WHAT IS REVELATION?

FREDERICK DENISON MAURICE

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"As our understanding can contemplate itself, and our affections be exercised upon themselves by reflection, so may each be employed in the same manner upon any other mind: and since the Supreme Mind, the Author and Cause of all things, is the highest possible object to Himself, He may be an adequate supply to all the faculties of our souls, a subject to our understandings, and an object to our affections."—*Butler*, 14*th Sermon*, *On the Love of God.*

PREFACE

In the Preface to the third edition of Mr. Mansel's Lectures, p. 14, he says:—

> "It has been objected by reviewers of very opposite schools, that to deny to man a knowledge of the Infinite is to make Revelation itself impossible, and to leave no room for evidences on which Reason can be legitimately employed. The objection would be pertinent if I had ever maintained that Revelation is or can be a direct manifestation of the Infinite Nature of God. But I have constantly asserted the very reverse."

It is not the object of the Sermons contained in this volume to convict Mr. Mansel of any inconsistency on the subject of Revelation. I have understood him to maintain, just as he states, the "very reverse" of the doctrine that Revelation means a direct manifestation of the Nature of God. My wish is to ascertain whether that doctrine which I have been used to hold and proclaim, or 'the reverse' of it, is the true one. If Mr. Mansel had persuaded me that all I had believed up to this time on that subject was false, I hope I should have had the honesty to tell my congregation so, to ask pardon of God and of them for having deceived them, and to abandon my clerical functions. As he did not persuade me, as all that he has written has added immense force to my previous conviction,—I have explained in six Sermons (the first in the series was preached before the Bampton Lectures were preached) why, in spite of the high authorities on the other side, I must still assert the principle which I discover in the Services of the Church and throughout the Bible.

In sermons addressed to a London congregation, I could only refer to Lectures delivered in Oxford. Pulpit quotations are nearly always unfair; pulpit discussions on metaphysical topics must be nearly always

most satisfactory to those who do not understand them. But if I made allusions to any book, I was bound to justify them. If I avoided quotations and discussions in a place for which they were unsuitable, it behoved me to prove that I did not avoid them because I was afraid of them. The ordinary resource in such cases is a collection of notes. Supposing I had wished to illustrate my own statements, to write a comment on my comments, I should have availed myself of that expedient. But I desired to bring Mr. Mansel's book before my readers, to examine that thoroughly. I did not care to choose the weaker or more startling passages of it: unless it was studied as a whole, my purpose would not be answered. My 'Letters to a Student of Theology preparing for Orders' cannot be accused, I think, of treating the subject or the author carelessly or superficially. I have followed his statements and arguments step by step. If they are as decisive and satisfactory as they are said to be, my objections will only make their worth and their power more evident.

I have at least endeavoured to bring the maxims of the Lecturer to a crucial test. They are defences of the truths which my correspondent is to preach. The defence being admitted, what will he have to preach? They are derived from a "Regulative Revelation;" I ask to know what are the rules, and what is revealed. I hear that Germans are utterly silenced. I am anxious to be shown what remains for Englishmen. I could not hope that learned doctors would listen if these questions were proposed to them. I have some confidence in proposing them to young men who are entering upon the battle of life; I have known something of their perplexities; I am sure that some out of their number demand that the problems should be solved, having found that to stifle them is death.

I have not been able to avoid in these Letters a certain vehemence of expression, which if it has ever taken a personal form, I shall deeply regret. I have no excuse for entertaining towards Mr. Mansel any feelings but those of respect. He has treated me both on former occasions and in this volume with a courtesy to which I have no claim;

he has even intimated a hope that we are essentially agreed in opinion. No one can tell how eagerly I should have responded to that hope, or how grateful I should have felt to so able a man for having entertained it. But since the further I read in his book, the more I perceived that it would be needful for me to abandon every conviction that was most precious to me before I could obtain that result, I felt myself obliged by his very good-nature to state the reasons of my disagreement. I could not state them as if they were indifferent to me; I could not conceal my opinion that the existence of English faith and English morality is involved in them. I have the comfort of reflecting that my words can do no possible harm to Mr. Mansel. His popularity cannot be diminished by my opposition. Some may be willing to accept it as an additional proof that his blows have been effectual,—as a pledge that more illustrious opponents may recoil from them. If I succeed in inducing a few Christian students and Christian workers to ask themselves what is Revelation; if I can convince a few serious doubters that what we call a Revelation of God, craves to be tried by the severest tests, is capable of meeting those agonies of the human spirit which our arguments can never meet;—I have done what I meant to do.

I had finished my Letters before I read Canon Stanley's admirable sermon '*On the Wisdom of Christ*,' which was preached before the University of Oxford last November. Some passages in that sermon, especially those on the criticism of the Bible and on the 'All or Nothing' doctrine, anticipate what I have tried to say in my remarks on Mr. Mansel's last Lecture. The whole discourse proves, it seems to me, that the true spirit of Butler has not departed from Oxford.

5, *Russell Square, June 4.*

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SERMON I. THE MAGIANS

St. Luke ii. 32.

"A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel."

Two subjects which appear incongruous were brought before us on the day of Epiphany. The Gospel spoke of the Magians, who were led by a star to the cradle of Christ. The Epistle spoke of the message which St. Paul delivered to the Ephesians. What connection is there between these thoughts? What has a star in the heavens to do with the sermons of a tent-maker?

A study of St. Paul's words would suggest the answer to this question; it is embodied in the very word *Epiphany*. Not a sermon or a star is the subject of the Epistle or the Gospel, but God's manifestation of His Son to the Gentiles. This manifestation can be as little explained by the discourses which St. Paul delivered as by the shining of an outward luminary. It is to the spirit within that God makes any of His discoveries. Only with this spirit can a man seize any truth, or enter into communion with it. Newton might have seen a thousand apples fall from the trees on which they hung; there was one which led him to perceive the law of the universe. The object that was presented to his outward eye became the instrument through which an idea was presented to the man himself. A universal truth shone through that special instance. His devout and humble mind would have acknowledged at once that God had led him to the one through the other. If afterwards he studied the speculations of Copernicus and the demonstrations of Kepler, he would have confessed, with all gratitude to his earthly teachers, that they also were instruments by which he was guided to the knowledge of a truth, which would not have been less a truth for them, for himself, for mankind, if no one of them had been able to apprehend it. In like manner the leading of a star, and the labours of

St. Paul, are equally unintelligible, if they are viewed without reference to the object of both; when connected with that, each may enable us better to understand the other.

I have taken the words of the old Rabbi Simeon, which have become a Vesper Song of the Church, to illustrate this subject. The best commentary upon them which I know, is found in our Collect for the Epiphany: "O God, Who by the leading of a star didst manifest Thy only-begotten Son to the Gentiles, mercifully grant that we, which know Thee now by faith, may after this life have the fruition of Thy glorious Godhead, through Jesus Christ our Lord!" One can but follow lamely in a discourse, the movements of the spirit in a prayer; but I shall try to keep the method of this Collect before me, and to examine its different clauses.

I. An Eastern sage, believing in a light which was older than the darkness, and which would at last overcome it, associating this light with the luminous forms that presented themselves to him in a still evening,—trying honestly and earnestly to find out what these were and what they signified to him, was in these very studies sending up a prayer to the Source of Light, that he might be shown his way, which was bewildered with shadows and deceitful fires. Such a man is surely a most interesting subject for contemplation. Yet how mournful a one he would be if we supposed it was all in vain; if his wishes were self-created, and met with no response; if his life was passed in dreams, and death was the awakening to a certainty that they pointed to nothing! Is not the doctrine of the Epiphany a more cheerful and a more reasonable one? If we take it,—so we are bound to take every record of Scripture, supposing we believe it,—as the instance and exemplification of a law, of the course of the Divine working, is it not good news that God Himself was directing the thoughts of the student of the stars, and of all other students and seekers in every direction—that their disappointments and sorrows and hasty guesses and crude anticipations were themselves schoolmasters by which He was bringing them,—yes, why do we stumble at the words?—bringing them to

Christ, bringing them to the Light which was lightening them, and had lightened every man that came into the world,—bringing them to know that He was there who always had been there,—bringing them to understand the deepest moral truth, the truth that most concerned their own being, through some common, often-observed incident, and by its commonness to feel assured that it was a truth for all as well as for them?

If we think of Him who was born at Bethlehem as having never lived till he was conceived by the Virgin, we may lose ourselves in all kinds of speculations about the miracle of that particular star that led the wise men to His manger. But if we adopt the Catholic Faith,—the Faith which was set before us on Christmas Day; if we suppose that the Word who was with the Father, who had been with the Father before all worlds, by whom the worlds were made, who had always been the life and the light of men, was then made flesh and dwelt among us,—that star will be no exception to the law which all stars have been obeying. They needed not to forsake their courses or break loose from their orbits that they might become instruments of illumination to the inner spirit of man, any more than that they might show him his path through the wood or across the ocean. In each case they were obeying their Creator's high behest, they were glorifying His calm and settled order, and so were ministering to the greatest as well as to the humblest needs of His children. It might have been indeed a wonder to the wise men, an overthrow of many previous conjectures and high imaginations, a tearing in pieces of many plausible schemes of the universe which they had devised or adopted, when they were led to confess the glory in a Jewish child, born in a Jewish stable, which they had looked for either in some Persian monarch or in some sun of the upper world. But if there was a breaking-down of theories, like that which every true man of science, in whatever department he works, has to endure and ultimately to give thanks for,—what a satisfaction was reserved for the humbled heart of the truth-seeker in the very meanness of the outward vesture, in the discovery that the glory was

all within, in the assurance that it was not the less human glory because it was Divine! How many lines of thought and of hope, which had each been visible at times, which sometimes seemed to intersect each other, sometimes to be running for ever parallel without the power of meeting, found their centre in that cradle! While they confessed how little the vision corresponded to what, as *wise* men, as *Magians*, they should have anticipated and wished, the conviction would be brought home to them, that this was what they required because they were *men*, that here was the Son of Man.

II. At this point then there seems no violent transition to that general Manifestation of the Only-begotten Son to the Gentiles, which came through the preaching of St. Paul, or of any who followed in his steps. It was as a messenger to men concerning a Son of God and a Son of Man that the Apostle went forth. This was his Gospel; and wherever he went preaching it, he found that other preachers had been before him. The rains and fruitful seasons, filling men's hearts with food and gladness, had been there. The sun and stars had been there. There had been thoughts of a Deliverer, of a King, of a Judge. Wherever he went, he had proofs that God had other ways than by the leading of a star to manifest His only-begotten Son to the Gentiles; that in every nation and language there were tokens and witnesses of Him which God Himself was drawing forth, which His minister was to learn first of the invisible Teacher in the secret ear, and then to proclaim upon the housetops.

III. And how is it now, brethren? Are things altogether changed? Have we, as some tell us we have, the Scriptures and the traditions of the Church, either separately or both together, as substitutes for that inner manifestation of the Son of God, which the Scriptures and the Church say came to certain wise men through the guiding of a star, and to the bulk of the nations through the preaching of the Gospel? The actual prayer of the Collect would be utterly inconsistent with the words which introduce it,—the desire for *us* could have no connection with the light which came to wise or foolish Gentiles in the old time, if

our knowledge of God has not the same ground, is not essentially of the same nature with theirs. The Magians had their traditions, and paid them fitting reverence. They studied the stars in conformity with them. But if their traditions had been a thousand times better than they were, they would have said: "Trust God, and not us. He is with you. Follow His guiding." They acted on the conviction that this was their duty. They opened their hearts to God's teaching, and He manifested His Son to them. He led them to the Child. Those to whom St. Paul preached were not merely Gentiles. A Jewish colony was mixed with them. He spoke to both equally. He made use of Gentile traditions and lore. He appealed continually to the Jewish Scriptures, and to the history of the Jewish calling, as authoritative and true. But in both cases equally his object was to lead them to faith in God, in the living Son of God, who had spoken and was speaking to the Gentile conscience, who had spoken and was speaking to the Jewish conscience, not less directly because He had given the Jews a Law, because He had raised up Patriarchs, Kings, Prophets, to rule them, teach them, reprove them; because He had caused His oracles to be collected and written down as testimonies of His continual presence with them. The Jew fancied that the Patriarchs, the Law, the Prophets, were substitutes for the voice that was speaking to the Gentiles. He put these and the written oracles, as well as the comments and traditions of the elders, between God and himself. Whilst therefore he prided himself on his superiority to the Gentiles, he in truth reduced himself to a lower level than theirs. He renounced the human privilege, of which he could not deprive them. He cut himself off, as far as he could, from the Divine light and the Divine manifestation, using his traditions, using God's Scriptures, to close the passage through which the light of Christ, the Only-begotten Son, was penetrating into his inner man. Therefore is it that St. Paul had to complain so continually, "A veil is on their hearts." It is not taken away in the reading of the Old Testament, though that testifies everywhere of Christ. Only when they turn to the Lord, when they seek Him who is seeking them, will it be taken away.

This example is so certainly meant for us and is so fearful, that there is need continually to press the truth which the Collect suggests. It is the God, who manifested His only-begotten Son to the Gentiles, who does only, who can only, manifest His Son to us. No book can do it, be it ever so divine; no Church authority or tradition can do it, be it ever so venerable. We must know, not the book, not the tradition, but *Him* by faith. We must trust Him as we trust a father; that is what the Divine book tells us to do, that is what the Church tells us to do, and its authority and its traditions belie their own origin, contradict themselves and become blasphemies, if they speak otherwise. If we believe in God habitually as a living Person, if we seek Him as a refuge from our own atheism, from our own idolatry, from that in us which is most utterly contrary to Him,—our self-will, our pride, our spite and malice, we shall know Him, really, as one knows a friend, not by seeing Him with the eyes, not by getting reports of Him or traditions of Him from others, be those reports ever so trustworthy, be those traditions ever so reasonable and credible, but by experiencing His help, by finding out how much better He is than we are, and yet how well He understands what we are, and cares for us. To exchange for this practical faith, which rests upon God Himself and His own manifestation of Himself in the Son of God and the Son of Man, a belief in the holy book, is to disobey all the warnings of that Book, to show that we do not know what is in it, that we prize it as a name or a watchword, not for that which it teaches. To exchange for this practical faith a belief in the Church,—a notion that the Church will tell us the right thing and will bring us to Heaven,—is to show that we do not know what it is to be members of a Church, or what a Church is good for; that we do not prize it because it leads us to the Rock on which it stands, to the God who has called it out to be the witness of His revelation of Himself to mankind, of His redemption of mankind, but because we suppose it is ours, and that it gives us some privilege and glory which other men want. This is to exalt ourselves and to deny God.

IV. That is to say, we do not adopt the next clause of the Collect: "*We which know Thee now by faith*." I have been obliged in some degree to anticipate these words, but they deserve a separate consideration. We were willing enough to limit ourselves by objects of sight. The world had a great many to offer us that were very beautiful, that deserved all admiration. But to rest in them was impossible. We overlooked them. If we came to them with a heart free and open for joy, they met it and gave it food on which it could feast for a time; if it brought sorrow, they oftener took their colour from it than gave it a brighter one. And there was an inward aching, a craving of the spirit for that which was like itself, for that which was higher than itself, a craving for deliverance from itself, that all these fair images merely mocked. How delightful was it to escape from them to a friend, to a kinsman! to find an object not of sight but of trust!—one who could exchange thoughts and feelings with us, who actually suffered and rejoiced, who was wiser and better than we! But the sympathy becomes exhausted, or there is a vacancy in the character which had seemed all satisfactory, or the wisdom perishes, or some jealousy tears the cord in twain. We need more than this: one altogether better than ourselves; one whose sympathy has no stint; one whose character has no flaw; one who will last the same for ever. We want a Son of Man. The Gospel that there is such a son of Man, that He knows our conditions of birth, of poverty, of suffering and death, what has it not been to Europe for eighteen centuries! Who knows into what hovels the sound has penetrated, over what cradles and what coffins there has been an echo of it? If you suppose the sun's light and heat have only been felt by those who are acquainted with the right doctrine concerning the heavenly bodies, you may suppose also that Christ's power has been limited by men's acquaintance with the right doctrine concerning His relation to the visible or invisible world. As the truest astronomy, by declaring what is the unchangeable law of the world, by showing how entirely independent it is of our conceptions and anticipations, refutes the one conclusion, the truest theology spurns with far greater indignation the

other. The theology of St. Paul declares Christ to be the foundation that is laid for every man, not one that men by their faith or feelings can lay for themselves. The theology of St. John declares Christ to be the Light that lighteth every man, whether the Light is acknowledged or denied. The Church, in its Creeds, its Sacraments, and its prayers, proclaims the Incarnation and the Manifestation of the Son of God as good news to the world. She prefers to endure the charge of being assuming and dogmatical, than to earn for herself the credit of hesitation and modesty—by refusing to meet the demand of the human conscience and reason—by teaching men to fancy that truth is created by their trowings.

V. But Simeon did not speak *only of* "*a Light to lighten the Gentiles*." He said there *was* "*a glory*" for the "*people Israel*." The Collect does not only thank God for manifesting His Son. It asks that we, though Gentiles, may have the "*fruition of His glorious Godhead*." These are equivalent expressions. We ask for the whole Church, for the whole Universe, what the Jew believed in for his countrymen.

He felt, and he had a right to feel, that the children of Abraham had been educated for something higher than the sight of the most blessed Child, of the most perfect Man. All their discipline had been to teach them that they could only be satisfied when they awakened up after God's likeness, that to know Him was their great reward. In our efforts to convert them, we have, I should think, been far too inattentive to this consideration. We have not done justice to the feeling which has been working, however confusedly, in their minds, that there must be the revelation of a *divine* glory encircling their nation; that if no such glory is in reserve for it, it has existed for nothing. But if we have failed to meet the secret cravings with which God has inspired Jews, if this has been the cause why so few of them have cast in their lot with us, we have done equal wrong to ourselves and to the other nations of the earth through the same ignorance and misunderstanding. The fruition of the glorious Godhead is as needful for us as for them. Whenever we speak of glory, whenever we think of glory,

however paltry our words about it, however low our conceptions of it may be, this unspeakable, inconceivable blessedness is lying behind them. Why else does the thought of glory so naturally, so inevitably associate itself with the thought of departure out of the world? Why is there something painful to us in calculating the petty rewards which we can bestow upon a man who has done any work of deliverance for his country? Why do we almost dread—eagerly as we may desire his return—to hear the vulgar, formal phrases which are all we can devise, to commemorate the toils and sufferings that we think of with most gratitude and affection?[1] Why is there somewhat calming and soothing in the sadness which follows a brave man to his grave in the very place where his work was done, just when it was done? Solon, we are told, thought those young men blessed above kings, who yoked themselves to the car of their priestess-mother, and when they had brought her to the temple where her services were due, fell asleep for weariness, and (since she had prayed that the Goddess would pour her best gift upon them) woke no more. Such a gift we may surely believe the God whom we worship would bestow on those who have offered themselves as freely for our common mother. Here the hard fighter knows Him by faith. Whatever may be the nature or the weapons of his outward warfare, he must seek the Captain of his host amidst jungles, must watch for Him by the light of camp-fires. It is by his own weakness that he learns the everlasting Strength; by his sins, the perfect Righteousness; by the feebleness and uncertainty of the halo which plays about the head of the noblest of His servants, the substantial glory of which that is the reflection. After this life comes the fruition of His glory. The longing for selfish prizes has ceased; the earthly weakness of desiring to exchange faith for sense has been taken away. What remains is the vision of that Light which fills earth and heaven, the revelation to the inward eye of the Godhead itself, as the eye of

[1]The news of General Havelock's death, at Lucknow, reached England a few days before this sermon was preached.

the spiritual body will by degrees become capable of taking in all the beauty and harmony of God's works.

Yes! there is in us all a deep sighing for Home, a longing which nothing but this beholding of God can satisfy. The more we know of the faiths of all the nations of the earth, the more we discover it. Even where the desire has been most perverted, it still exists. Buddha taught those who honour his name to crave for annihilation. Though few may understand his philosophy, hundreds of millions have been affected by his practical teaching. That dream of theirs seems to us monstrous at some—which are surely the best—moments of our lives. But how often has it seemed most natural, most desirable! To lose oneself, to forget, to be forgotten: who, after days and months of intense restlessness, may not have counted this the highest of all blessings which the soul can attain? As long as there is about us a floating image of a God of wrath, a God from whose dominion we should be glad to escape, yet a God who would fain curse us with immortality, we shall turn to this as a distant but not impossible hope. Terrible as it may be to us to part with all beautiful things that we have delighted in, with all energies, affections, memories, hopes, the conscience will count this a trifling sacrifice to be delivered from its own ever-increasing burden, from the presence of an irresistible enemy.

But when there comes to the conscience the revelation of a reconciled and reconciling God, of One who has manifested His only-begotten Son bearing the burden which we could not bear, taking away the sin of the world, bequeathing peace, giving repentance, baptizing with the Spirit, all is changed. That which was sought in nothingness, is found in a Father. The death of self is the beginning of a new life, of purified affections, energies, memories, hopes. These have their fruition in God. These realize their glory when He is revealed. Therefore it is true, as it was of old, that the desire of nations is for a Christ, a Son of Man; but for a Christ, a Son of Man in whom we may see the Father. Therefore it is true, as it was of old, that the star which shall guide the wise men from the East, be they Buddhists,

Brahmins, Mahometans, will rest on the cradle where the young Child lies; but will rest there because that Child has come to manifest the glory of God. Therefore it is true, as it was of old, that the preachers of a Gospel to the Gentiles must go forth telling them that the Word who is their Light, took flesh and dwelt on earth, and suffered the death of the Cross, and that they may be signed with the sign of His Cross; but it is because the Wisdom and Power of God were revealed at Calvary; it is because the assurance was given there that sinful and dying men shall hereafter behold the face of God, and that His Name shall be on their foreheads.

SERMON II. CHRIST AMONG THE DOCTORS

Luke ii. 46, 47.

> "And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers."

The manifestation to the Magian, which was brought before us in the service of Thursday, is recorded by St. Matthew. This manifestation to the doctors is only spoken of by St. Luke. We might have expected that the places of the narratives would have been reversed; that St. Matthew, who wrote for Jews, would have spoken of that which directly concerned Jews; that St. Luke, the companion of St. Paul, would have seized upon the fact which has been always described as the revelation of Christ to the Gentiles. But it should be considered that he who cared especially to set forth a King of the Jews, would very appropriately notice the search of the Wise Men for such a King, and the homage which they paid Him when they had found Him. And I think there was no one fitter to speak of the way in which the Light of the World burst upon the minds of the Rabbis in the Temple, than he who had conversed with the pupil of Gamaliel, and had carefully studied the process of his illumination.

What the Church seems especially to impress upon us by bringing these two facts together, and classing them under the common name of Epiphany, is that every act of our Lord, from His birth onwards, is to be looked upon as a disclosure of the glory of the only-begotten Son of the Father—of Him from whose Grace and Truth all the grace and truth of men had proceeded. So considered, these old records which

some suspect and would like to cast off, are seen to be most consistent with the tenour of the history, most helpful in delivering us from confusions respecting that history, and respecting the meaning of the word Revelation. We think it natural and reasonable that the Apostles, being endowed with certain miraculous powers, should be able to build up a Church among Jews and Gentiles. Had we the like powers, we have little doubt we might convert Hindoos and Mussulmans as well as the great body of those who are Christians only in name. The Apostles had no dream that they had any such charms for acting on the hearts and consciences of men. They said that the Gospel itself was the "*power of God unto salvation, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek*." They said that what they had to do was to preach Christ crucified, because in His weakness and humiliation were made known the power and wisdom of God. In other words, it was He who was revealing Himself, through their preaching, to that eye which was intended to receive the discovery, and was waiting for it. The story of the Star in the East leading the Wise men to the King whom they were asking the stars to tell them of, explains how He made either words or signs effectual for His own mighty purpose. And the story of His listening to the doctors in the Temple, and questioning them, shows how He compelled a set of men, who were the slaves of words, or rather of letters, who believed that all power lay in them, to confess a mightier power in Him.

I. This is the subject which I think is especially forced upon us by the Gospel today. There were met in the Temple a number of grave men, full of all the learning which could be got from the traditions of the past, full, as they thought, of all the learning which could be got from the words and lives of Patriots, Lawgivers, holy men. It was no profane wisdom that they were occupied with. Some of them might have a little measure of it. All would value it only as it illustrated the Divine wisdom which had been imparted to their land, or as a foil to set off its brightness and purity. They might not be wholly agreed about the meaning of the words by which they set such store.

The Psalms were open to very different interpretations. They were not at one upon the question where and how this or that prophecy would be accomplished. They might differ even upon the relative worth of different commandments—still more when they compared those commandments, simple, broad, and general, with the accurate rules which had been transmitted to them by elders and doctors. Probably there was no doubt in the minds of the majority that the observance of the commandments was comparatively an easy and vulgar thing, that the practice of those refined rules was the sign of a more exact and scrupulous holiness, at all events a step to it. Some however there would be among them who derided such practices as idle and unnecessary. Ordinary morality, they would say, such as the Commandments prescribed, was what God demanded; the maxims of an ascetic devotion had been needlessly grafted upon these. Amidst all such differences there would be a general impression that whatever there was in the land of religion or acquaintance with the oracles of God, dwelt among them. Age, and the knowledge of what former times had bequeathed, were theirs. They were the shepherds of the people. Whether the sheep went right or wrong depended mainly on their submission to this guidance or their neglect of it.

Into this grave and venerable consistory there enters a Boy just twelve years of age. No one can tell exactly how he came there. But of course it is a promising sign, a sign of early devotion, that he should like to be in the Temple. The great festival is just over. Amidst the numbers who frequented it, it is no wonder if there should be one who has been seized with awe and admiration by those beautiful buildings, or by the sense of that which they denote. This one is apparently a fugitive from his parents. He may have wandered from them by accident, or he may have a thought, if his tribe and the rules of the elders permit it, of giving himself to the service of that place. A friendly Rabbi might think it worth while to question him about his purposes, to ascertain why he was lingering in those precincts.

(1.) So he stands among the Rabbis, not affrighted certainly by their dignity, with no sign of bashfulness, but also with none of forwardness. He is not eager to speak. He wishes to listen. The doctors are conversing about matters which they presume are far above the comprehension of a boy. And there is in the face of this boy nothing which tells of assumption or precocity, rather of quietness and docility. Such a one may be allowed to hear their discourse; it may impress him hereafter, if not at once, with reverence for the persons and their office. And what was that listening of his? In the highest sense, as in every lower one, the maxim holds good, "Everything is received according to the measure of the receiver." We can imagine how glibly the familiar texts would be repeated by one and another,—how often 'sins' and 'repentance' would be in their mouths,—how they would debate about the hope of Israel and the promise of dominion over the Gentiles, —how they would speak of all God's doings with them, if they did not actually pronounce the Name which signified his hidden essence. What awful, unutterable meanings lay beneath these sounds! And the meaning, not the sound, was that to which the Boy was listening. That of which the learned men had only the faintest consciousness, entered into His inmost being. It was in the fullest sense listening, reverent and awful listening, the listening of a child, not the judgment of a man. It is hard for us to make that distinction; but if we believe the Incarnation, we shall try to make it. We shall believe that the Child was a child, the Boy a boy; that the Child was perfect as such, and therefore did not anticipate its after-growth, which would imply imperfection; that the Boy was a perfect boy, and therefore had none of that forestalling of manhood which our consciences and reason tell us is irregular and untrue. And this is not, as some would state it, merely in order that we may do justice to the Humanity of Christ. We cannot in any other way see how the Divinity manifested itself through the Humanity, how it addressed itself to all the conditions and needs of Humanity. We may make a notion to ourselves of Divinity as unlimited wisdom and power; but such notions are good for very little. What we want

is to know what wisdom and power are in their fullest, highest sense, not to mould and contract them by our understandings, and then fancy we make amends for the contraction by giving them the epithet 'unlimited.'

Do you suppose that those Rabbis, after forty, say, or fifty years, of reading and copying out the Law, of comparing and registering the different commentaries upon it, had ever felt such a presence of Divinity with them, as when they looked into the face of that listening Boy? They could copy the letters, they could overlook the commentaries. If there was something very deep and mysterious beneath them, they could reduce it into Cabbala; they could talk of it as *their* possession, *their* distinction from the multitude. But which of them could penetrate the awe and mystery of that countenance, clear and bright as it was? What spoke to them through that, could be reduced into no Cabbala. They could never say, "*That* raises us above the rest of our countrymen." They must have felt: "That face speaks to us of our connection with Galilean peasants; it reminds us that we are of the same flesh and blood with them. While we look at it, does it not seem as if we were more glorious to be of the same flesh and blood with any one that is called a man, than to have all this learning of ours?" A strange message to come to men who must uphold their reputation for sanctity and wisdom before the multitude! Yet surely a divine message! Surely those listening eyes were reading their very hearts. Surely they knew better than they ever did before, that God was reading them.

(2.) And then came the *questions*. "*He was sitting among them*," it is said, "*both hearing them and asking them questions*." Still all is suitable to the boy. He pronounces on nothing. He does not lay down the law upon this matter or that. The time may come when He shall go up into a mountain and open His lips, and speak as one having authority. But that time is not yet. He is not above the Scribes, but is sitting at their feet. He desires to know what *they* think about this commandment in the Law, about this sentence of David or Isaiah. At first, no doubt, the answers are all ready. They can tell that which one elder or

another had written down or expressed orally to his disciples. They begin to give out the oracles, perhaps with an air of patronage or condescension, to the earnest youth. Why do the patronage and the condescension disappear? Why is the well-trained memory at fault? Why is there that look of puzzle and perplexity, almost of terror, on the countenances of those who are used to resolve all riddles, to silence all disputes? The question has gone beneath commentary and text both. The second-hand answer does not avail. What, for instance, could it profit to give the best exposition of the Commandments, if the Child with those deep, searching eyes said: "He who spoke these commandments calls himself The Lord *thy* God. What is this *Thy*? Is He indeed the God of each of you? He speaks as if He were a Deliverer out of bondage. Is that indeed so? Was He only a Deliverer of our fathers in the days of old, or is he that still, that now? The prophets always describe Him as the Living God—the God from generation to generation. What! is He then actually with us as He was with them, speaking to us as He spoke to them? He is described as a Father pitying His children, putting away their sins from them, and yet as hating all iniquity. Is that so still? Does He actually seek to make men right?"

I have supposed, you see, questions which had no novelty or strangeness in them; questions which arose directly out of the language of the Holy Book. If these had been all,—if there had been none deeper than these—deeper than we can think of,—what must have been their effect? No Rabbi can have imputed captious doubt, premature disbelief to the *speaker*. May not many a one have been led to suspect *himself* of doubt and disbelief? May not many a one have thought: "It cannot be that the words are to be taken in this simple strict sense; if so, the Book is not the one I thought I knew from beginning to end?" May not another have said: "Yes! thanks be to God, that must be what is written. I did not perceive it, but so it is. The King of kings cannot be far from us. He must be in this place; and though it is the holy place,—the place which He chose to put His name in,—I knew it not?"

(3.) We are told that "*all who heard this child were astonished at his understanding and answers*." So that they must have asked Him questions as He asked them. No doubt He showed as much willingness to submit to their catechism as He had shown eagerness to receive whatever they had to impart; a child, whichever task he was engaged in,—taught by elder men, doing what they required. And the answers, we may be sure, like the questions, would not be new or rare or far-fetched. They would be startling because they presented the words of holy men in their direct, full, original force; because they did not make veils for the sense, but drew away a veil which had concealed it; because the words came forth in them as if the men were there in whose hearts they had been as a burning fire; because the words were shown to be not theirs, but His who had spoken to them, and had declared His own purpose through them. The answers, I repeat it, were not veils; they were a Revelation, or Unveiling; and that Revelation, or Unveiling, was not of a System or of a Religion, but of Him who had said, "Let not the rich man glory in his riches, nor the wise man in his wisdom, but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he *knoweth* Me, that I execute judgment and righteousness in the earth."

It was therefore, as the Evangelist expresses it, the *understanding* of this child which astonished the doctors. We can see what must have been the impression upon their minds. This boy entered into the very sense of the words which they had read and copied and committed to memory. They had never *understood* the words as spoken to themselves. They had drawn conclusions from the words, generalized notions from them. But their hearts had never come into contact with them. They were idols to be worshiped at a distance; not worshiped till all the dangerous life had been extracted from them, till they were as powerless to act or teach or govern as the stocks and stones of the heathen, which had been denounced in them. What a wonder, to see them quick and breathing again in the answers of this Child! What a wonder, to find that He went along, not only with them, but with the

very mind of Him from whom they had proceeded; that *He* spoke like one who had been brought up with Him, like a sharer of His counsels!

(4.) Although, therefore, one discovers nothing in the listening or questioning or answering of this Boy which interferes with that growth in wisdom and stature of which St. Luke speaks,—with that gradual unfolding of the human life which was necessary to the manifestation of the Divine life,—there is *that* foreshadowing of after-years which we generally discern in an individual man when we are acquainted with the facts of his story, and which we should confidently expect in *the* Man, the Representative of the Race. After He had entered upon His ministry, when He was exercising the fullness of His power, when He was denouncing those Scribes and Pharisees to whom He had listened in the Temple, He was still unveiling some of the deepest mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, by asking questions of his disciples and the multitude, that being the last, which awakened so much awe, "*What think ye of Christ? whose Son is He*?"; He was still answering those who asked Him, "*What was the chief commandment*?" "*Shall we give tribute to Caesar?*" "*Whose wife will the woman be hereafter, who had the seven husbands on earth*?" He was again a silent hearer of the charges against Him in the Sanhedrim, till that adjuration of the High Priest to declare whether He was the *Son of God* brought forth that final answer, "Thou hast said; nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the *Son of Man* sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of Heaven." In all these ways His earliest acts on earth and His latest exhibited a divine harmony. His understanding of the ways of God was more and more discovering His name to be that which the prophet had proclaimed. "*He shall be called Wonderful*, Counsellor." And the question to Mary and Joseph, when they sought Him sorrowing, "*Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business*?" was the preparation for His baptism, and for the final prayer, "Father, glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee."

II. But the subject is for us no less than for the Rabbis. I will mention some of the lessons which I think lie in it, and which we need especially at this time.

(1.) And first: There is, in many divines—in many Christians who are not divines—a great fear of questions. "Certain things," they say, "have been settled long ago. To disturb the settlement is perilous. If we are humble and modest, we shall be content without *knowledge* of divine things. Probabilities, distant approximations to knowledge, are all to which creatures such as we are can aspire." Now, brethren, as long as I believe in Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, our Lord;—as long as I seek for my standard of modesty and humility in Him,—so long I must protest against the kind of modesty and humility which these disciples of His affect. I find Him beginning His pilgrimage on earth as a questioner. I find Him astonishing the upholders of a long and safe tradition by that method. I find Him sanctioning that as His own sound method of detecting falsehood and laziness, and of urging men to seek Truth that they may find it. Brethren, I believe that Christ has been asking questions from that day to this; that He is asking questions of us all, divines and laymen, now; that the questions come to us in multitudes of shapes, through a multitude of lips;—through children tormenting their parents and teachers about the wonderful meaning of *words* which have become to *them* mere familiar sounds, of *things* which they have gazed at till they have forgotten that there is any life or mystery in them at all; through men who have been exercised with the puzzles of Philosophy, and want to find some ground upon which they may stand, a ground of reality, not of convention; through the cravings of men who know nothing of Philosophy, but who have found enough in their own thoughts and in the world to amaze and confound them;—through the frivolous, even, who appear to be engaged in no search at all, who only wish to throw down some system or to build up one for their own fame, but who nevertheless, because they are men, cannot be merely busy in that poor occupation, and will be sure to start some inquiry which we may pursue to its issue if they

will not. I am greatly afraid that when we try to silence any of these questions we are trying to silence the voice of Christ, in others and in ourselves; that we do not like Him to sift us and make us understand what in us is of Him, and will bear the fires of His judgment-day; what is wood, hay, stubble of our own, and must be burnt up in those fires.

(2.) I know how liable statements like these are to be misunderstood, as if one wished to discourage reverence for the past, as if one thought there were no oracles of God which were stronger and deeper than all the reasonings and speculations of men. I have endeavoured to show you today how fair and reasonable these charges are. Just because I would uphold reverence for the past;—just because I think our own speculations and reasonings are so much feebler than the oracles of God,—I dare not stifle one anxious question of men respecting the faith of other days, respecting those oracles of God. The Rabbis did not reverence the past. They accepted its decrees. They had no fellowship with the life and sufferings of its men. They did not honour the oracles of God. They were buried under their own reasonings and speculations. They could not receive any communication as coming directly to the hearts of men from the Ruler of their hearts. No men needed so much to become little children, to recover the wisdom of children. That they might attain that wisdom the Child came amongst them, listened to them, asked them questions, answered their questions.

I think that same Child, who has the government on His shoulders, hears us, questions us, answers us for the same end. There are those doubtless who wish to cut us off from all communion with the past, telling us that it is a chain upon our freedom. There are those who say the Bible is an obsolete book, useful in the infancy of the world, unworthy of such advanced sages as we are. You do not confute these objectors by arguing against them, by opposing the weight of opinion to them, by emulating their hard and scoffing temper. It is not that they question too much, but too little. They have never asked themselves what they want, what mankind wants. If they once fairly grappled with

these questions, they would begin to reverence those who wept and bled that mankind might have what it wants; they would be filled with shame, as they contrast the tears and blood with their boasting. They would hear an old text telling them secrets of their own being, which the wisdom that mocks at texts has never penetrated. For they would perceive that they want—that mankind wants—the actual knowledge of God; that for this men have sighed and cried in every country and age of the world; that if this knowledge is not to be had, what is called Self-knowledge is either a miserable delusion or a curse and a horror. So you may lead even proud deniers to come, as little children, not only to the Bible, but to that Child whom the Bible declares to be the firstborn of Men, the perfect manifestation of God.

(3.) This is the subject with which I began, and with which I shall end. Do *our* Doctors confess Jesus Christ to be that perfect manifestation of God? Do they admit that He came into the world, in very deed, to show men of the Father? Do they confess that *this* was His Father's business which he was about, from His cradle to His Cross? Nay, that in this He was occupied ever since the world was made; that in this He will be occupied for ever and ever? Alas! in the very highest quarters of English Theology, we are taught a doctrine the very reverse of this. The only way, we are told, to confute Rationalism, to establish Christianity, is to affirm that God cannot be known; that man is prohibited by his constitution from seeking such knowledge. The justification for this startling doctrine lies in the simple proposition, "We cannot conceive the inconceivable," a maxim so self-evident, that it must have swept all thoughts about an invisible world, or a divine Being, before it, if there had not been a deeply grounded conviction in human beings, however variously expressed, or however unable to express itself, that unless we can rise above our conceptions, above ourselves, there is for us no science of things, no knowledge of persons —fathers, brothers, friends; that all affection must perish as well (in the true sense of the word) as all understanding. That inward belief, the loss of which, one has been wont to suppose, is the loss of every

aspiration after goodness or nobleness, the destruction of any morality but that which is conventional,—that belief has given rise to the cry that some Being who is above all our thoughts and conceptions, but who must be the ground and standard of them all, would tell us what He is, and therefore what we are. The faith of our fathers was that God answered this cry which He had awakened; that He did come forth in the person of His only-begotten Son, to show men what He is; that He did send His Spirit into the hearts of men, that all might know Him, from the least to the greatest. The confession of this Revelation was their orthodoxy. They had no notion of a system or scheme of Religion, apart from a Manifestation of God to men. I believe, brethren, that any scheme or system of Religion which has not such a Manifestation for its basis,—any scheme or system constructed out of the Bible, or upon a theory of our own nature,—will effect nothing for the good of mankind. I believe the Child who stood in the Temple will destroy it. I believe He has saved and will save the world, which by wisdom knew not God from that fatal ignorance, by revealing Himself as His Father's Wisdom, as the source of all Wisdom in us.

SERMON III. ST. PAUL AT ATHENS

Acts xvii. 26-31.

> "And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent; because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."

The picture of St. Paul at Athens, which is given us in the Acts of the Apostles, has been filled up with many lights and shades by the imagination of the reader. But these are the great outlines which cannot be effaced. He was grieved in spirit when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry; he disputed in the market-place with philosophers of different sects; the curiosity of the people to hear some new thing would not suffer him to abstain from a general statement of his object in coming to Greece, if he had desired to be silent; he did actually deliver the most elaborate of all his discourses on Mars' Hill.

What that discourse would have been if he had adopted the notion respecting the right method of spreading Christianity, which is most prevalent and admired amongst us in this day, we can have no difficulty in conjecturing. He would have begun with offering proofs that all other nations had been left to follow their own courses, unguided

and untended, while his had been the depositary of a divine communication. There was evidence,—he would say, not demonstrative, but sufficient to satisfy men who were alive to their own perils and their own ignorance, that the Ruler of the world had given intimations concerning His will to the children of Abraham. These intimations, so far as they concerned His nature and purposes, could not be called strictly true for men had no faculties wherewith to receive the knowledge of an infinite Being. But they were such approximations to truth as it was desirable for men to receive. Precepts founded upon them had proved very beneficial in the practice of life. Amongst these precepts was one against the worship of graven images. No reason, of course, was given for it. How can an infinite Being be expected to give reasons for His acts? How could they be made intelligible to men if they were given? But supposing the Lawgiver possessed infinite power to enforce His decrees, was it safe to set any of them aside?

Then proceeding from the people to the learned, he would show triumphantly how every speculation respecting the gods had proved abortive and ridiculous. He would show that by the very conditions of man's being it must be so; that the dreams of men respecting a Nature so immeasurably transcending theirs, so altogether different from theirs, could have no counterpart in reality. Of course he would deal his blows with perfect impartiality. This would be aimed at the self-confidence of the Epicurean denier, that at the scepticism of the Academic, a third at the physico-theology and stern ethics of the Stoic. If there was any departure from this rule, it would be in the case of some particularly earnest inquirer. It must be a greater victory for the Gospel to expose his blunders and failures, than those of a mere sophist or professional disputer. Then, having cleared the ground of all other opinions and speculations, with what satisfaction would he commend his own religion to the acceptance of the multitude! He would represent it as milder, less national, less dogmatic, than the Jewish from which it had sprung. He would appeal to the common sense of the Athenians whether, in the utter ignorance of divine things

in which they were and must be, the prudent course was not to accept a faith which promised inconceivable rewards to its champions, which denounced utter ruin against those who rejected it.

I can conceive only two reasons which can be assigned by those who approve this kind of teaching, why it should not have been St. Paul's. One is, that he was not learned enough to know the opinions of sages, or not logical enough to produce *the* overwhelming argument against them. To such an objection I merely reply, that *I* presume St. Paul to have been sent forth with such weapons as were fitted for the work he had to do; if they think otherwise, they should say so boldly. The other is, that such language might have exposed the speaker to a storm of Greek indignation. But St. Paul, according to the opinion of him we have been wont to entertain, was a brave man, whose testimony would not have been more stern when he was in security than when he was in danger. Nor am I prepared to admit that the kind of discourse I have imagined, would have been more perilous to the Apostle, than those which had drawn down upon him the fanatical rage of Jews at Thessalonica and Berea. If his main object was to proselytize for a certain religion, I am not sure that it might not have induced more Athenians to join him than Dionysius and Damaris. For it would have appealed to passions which St. Paul in his actual speech did not invoke. Epicureans and Academics would have seen great plausibility in the denunciations of the popular worship. Each would have welcomed the sneers at the philosophical system of the other. St. Paul's own countrymen—if any were present—would have recognized in him a champion, not an enemy, of their exclusiveness.

But let us consider now, not what St. Paul might have said, but what he did say, to the people of this idolatrous, philosophical, news-loving city.

I. "*God hath made of one blood all nations of men, to dwell upon all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation*." This was the lesson which the Apostle had learnt by earnest meditation on the calling of his own nation, by his study of

the Law and the prophets. God hath formed the nations of one blood, of one family. God hath watched over the bounds, the circumstances, the destiny, of each nation upon the face of the earth. The Jewish nation had existed to be a witness for this universal fellowship among the nations. It had existed as a witness against that which tended to divide them and set them at war. It had existed also as a witness for the special work of each one of those bodies which had its definite geographical limits, its sympathies of kindred and race. It existed to say, "The one living and true God has created you all to be one. The one living and true God has assigned you your tasks. He has never left you alone. No one fact of your history has lain beyond the circle of His providence. No one thought has been awakened in your minds without His teaching and guidance. I, the Jew, the child of Abraham, stand forth to make that claim on behalf of the God whom I worship. I stand forth solemnly to repudiate the doctrine that any nation whatever has a right to deny connection with any other. I, the Jew, the child of Abraham, stand forth to declare that you, the men of Athens, have had a divine vocation, that the God of all has appointed you to play a distinct and a very remarkable part in His great drama. I declare that you are utterly wrong when you affirm that the great deeds of your fathers are to be ascribed to them, not to Him; that your institutions, your freedom, your wisdom, are human, so as not to be also in the highest sense divine." This is a wonderful message, very unlike that one which we heard just now. But I ask you to read St. Paul's own words attentively, and see whether they express less than my paraphrase of them; whether they do not express far more.

II. But *why* has God chosen out the particular nations? *Why* has He ordered the times before appointed and the bounds of their habitation? Here is St. Paul's answer: "*That they may seek the Lord, if haply they may feel after Him, and find Him*." According to this explanation of an inspired Apostle, it was God himself who stirred up the thoughts and inquiries of men about His Being and Nature. Nay, every circumstance of their outward position was devised and ordained expressly for the

purpose of giving this impulse, this direction, to their thoughts. Certainly, if we believed that, many puzzles in history oppressive puzzles to those who read it as the history of their fellow-beings—would be solved. One sees how the soil and climate, the temperament of peculiar races, their apprehensions concerning law and government, their internal struggles, their relations with neighbours, have modified all their thoughts and feelings; but especially their apprehensions of the invisible world and of divine powers. If one might assure oneself that a soil fertile or rugged, a climate genial or cruel, the need of rule, the need of freedom, the activity which led to wars, the deeper craving for peace, all had been instruments of giving them some glimpse of a Guide and Ruler,—had led them to grasp at something which is really in Him, some side of His character, some purpose of His will, —the past would become an illuminated, not an utterly dark scroll. How one apprehension should become feeble, distorted, how others should be rejected for its sake,—how when others asserted their right and necessity, all polytheistic confusions and contradictions should arise, how they might become fixed in the mind by selfish fears,—how they would be perpetuated by dishonest priests seeking to keep up an impression of their own power, confounding that with the unseen power, this we can understand without much difficulty from later experience. The hard question is, What was the starting-point of those thoughts? and that other, How were they kept alive in men's minds, when so much in nature and themselves was confuting them? To these questions St. Paul gives his decided reply. This feeling after God,—which has been discovered, under some condition or other, in all tribes of the earth, which has had the most marked tokens of being a human necessity, and yet which a thousand tendencies in man have threatened with death as well as with derangement,—this the Creator Himself has called forth and sustained; without His first word it could not have been,—without His continual presence and inspiration it must have ceased altogether.

III. Bold as this statement is,—strange as it must sound to those who have persuaded themselves that the method of defending the principles of the Old Testament is to treat all heathen apprehensions of God as merely traditive or merely imaginary,—it is less startling than the words which follow them. We are so familiar with them,—they have so leavened the dialect of Christendom,—that we do not consider how awful they are in themselves, how much more remarkable they are for the place in which they were uttered, how they contradict some of our most approved religious and philosophical maxims. "*Though He is not far from every one of us. For in Him we live and move and have our being*." Oh, how often has the wish presented itself to many of us that we had never heard these words in our childhood!—we think they would burst upon us with such overpowering strength if we were listening to them for the first time. It is an ungrateful and a foolish wish. We have been influenced by them all our lives through, in ways we cannot conceive, and shall not know till the day that discovers all things. We might not have been more thrilled by them than any of the crowd were who stood about St. Paul in the Areopagus; they may break now through all the frost of custom; they may come on us like guilty things surprised by a presence that we have forgotten. But is there not something in them which we shrink from because we think it may mislead us into a dangerous Pantheism? Do we not say to ourselves, "That is an especial peril of this time. The passage is no doubt true, as it occurs in the Bible. But since it is liable to be perverted, *we* had better dwell upon some different announcement, however suitable that may have been for other ages, which were prone to another kind of error." Now consider. If there was a city in all the world which was exposed to the assaults of Pantheism, not in some other age, but in the very age when the Apostle visited it,—that city was assuredly Athens. Each form of idolatry, each form of speculation, was bearing towards this gulf; each, as it became weak, was sure to be absorbed in it. If St. Paul had no divine intimation of the fact, his discourses with the philosophers in the market-place must have made

him aware of it. He must have seen it in the very inscription which was the text of his discourse. The dedication to the Unknown God, —whether it only indicated a desire in a time of pestilence to invoke all imaginable or possible assistance,—whether it expressed a sense of some Being who could not be represented as demons or demigods were represented, equally declared that the mind of the nation was aiming at an all-inclusive worship, and that as one definite object after another lost its hold upon them, more and more would be drawn into a lazy acknowledgment of the vague and indefinite. With this conviction full on his mind, St. Paul uses the words, "*He is not far from every one of us; for in Him we live and move and are*."

I conclude, then, that St. Paul regarded this statement as the one great protest against Pantheism, and all other evil tendencies to which the Athenian was liable; a protest against it, because it was the full and distinct assertion of the truth which was underlying Pantheism, and which Pantheism was perverting; a protest against it, because no proclamation was so certain, if it was received, to inspire men with awe of that Personal Being whom Pantheism was denying. The Apostle then is the standing witness for the maxim which is applicable to all places and all times, that you can only combat any prevalent error by seeking for the divine principle of which it is the counterfeit. Till you do that, your cleverest scoffs and reasonings will all serve to strengthen, not to abate its virulence.

IV. At last the Apostle approaches one of the teachers whom we may suppose he wishes to confute. He speaks, indeed, not of a philosopher, but of a poet; but then poets in the latter days were fond of enunciating philosophical sentiments, as in the earlier days they had done so much to build up the popular mythology. And here is a sentiment of Aratus which may be turned to either account. It may justify the old Homeric notion of men having a divine parentage; it may assert the proud notion of sages, that men by wisdom can make themselves gods; "For we also are His offspring."

Surely, it might be said, the sentiment is all the more alarming because the singular number is used instead of the plural. To speak of a son of the Gods—of Apollo or Venus, was merely to use a phrase which most in that time would have felt to be a fable, or would have explained as a metaphor. To speak of *His* offspring was to mount into a higher region, and to assert for the poor frivolous people who cared only to tell or hear some new thing, that their origin was divine. Could you believe it?—St. Paul adopts the phrase in this aggravated sense; he indorses the words of the poet; he applies them not to his own countrymen, or some portion of his own countrymen, but to his heathen audience. He does not speak of some excepted persons among them; some who had arrived by any process at higher intuitions. He resorts to none of the qualifications which the writer of the words would probably himself have adopted. He looks out upon the jeering, laughing mass about him, and says, "We—you and I—also are His offspring; the offspring of that Unknown God, that God who made the heavens and the earth, and all things therein, whom I have been declaring to you."

V. He does not stop here. He builds an argument upon this mighty assumption. It is *the* argument against that idolatry which had pressed so heavily upon his spirit. Upon it he rests the soundness and reasonableness of the Second Commandment. "*Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device*." Do not say that this was an additional motive which he urges for their abandoning the tradition of their fathers, the habit of their city. It is the only motive. He cannot urge them to make that change which involves such a convulsion in the whole moral being, which cuts asunder so many links of old affection, if the doctrine of their poet is not true, if they have not a right to claim God as related to them, —God as, in the strictest, fullest sense, their Father. I say again, in the strictest, fullest sense; not in some vague sense, which is indeed Pantheistical, a sense which represents Him as the Father of all cattle and trees and flowers, and therefore their

Father. The argument would be utterly worthless and contemptible if that were his meaning. They might make the Godhead in the likeness of any object in nature,—they might mould Him according to their conceptions of any of those objects,—if that were all. It was because He was the Father of them, the Father of their spirits,—because they were spiritual beings created in His spiritual likeness, created to feel after Him and find Him,—it was therefore that the conceiving Him under any of these notions of theirs, the casting Him in any material shape, was so degrading and abominable. The whole burning indignation of the Jew against the gods of the hills and the groves comes forth in this assertion, which is nevertheless so full of tenderness for every heathen, and which could only have been uttered by one who believed that God had loved the whole world, and had sent His Son to take upon Him the nature of the dweller in Athens as much as of the dweller in Jerusalem.

VI. The tenderness to heathens,—the justification of God's ways to men in all ages,—the assertion of the ground upon which he had affirmed all to be of one flesh and blood,—comes out fully in the next passage of the discourse. "*And the times of this ignorance God winked at, but now He commandeth all men everywhere to repent*." I will not debate about the force of the word which we translate winked at, or inquire whether any better expression might have been found. No doubt it might have been an advantage to preserve the sentence in St. Paul's own form, by using a participle in the first clause. But at least we may be sure that this sentence does not contradict the Apostle's previous assertion, that God had not overlooked the different nations of the earth, so as not to order the bounds of their habitations, and to direct the search after Him; on the other hand, that it is incompatible with the headlong and ungodly conclusion which divines have often sanctioned respecting the condition of the heathen world, and the amount of guilt which was involved in its idolatry. St. Paul assuredly does not tell the Athenians what Tertullian's higher inspiration and later revelation enabled him to proclaim with absolute certainty, that their fathers were doomed to

hopeless perdition. That opinion which (it is said) urged the honest barbarian monarch to refuse baptism, was not thrust before the Greek; an entirely different one was suggested to him. But the message to the men of that generation was not less strong and decisive, because it involved no judgment upon previous generations. "*God commandeth you to repent*." "Since by me He tells you that the words of your poet are fulfilled,—that He has sent His Son to claim you as His offspring, by me He commands you to cast aside the gods of gold and silver, made by art and man's device; by me He bids you to turn round to Him and own Him as your Father. But not only by me. The message is to your consciences. The message comes straight from Him to them. He commands repentance. He gives repentance to all that will have it. If you are conscious of separation from Him who is so near to you, He destroys the separation. If you have felt after Him, and not been able to find Him, He will reveal Himself to you. The message is to all men everywhere. The separate gods, the material gods, shall not for ever tear the nations asunder. All in all nations are invited to become brothers with each other, by taking up their position as offspring of the same Father."

VII. But is not that call to repentance fortified by a threat of punishment? If it were, I should produce it, and dwell upon it; for I do not think we can warn people too much of the heavy punishment which they bring upon themselves, by continuing servants of material, sensual, unreal things, and by not taking up their rights as children of a gracious and righteous Father. But though I might like the word if it was in St. Paul's discourse, I cannot introduce it when it is not there. St. Paul speaks of *judgment*, not of *punishment*. He speaks of "*a day in which God will judge the world by that Man whom He hath ordained, whereof He hath given assurance in that He hath raised Him from the dead*." I am bound to say that the two modes of speaking are wide as the poles asunder, however in our carelessness we may confound them. To proclaim a judgment, is to proclaim an accurate discrimination of acts and characters. To proclaim a judgment of God, is to proclaim

that *He* will discriminate who knows characters and acts perfectly. To proclaim a judgment of God by that Man whom He has ordained, is to declare that He will apply to men that kind of measure which the Son of Man applied when He was upon earth. Now *He* said, "*It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for Chorazin and Bethsaida*." He preached a gospel to publicans and harlots. He said, "*Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees*." He said to His disciples, "*Judge not, that ye be not judged*." In the face of such language, how could St. Paul dare to stand up among the Athenians, and tell them that either they or their fathers would be cast off by God, who had not cast them off yet? How could he help telling them that there would assuredly be a judging and sifting of all nations and all men, inasmuch as the Son of Man, the risen Head of Nations and of Men, had come to bind them all to God,—to bind them all to each other? How could he help saying, "He whom you have been seeking for,—He who has been seeking for you,—will be revealed in the fulness of His glory. He will know what each nation has done in fulfilment of the purpose for which it was called out. He will know what each man has done to fulfil the purpose for which he was sent into the world. He will know who have followed the light which He gave them, and sought for Him; who have loved darkness rather than light, and have chosen death. I, Paul, can pass no judgment upon you or any one. I judge not my own self. But I know that that judgment will be according to the truth. For He who is truth,—He who, dying and rising again, has manifested the truth to men,—will be manifested in every man's conscience. Every eye shall see Him."

My brethren, I have endeavoured in this sermon to set before you two methods of presenting the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to men. I have not concealed from you—indeed you are all aware of it—that the first has very powerful supporters, that it puts itself forth as *the* logical, *the* safe, *the* orthodox method. I have been able to say nothing on behalf of the other, except that it was the method of that Apostle, who, as we affirm, was God's instrument for causing His light to shine

throughout the world. By the one course we silence objectors, joining, according to all precedents, in the same *auto da fé*, the representatives of the most diverse sects and schools, the most devout and the most scornful, the most earnest and the most frivolous. By the other, we claim all the most diverse sects and schools, the most devout and the most scornful, the most earnest and the most frivolous, as witnesses for the God and Father who would lead them all to His Son. By the one, we magnify immensely the skill of the particular dialectician who argues the case; we depress to the lowest point our common humanity. In the other, the man who pleads is nothing, but the race is glorified by its union with a crucified and ascended Lord. To the one method we are indebted for an exhibition of a vast amount of ingenious advocacy, of fine metaphysical reasoning; to the other we are indebted for the existence of a Christendom.

Such is the testimony of the past. How the future will speak we wait to learn. Nothing less is involved in the question, than whether the hundred and sixty millions in India shall be taught that all their mythology and all their philosophy is folly—or that God has sent His Son to claim them for His offspring; whether the masses of our own population who have been alienated from our Churches, shall be told that infidelity is false and foolish, because it holds out a hope that man may know something of the Infinite—or that God seeks that all should know Him, from the least to the greatest; whether each one of us shall accept every dogma of the Church and Bible because that is quite as likely to be true as anything else,—or shall continue to pray to Him who cannot be mocked, that He will give us in this world knowledge of His truth, and in the world to come life everlasting.

SERMON IV. THE MIRACLES

JOHN x. 37, 38.

> "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in Him."

LAST Sunday I compared the method which we commonly suppose to be the most ingenious and successful for the defence of Christ's Gospel and the confutation of its opponents, with that which was adopted by St. Paul, in his speech at Athens. I showed you that there was not a difference merely between them, but a direct, formal opposition,—one which could not be accounted for by any advantages which the Apostle possessed over us in the mightiness of his gifts, or which we possess over him in the fact of our being inheritors, for eighteen centuries, of the blessings that he proclaimed. If the modern course is right, his divine inspiration was only a means of leading him wrong; if he was right, we are showing that we have little appreciation of the treasures which he affirmed to be ours, by the measures which we take for the purpose of securing them against invaders.

The causes of this wide departure from the precedents which we profess to esteem most, is to be sought, I have maintained, in the entirely different force which he and we give to the word *Revelation* and the kindred word *Manifestation*. They are, as I have often observed to you, specially favourite words of St. Paul's,—words upon which the interpretation not of single passages but of whole Epistles depends. It could not be otherwise, seeing that the revelation of Christ to him was, he declares in the Epistle to the Galatians, that which enabled him to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. The records of his own life therefore—the very meaning of that conversion which we shall be considering this week, and by a necessary consequence the meaning

of the message which he delivered to the nations—are inseparably connected with his idea of Revelation. I think the more you pursue the words which express this idea through his letters, the more you will feel that he is rigidly accurate in the use of them; that the sense never changes; that Revelation is always with him the unveiling of a Person—and that Person the ground and Archetype of men, the source of all life and goodness in men not to the eye, but to the very man himself, to the Conscience, Heart, Will, Reason, which God has created to know Him, and be like Him. Or to take his own far better and bolder language,—that which we considered last Sunday,—that of which his Epistles contain the exposition and the rationale,—it is the revelation of Him "*in whom we live and move and are*," to creatures who are "*feeling after Him, if haply they may find Him*."

Now, if this idea of Revelation has been changed for another that is wholly unlike it,—if by Revelation *we* understand certain communications made to us by God, and which we cannot dispense with, because the very constitution which He has given us makes us incapable of knowing Him as he is, because by no possibility can there be an unveiling or discovery of His own nature, or character, or purposes to us,—the whole subject must be contemplated by us, and must be presented to others, in an aspect which it never assumes in St. Paul's writings and discourses, or in any part of the Old and New Testament. So that we are in the strange predicament of men fighting with prodigious zeal and prowess on behalf of the authority of books which, the moment we take them from their shelves and examine their contents, are found to set at nought the hypothesis upon which we have rested our apology for them. In establishing the necessity of *a* Revelation, we have done what we can to confute *the* Revelation of which these books testify.

When once such a theory about the nature of Revelation as this has been fully developed (and the unfortunate rage for apologetic literature in the Christian Church has always fostered it, while the faith, the practical life, the sufferings of Christians, have been a continual

protest against it),—when, I say, it has been fully developed, it will find, like jealousy, proofs strong as holy writ, proofs even drawn from holy writ, to confirm and justify it. Our Lord's miracles have been especially made to perform this office. 'They are,' it is said, 'upon the face of them, strange, exceptional acts. What were they for? Why are they recorded? Surely to make the mission of Christ credible. Once admit them, and you cannot doubt that He spoke with an authority which never belonged to any one else. Accept this authority, and whatever you find in the book, however much it seems at variance with your heart and reason, you will be bound to receive as divine.' I am not now considering the question, how far this mode of argument in our day has been successful in its intended purpose. I am not considering whether it has not kept back numbers from the faith which it recommends; I am not considering how far appeals to the intellect on the particular question of miracles are consistent with the demand for a suppression of the intellect afterwards; I merely desire to meet the question, For what purpose are these works of Christ, if not for the end these apologists have imagined? I will not answer them as they would answer me, in all cases except this, with an assumption of ignorance, 'How can we penetrate the designs of an infinite Being in any of His doings?' because I think the Scriptures and the Church have given the answer, and wish us to profit by it. They declare that the miracles were for the *manifestation* of Christ's glory. That is the very expression which the beloved Disciple uses respecting the miracle at the marriage-feast; for this reason the Church has chosen that story and the story of other miracles for the Gospels on the Sundays after Epiphany. They are not, according to this teaching, arguments to convince the understanding that it ought to suspend its own proper exercises; they are unveilings or manifestations to the whole man, of the nature, character, mind, of the Son of Man; and therefore, as He shows us in the passage of which my text forms a part, of the nature, character, mind, of the Father who sent Him.

I. Our Lord says, in the words I have taken, "*If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not*." Did you think St. Paul's words at Athens very inconsistent with some of our current notions? But how much more startling are these! How continually we are told that we are evincing the greatest irreverence, that we are proving ourselves ignorant of the limitations of our own minds, and of the distance between the Divine nature and ours, if we presume to consider whether such and such acts have a divine quality in them, or one that is the reverse of divine. I trust and believe that those who speak this language are utterly inconsistent with themselves. I am satisfied—indeed, I know for certain—that they talk of many of the acts attributed to Siva and Vishnu, and to the gods of the classical mythology, as evil and hateful, and therefore as having no savour of divinity in them. Where did they learn that language? Was it not in the book which told them that God is a righteous Being, just and without iniquity? Have we not learnt it by those reasonings of God with His creatures about the madness and folly of worshipping stocks and stones, about the wickedness of pouring out drink-offerings to false and evil beings? Have we not learnt it from those chapters of Isaiah which we are reading in these Epiphany weeks, those which declare that He is setting forth His true Image, the Image of perfect gentleness and meekness, to confound all the dark images which men have made of Him? And yet, when we come back to the school in which we have received all these lessons, and are assailed by doubters of our own land with the assertion that such and such words or acts or habits of mind should not be attributed to a Divine Being,—instead of asking ourselves, and encouraging them to ask, whether these representations of Him are actually in the Holy Book, or whether the objector has rightly understood them, or whether they really outrage his conscience, as he fancies they do,—we stop him with a preliminary denial of his right to make the inquiry at all. From some high logical or theological tribunal, we pronounce that there is no test in man for ascertaining what is right or wrong in One who claims to be above man; that he may exercise all his faculties in ascertaining whether a

certain book has probable claims to be regarded as coming from an infinite and omnipotent Being, none of them in ascertaining what manner of Being He is from whom we say it has come. Has not the disputer a right to turn upon us and say, "All that may be true enough; I dare say it is. It confirms many of my suspicions; it strengthens me in my growing atheism. But how happened it that your logic and your theology fell asleep when you were talking about Vishnu and Siva and Jupiter?"

Now to all this strange and contradictory talk, I oppose not some conclusions of my own reason, but the words of Christ himself, "*If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not*." Here was a distinct appeal to something in man which *could* recognize whether the works He did were the works of His Father or not. That appeal He was making to men through His whole life upon earth; in those *good* works—so He calls them—which we have changed into mere exercises of irregular power, into violations of the order which He had himself established.

Take, for example, the work at Cana, which the Church brought before us last Sunday. We are told by St. John, who must have witnessed it, that in it Christ manifested forth His glory to His disciples. Of course he means us to recollect his own words in the previous chapter, "*We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father*," which was fullness of grace and truth. A Man was sitting in the midst of them, sharing their joy, feeling with them. He manifested Himself to them as the source of that joy. A change wrought calmly, secretly, unobtrusively, unknown to those whom it would have startled most if they had known it, gave them a sense of creative power such as they had never had before. The occasion was common and earthly. The gift was the gift of an ordinary thing, though of one which symbolized life and gladness. It is in little things, in particulars, that the laws of a universe reveal themselves. The unfolding of a flower may teach us more of the birth and growth of all things than we can obtain by reflecting on the whole Cosmos. And in this one act of changing the water into wine at the marriage-feast, the sense of all good things

coming down through a Brother, from a Father, may have been more profoundly awakened in the minds of those fishermen, than it had been awakened in all kings and prophets before them. From what material conceptions of Creation may it not have delivered them! How they may have risen to the perception, if not at once, yet through the discipline of after-years acting upon that one event, of a Word who giveth life!

That, I think, was in the truest sense a *manifestation*. We may confidently apply our Lord's test to it. If it had not come to the Disciples as a work of the Father, they would not have believed on the Son of Man. They might have believed on a great enchanter,—in one who could play with the powers of nature. They would not have believed in a Lord of their hearts and reins; they would not have believed in a King of nature and of man; they would not have believed in One of whose fullness all had received, and grace for grace.

Take again those acts of healing which have been brought before us in the Gospel today. The first was wrought on behalf of a leper, who met our Lord as He came down from the Mount. The people who heard His discourse on that Mount said, "*He speaketh as one having authority, and not as the Scribes*. He speaks like a King, like one who knows the Law and the Lawgiver, not like one who has to spell the meaning of it out of books." The leper confessed the same fact. "*Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean*. Thou hast authority; I see that. Thou art the King over men, over me. And Thou hast spoken of a Father who cares for His children, who cares for the unthankful and evil. That has been the burden of thy discourse. Wilt thou not then have regard even to an outcast from the society of men, to one who proclaims himself unclean? Others may cut him off, but wilt thou?" The answer, "*I will; be thou clean*," is assuredly an assertion of the authority which the leper had ascribed to Him. He assumes a kingly right over the body of this man—a right to restore its health. But so far is He from trying to separate that act of healing from the order of God's government and kingdom, that He sends the man to the priest, the ordinary and

appointed judge in cases of leprosy. He is to prove, by the recognized outward sign, that the inward cure has taken effect. He is to offer the gift which the law has prescribed. Here is then not a King now for the first time installed in that office, now for the first time exercising its noblest functions. Here is the manifestation of Him whose goings-forth have been from everlasting; a revelation of Him from whom all powers and methods of healing have been derived. Most strictly then is He fulfilling His own words, "*If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not*. If my works are less regular, orderly, inward, than those of Him who governs all things, who renews the life of all things and all men day by day, *believe me not*. If my works are not works of grace and truth, works which bear witness of a Father who is full of grace and truth, of a Father who is not the destroyer but the restorer of men, who is pursuing them into all the secret places of their sorrow and misery to make them right, *believe me not*."

This manifestation is the proper preparation for the next, of which I have spoken to you more than once. I will not dwell upon it in reference to the Centurion's training in the Roman camp, to the lessons he had learnt there of obedience and government, and the power of words to subdue physical strength and hold multitudes in subjection. I would speak of it as the typical instance of those works of healing which demanded faith, and evoked a faith in the persons who were benefited by them. The notion we have formed of miracles and their object leads us to suppose that this faith was in a Person presented to the eye, and able to do marvels that had never been done before. Our Lord selects, as *His* instance of lively faith, a man who cared nothing for the sight or touch, who confessed an invisible might, who believed that if Christ spoke the word, his servant would be healed. May we not affirm then, without hesitation, that the highest blessing which our Lord conferred on palsied, leprous, blind, deaf, dead men, was that He awakened in them a trust which raised them above what they saw—above themselves? Was not the difference between the nine who went their way, and the one who returned to give glory to God,

precisely this, that they received a bodily cure no less perfect than he did, but that he was saved out of his selfishness and ignorance of God, because he perceived that Jesus was doing His Father's works? This, I think, has been the interpretation of earnest readers; it may almost be called the traditional interpretation of Christendom. If we would but hold it consistently,—if, in the case of this miracle or of any other, we would but accept the lessons which it has carried home to suffering and lonely people in all parts of the world,—if we would but consider those lessons worth all the apologies that ever have been written, or ever shall be written, we should be less afraid of taking the words of the Son of God as they stand,—we should not think it dangerous to apply His own test to His own works.

I reserve the consideration of one of these works, that of restoring the man possessed with the devils, for next week, because it strikes directly at one of the leading and most effective reasons for inventing another test than our Lord's, and for discarding that. The Church has connected with that narrative the one respecting the passage over the Lake of Galilee, when Jesus said to the storm, "Peace, be still." There is a great beauty, which all readers have felt, in the association of the tumults in nature with the tumults of the human spirit. There is more than beauty: there is the deepest practical benefit in considering wherein they are alike, wherein they differ, why the same monarch must have dominion over both. I should gladly use the Gospel of next Sunday to suggest this comparison, but as I wish to fix your minds upon the cure of the demoniac for its own sake, I will refer for one moment to the first story now, as an additional illustration of the doctrine, "*If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not*." The remark can scarcely have failed to strike any one, that our Lord's acts of power do, in a very wonderful manner, gather up the different functions which those who were seeking God, if haply they might feel after Him and find Him, had attributed to separate divinities. Little as the Jews knew of the names of Dionysus, Demeter, Aesculapius, Phoebus, they, like all other people, *felt* as if some distinct benefactor must be concerned

in the gift of the wine that made glad the heart, of the common bread, of bodily health, of the light in the eye or understanding. And so, as the disciples were to preach a Gospel to all nations, acts which testified of this union of powers were the most perfect preparation they could receive—initiating them into the faiths of different races, making them in the fullest sense assertors of the unity whereof their own was the appointed witness. To realize, by one special instance, in whose hand was the trident of the seas, was surely a part of this practical discipline which they would appreciate hereafter. But they would only appreciate it hereafter, because the impression He made on them at the moment was not the impression of a wonder-worker, who was exhibiting his power in producing startling effects and a sudden excitement, but of a calm Ruler, the upholder and restorer of peace and order. It was a work which revealed Him who had fixed the bounds of earth and sea. It was a work which, beneath the Creator of the world, revealed the Father of men.

II. The first part of my text is negative,—"*If this is not so, believe me not.*" The second is positive; it is full of instruction, I think also of encouragement. "*But if I do, though you believe not me, believe the works*." In general, perhaps, the order was reversed. Jesus was recognized first by the Galilean fishermen as the Teacher they had craved for; to whom the prophets and John, the chief of the prophets, had pointed them; then the works became fuller manifestations of His nature and His dominion. The Centurion had learnt his need of One who could command men by a word, as he commanded the soldiers that were under him; the power which sent away his servant's palsy appeared to be the proper endowment of such a Ruler. But our Lord speaks of cases in which a belief in the works may precede a belief in Him, and may lead to it. The works, He says, may lead men to *know*—actually to *know*—that the Father is in Him, and that He is in the Father. What! to know this? Is not this the deepest mystery of the Christian faith? Must it not be received as a dogma transmitted from other ages, very galling to the reason, but against which it cannot remonstrate, because it has

no capacity for dealing with the Infinite? I can only repeat our Lord's words. He says that men who believe the works as works of His Father, even before they have learnt to believe Him, may come to know this truth. And suppose it were a truth—suppose this mystery did underlie the universe, as we in our creeds profess that it does,—and suppose that the Church is right in treating these works as divine manifestations, —must it not be so? Could they be divine manifestations, and not manifestations of this divine relation? Could men feel them as divine, because the expression of the highest grace and truth,—feel them as human, because coming with all human grace and truth,—and not confess a Father and Son, with an inward reality and certainty such as no mere dogma or tradition ever earned for itself, ever pretends to earn for itself?

And yet, brethren, we fear to let our Lord's miracles be exposed to a trial which He claimed for them and to which such a promise as this is attached! We think it safer to stifle all examination into their moral character, lest we should put in hazard the authority of the documents which contain them! Oh, poor and heartless policy, which must produce the results of all policy that is not based on truth! No doubt, if you invite men to say whether the miracles of Christ have not in them the tokens of all grace and truth,—are not such signs of His power as a Father would give to His children,—you permit them to state their doubts, their difficulties, their suspicions. Do you not wish that they should? Do you not know that there is danger, incalculable danger, in their quelling these doubts, difficulties, suspicions,—in their not bringing them forth to the light of day? If some are merely idle doubts, doubts suggested by the spirit of scorn, are there not some which God has awakened, that He may satisfy them? Dare you crush those? Can you distinguish the tares from the wheat? Cannot you trust God to do it? The truth must be spoken—our modern way of meeting objections nourishes and justifies all the pride and contempt which prompts the worst of them; only hinders those from coming forth

which really demand a solution, which, if there is any moral standard for man, any moral sense in man, will find one.

And while we consider the effect we may produce on others, let us not forget the reaction upon ourselves. History, not speculation, supplies us with an awful warning. We know, on the testimony of Evangelists and Apostles, that there were men—religious men eager to crush all doubt respecting the authority of the Scriptures; quite ready to confess miracles that were merely miracles of power. These men refused our Lord's test. They would not ask whether His works were good, whether they came from the Father. They did not believe they had any faculties for entering on that inquiry. And so they denied both the Father and the Son; so they came to believe that Christ healed the sick, stilled the winds and waves, preached glad tidings to the poor, under the inspiration of Beelzebub, the prince of the devils.

SERMON V. CASTING OUT THE EVIL SPIRIT

LUKE viii. 35.

> "Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid."

I HAVE chosen a passage from St. Luke's version of the story which we read in the Gospel of today. In doing so I am aware that I must remind you of a conspicuous variation in the Evangelists who report it. St. Matthew speaks of two men possessed with devils; St. Mark and St. Luke, only of one. The peculiarity of the incidents, and the strict agreement of the geography, leave no doubt that the miracle to which they refer is the same. Here therefore would be a legitimate subject for examination, which, if it were honestly conducted, must lead to good. The only danger in such cases is the concealment of difficulties, or the distortion of evidence for the purpose of removing them.

Another question is raised by the narrative, which may receive illustration from the physician as well as the practical divine, each helping to clear the mind and remove the prejudices of the other. Are there such cases as are described here, in modern times, or were they confined to the age of the Evangelists? Which argument can hardly fail to introduce the whole controversy respecting the existence and influence of evil spirits.

It is not because I would shun either of these lines of thought that I choose that one which the Church suggests to us by her use of the story in this season of the year. The Gospel for today is intended, no doubt, to give us another of the Epiphanies or Manifestations of Christ. I do not think we shall find such a manifestation less, whichever Evangelist

we follow. One as much as another will assist us in the inquiry in which I am engaged: "What, according to the writers of the New Testament, is Revelation or Manifestation?" If we keep that problem steadily before us, I do not despair of our finding some light upon the others. At all events, we shall not be able to look upon them as mere cruxes and trivialities which may be left to critics; they will assume a human significance and grandeur.

I. Whatever differences may exist between the Evangelists, there is none as to the character of the malady which affected the one man or the two. All the symptoms of outrageous madness are described, let the cause of it be what it may. "*They came out of the tombs*," says St. Matthew; "*they were exceeding fierce; no man could pass by that way*." St. Mark, speaking only of a single maniac, adds some more lines to the description. "*No one could bind him, no, not with chains. Because he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces; neither could any man tame him. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying and cutting himself with stones*." St. Luke says, "*He wore no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs*." Surely as clear and full a picture of madness as was ever painted.

II. None of these signs are in themselves rare; we connect them with facts we have known, with sights we have seen. If there were no provision for the care of the insane, there is nothing in the conditions of modern civilization which would make it impossible or unlikely that such objects as those which presented themselves to our Lord in the country of the Gergesenes, should encounter us in England. But again, the Evangelists are agreed as to the origin of this fury. "The men," says St. Matthew, "were possessed with devils." "He had an *unclean* spirit," say St. Mark and St. Luke. They do not however abandon the plural number. The answer, "*Our name is Legion*," occurs in both. If this language is disagreeable to our ears, we cannot rid ourselves of it by comparing the documents. It stands out as strong and clear in one as the other. I need scarcely remind you that it does not belong to a single story or to ten stories. It is characteristic of the Gospels as such. It is

not, as I have observed to you before, characteristic of them *as well as* of the Old Testament books. It distinguishes them from those books. The allusions to evil spirits are rare in the one, continual in the other.

III. In another point there is no diversity. It is that for the sake of which I am referring to the story, that which has given it a place among the Epiphany services. "*What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? Art thou come hither to torment us*?" is St. Matthew's account of the voice which met our Lord when he approached the madman. "*What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God that thou torment me not*," is St. Mark's version. St. Luke substitutes "*I beseech thee*" for "*I adjure thee*;" otherwise he nearly repeats St. Mark. Here again the expressions are familiar to us. We meet them under varieties of form in other narrations. Evil spirits are said always to regard Jesus as their tormentor, because He is come to deliver a man from their dominion.

IV. That which distinguishes this story from others of the like kind —the entrance of the devils into the herd of swine—is also dwelt upon carefully and minutely by each of the Evangelists. However we explain it, we cannot treat it as an interpolation: and it is an evidently hopeless experiment to look for some particulars in one of the three narratives, which may induce us to hold by that as the least difficult.

V. Finally, though the passage I have taken out of St. Luke, which declares the ultimate effect of our Lord's command, has nothing exactly corresponding to it in St. Matthew, it is evidently taken for granted in his account. The men, being delivered from the tyrants that possessed them, would of course be clothed and in their right mind. I wish to keep that result in recollection, therefore I have set it before you in express words; I might have reached it just as well by inference from the first Gospel.

Taking the story then as it stands, and not having any secret for changing it from an account of spiritual bondage and spiritual emancipation into something else, I cannot doubt that a number of persons in our day—of intelligent and devout persons—will turn from it with considerable annoyance and discontent. Any preacher who recalls his

own feelings about it at some time or other of his life, will not, I should think, be inclined to judge harshly of such objectors. Least of all—unless his remembrances are of a rare and peculiar kind, or his present convictions very feeble—will he desire that their doubts should not be frankly stated, should not be fully confronted with the facts of experience as well as with the words of Scripture. For if we have any of us been led to accept this record, not coldly and reluctantly, but as one which we could not bear to part with, which has been a strength and help to us in dark hours, the process, I suppose, has been something of this kind. Beginning to contemplate the subject quietly and at a distance, with very great indisposition to compromise his reputation for sense,—asking himself what sort of maniac the man described in the Gospels might be, and what natural way of accounting for his frenzy there might be found,—the inquirer has suddenly had the thought thrust upon him, "What if *thou* art that man? What if the strange fact that he was a spiritual being is a fact that is common to him and to thee? What if that other strange fact, that his spirit was under the yoke of unlawful intruders, of cruel usurpers, may also explain what thou hast known in thyself, and which thou couldst very ill explain? Hast thou not been conscious of a subjection to the tyranny, not of one ruler, but of divided, contradictory rulers? Is not their name Legion? Thou hast been wont to speak of them as impulses, motives, principles: has that language made the fact clearer? They are not visible; they assail thy own very self; from them have come foul and cruel thoughts and inspirations. Is it not horrible to think they *are* thyself, that there is no distinction between them and thee? Is it not a lie to think so? Whether thou hast resisted them, whether thou hast obeyed, do not the very names Resistance, Obedience, imply that they are not thyself? But was there no other that thou wast resisting when thou wast obeying them? Was there no other that thou wast obeying when thou wast resisting them? What says thy conscience? Does it witness of none such? Has He never manifested Himself to thee yet? Is He not manifesting Himself to thee now? In all thy thoughts of

good, in all thy struggles with evil, is He not manifesting Himself to thee? And Who else was it that manifested Himself to the maniac in the country of the Gadarenes? Was not that a crucial instance of His nature and His power? Was He not showing His purpose of claiming a spirit that had sunk into the lowest and bitterest bondage? Was not He showing that there are no usurpers over the human spirit so mighty that He cannot overcome them?"

I imagine that a person who has gone so far as this, will find in the final incident of the narrative something to cause him trembling rather than to affront his taste. He will be disposed to say, "Yes! as I see in that fierce madman a man of my flesh and blood,—such a man as I might become if a mightier than I was not upholding me, —so I cannot deny that those swine running violently down a steep place till they are choked in the sea, do set before me the liveliest image of the effect: those powers which have swayed me, which are always seeking to sway me, would produce if they were transferred to mere brute natures. They show me that we do not sink *merely* into a condition below humanity when evil has the mastery over us; that the depraved Will carries into its degradation a malignity which gives the animal what it has not of its own. Surely a lesson which a divine Teacher would desire to impart, by such an example as the Gospels speak of, to those whom He came to claim as spiritual beings! For," he will go on, "when one looks at the New Testament again, with the light thrown upon it from experience, do not I perceive that this is the very character in which Christ is presented, not in one or two passages, but throughout? What does it mean, that He baptizes with the Spirit? What means the history of the Temptation? What means every discourse, miracle, parable? Are they not all testifying of One who is come to debate the possession of the man, not with flesh and blood enemies, but with principalities and powers that are assaulting, if not holding, the very citadel of his being? Why does He speak of the strong man armed, keeping the house in peace? Why does He speak

of the stronger than he, who takes from him all the armour wherein he trusted, and spoils his goods?"

Now, I repeat it, a man who has learnt by this process of thought, or by any process of thought like this, to accept the narrative of the Demoniacs without change or qualification, cannot be offended with any one who hesitates about it, nay, who fights every step of his way before he will surrender his objections to it. I apprehend that his experience of such a state of mind will make him far more than tolerant of it. There are many feelings connected with it which he would not for the world eradicate, because they are some of the greatest confirmations of his own faith on this very subject. For instance, the dread of Superstition and Fanaticism. The more deep this dread is,—the more a man regards superstition and fanaticism as horrible evils into which by God's help he will not sink, and which it would be agony to suspect in the Son of Man,—the more hope, it seems to me, there is that he will take in this story in the length and breadth of it. For the direst kind of Superstition is that which connects evil with the Nature of God, and the next direst kind is that which identifies the man himself with evil. And here both are undermined from the foundation. God manifests Himself in conflict with the Evil Spirit in his essence, and in all the forms he may take. God manifests Himself in the very act of distinguishing the man from the evil which has possessed him. The direst fanaticism is that which assumes the being of any man to be the proper habitation of evil spirits. And the second most evil form is, that which supposes that certain special men have a right to claim the Spirit of God as theirs in a sense in which ordinary men may not claim it. And all the petty forms of fanaticism wherein it passes into triviality, such as abound in our day, have their root in the notion that spiritual powers and influences are light topics, for drawing-room gossip. Here at once each of these shapes of fanaticism is laid bare. The Spirit of Christ meets the Unclean Spirit in what appears his last, securest, most legitimate hold, and declares that there he has no right. The maniac is as fit to be the receptacle of His power and inspiration as the highest

saint. The whole transaction is full of solemnity and awe; so that if it be true, and have come from the source of Truth, the stories with which our ears are dinned must be not ridiculous but loathsome.

For all these reasons, then, a believer in the narrative will be exceedingly afraid of using even what may seem to him fair methods of argument for the sake of dispelling scepticism upon it. Something perhaps he may do by calmly stating his own conviction and how he has been led to it. But he cannot be displeased if he should not be the means of imparting that conviction to any other mind. If it has been given him, as he thinks it has, he can trust One who knows all the passages and channels of His creatures' hearts to send it them as they want it. He knows that so far as he tries to drive it home by arts of persuasion or of ridicule or of terror, because it is his, so far he shall be marring the effect of the divine arguments which are so much subtler, and penetrate so much deeper, and carry with them such a different kind of compulsion.

These conclusions are inevitable for a person who regards this story as a revelation of Christ himself, and of His dealings with the human spirit. But I have told you in former sermons that an entirely different notion of revelation from this has been proclaimed in our day as the only one which is consistent with Christian orthodoxy and with common sense. To represent it as the discovery of the true God in the person of His Son, to a creature capable of knowing Him, incapable of freedom and peace without the knowledge of Him, is to incur I scarcely can say what frightful charges. Mysticism is on the face of such a statement; Rationalism lies beneath it; it betrays a profound and fatal ignorance of the nature which God has given us, which can never come into near and close contact with the Eternal, which can only abstract some feeble notion of that from the things of time and sense. What then is Revelation, if not this? It contains, we are told, lessons which it is necessary for us to receive,—which God wishes us to receive, —because though they are not in any strict sense manifestations of what He is, they are necessary for the regulation of our lives. Here at

last is something positive. We are not merely told by what standard we *cannot* judge of that which is presented to us. We know what its office is. Be it so. Then let us consider what sort of Revelation has or has not fulfilled that office.

I would still hold fast to the Scriptures in entering upon this inquiry. I would begin with this story of the Demoniac. I am not now engaged with objectors to it, but with those who say that, being a part of the Bible, it is to be received like any other part; that to raise any cavils against it, or to put any unliteral sense upon it, is perilous. Here then is a case of moral regulation. A man who was wild and furious becomes calm and orderly. He sits at the feet of Jesus clothed and in his right mind. What has wrought this mighty change? Is it the announcement to him of some law which God has laid down for his creatures? Is it the announcement of some punishment which will follow the breach of that law in some other world? Is it a series of sound ethical maxims? Is it injunctions about prayer to God or self-government? Is it anything whatever which we comprehend under the ordinary notion of moral discipline? All these regulations were desirable, assuredly, for a man in the condition of the maniac. But common sense pronounced them ridiculous. It was obvious that they could take no effect; that they must be wasted. Far more direct and simple methods were resorted to. He was chained. But that was as ineffectual a scheme of regulation as the other. The fetters were burst asunder, the chains were broken. It is just when all mere regulations, divine and human, are found absolutely vain to restrain him from being the curse and plague of his fellow-men that Christ is said to have met the man himself, to have entered into colloquy with that which could hear no laws, could be restrained by no force,—to have emancipated and reformed that. And here is the result: not a new excitement substituted for the old; not religious paroxysms taking the place of other paroxysms, but quietness and order: he is in his right mind.

Here is one instance, and, as I have shown already, a type-instance, of Christ's acts towards a class of human creatures. But let us pass to

a case of a directly opposite kind. Saul of Tarsus, instead of being a maniac, is the most correct of men, reverencing the law,—as touching all the commandments which are contained in it, blameless. He has been trained to regard the Revelation given to his fathers as a regulative one. Precisely in that character it has been set before him by the doctors at Jerusalem. The thought of its being anything but this,—of its being in any sense an unveiling of God himself,—the promise of a more perfect unveiling,—may now and then have disturbed him as he pored over some passage in the Psalms or the Prophets. But he has dismissed it—angrily dismissed it. God has been pleased to give his nation a revelation. It consists mainly of a law, though it has also pleased God, in compassion to the ignorance of His creatures, to set before also a system of worship and sacrifices which it would be very unsafe and criminal for them to neglect. He hears of a set of men who are apparently teaching another doctrine than this; who, if he has not mistaken them, proclaim that a crucified man has manifested or unveiled the Divine Being to men. All regulations, all limitations, have been burst through; these wretched fanatics are actually assuming that the Invisible has come nigh to His creatures,—that there is a way by which they may ascend to him. St. Stephen's speech perhaps first discovers to him the extent of their departure from all the maxims which he holds sacred. There every step in the Jewish History is treated as a step towards the revelation of that Just One of whom his countrymen had been the betrayers and murderers. There those countrymen are charged with having resisted the Holy Ghost, who in all ages has been striving with them. There the vision of a Son of Man at the right-hand of God is openly announced in language which could be nothing less than blasphemy in the ears of one who looked on God as immeasurably distant from man. He becomes more and more furious; still it is fury against the opposers of a regulative Revelation. Then comes the crisis in his life. That regulative Revelation,—the system of laws, precepts, ordinances, which God Himself has appointed for the good of his nation,—prove utterly ineffectual; instead of their helping him

or raising him, he finds himself crushed under the weight of them. It is only when the same Lord who bade the unclean spirit depart out of the maniac in the country of the Gadarenes, claims to be the Lord and Deliverer of his spirit, that he becomes clothed and in his right mind.

What kind of work he did then, what sort of revelation of God he proclaimed in the city which was most unlike Jerusalem in its speculations and its worship, I considered in a former sermon. And if we followed up the discourse there by an examination of his Epistles, we should come, I think to these two conclusions:—1. That he is everywhere announcing an actual revelation and manifestation of God's righteousness to the spirit of man as the deliverance from a mere law—a regulative Revelation—which had never reached, which never could reach, the spirit of man. 2. That he speaks of the Spirit of God as holding converse, not with the spirit of the maniac in the country of the Gadarenes, not with the spirit of him, the Apostle of the Gentiles, but with the spirit of man, from generation to generation; that he regards the assurance that such a Spirit shall be with us, witnessing to us, sustaining us, making us partakers of the Divine Nature, as the great assurance of the Gospel, apart from which it would have no power whatever to improve the lives of men or the condition of the world.

Brethren, was St. Paul right or wrong in this anticipation? Has the Gospel of Christ produced any, even the slightest, amelioration in human society, except so far as it has carried this message home to the hearts of human beings? It has done singularly little in the way of outward regulation. It sent forth no decrees against gladiatorial exhibitions, against polygamy, against slavery. If it has wrought, in any period of its existence, any cure of these evils,—if it has given any new face to society,—it is because a voice was saying to the unclean spirit that had possessed it, "Get thee out;" because Christ himself was felt to be wrestling with that spirit and overcoming it. So has it been with every man. In the latest ages as in the first, there have been messages of deliverance to the outcast maniacs who could not be

bound with chains; but through whomsoever they have come, through the benevolent physician or the sympathizing sister of charity, they have been recognitions of a better spirit struggling with the evil spirit; they have been tokens from Christ that He can set free the captive and put down the oppressor. Decent men have been changed in later times, as in earlier times, from self-satisfied and bitter haters into humble Christians, into zealous apostles of goodwill to men. But in every case the change has been preceded by the discovery of the inefficiency of all mere regulations, in whatever form they might come,—as laws of earth or laws of Heaven,—to make a true man. It has taken place when the heart has owned a Son of God to whom it had been crying, "*What have I to do with thee? Art thou come to torment me*?" as a friend and deliverer. It has come when the heart has perceived that the power which it had thought far away, in Heaven or Hell, is nigh to it. It has come when the man has confessed that the Righteous God, seeing that he had no righteousness of his own, was clothing him with the righteousness which none can comprehend, which every spiritual being is created to apprehend.

I believe, brethren, it is not true of the Gospel of Christ, that if you take from it its original character,—if you strip it of those claims which Apostles and Martyrs put forth in its behalf,—it may challenge respect on a lower ground, it may claim a sort of useful and recognized position for itself among the other agents of civilization. I know such an opinion prevails in many minds. They say that

> "Reft of a crown, it still may share the feast."

You will find it is not so. You will find that if we dare not proclaim Christ as the Deliverer of the spirit of man from its bondage,—if we dare not say that He has come actually to reveal God's righteousness to men,—we had better cease to speak of Him at all. For it is such a one that men want; it is for such a one that in their inmost hearts, even when their language against the Son of Man is loudest, they are crying. It was so in former ages; it is so now. It was so among the most

miserable and the most respectable; it is so still. If preachers of the Gospel do not answer the cry,—if they only represent it as one of the regulative processes that are at work in society,—it will be felt to be the feeblest of all these processes; the chain and the prisonhouse will be stronger.

Brethren, the lesson is written in broad and deep characters upon our annals; it is written in characters of blood. I may dare to speak to you, on this thirtieth of January at all events, not of other men's sins, but of our own. We are not commanded any longer to forget the beam in our eye that we may search for the mote in our brother's eye. The Church of England has herself to blame for the event which this day commemorates, because she did not heed that groan which was deep before it became loud: "Give us a Gospel which speaks to us as spirits, for spirits we are. Do not merely deal with us as creatures of time and sense. Do not soothe us with shows, or coerce us with rules and punishments. Tell us if the Eternal has come near to us. Tell us if we may know Him." The voice was not understood. It was supposed that they who uttered it were maniacs, and that chains might bind them. It was supposed that a regulative Revelation, if it were duly proclaimed, would satisfy all reasonable wishes. The experiment was made; you know how it succeeded.

Alas, the fearful lesson of this day was not enough for our warning! In the following century there was again the cry for a Revelation that should reach the spirits of men, that should present Christ to them as an actual Deliverer from evil spirits, claiming maniacs, robbers, outlaws, for sons of God. There was evidence—clear, undoubted evidence—that those who proclaimed Him in that character, did leave men whom they found possessed with unclean spirits, clothed, and in their right mind. There was evidence as clear and undoubted that effects the opposite of these were the result of their preaching; that fanaticism often followed it—sometimes hypocrisy. These facts were heeded, the others not. The conclusion was drawn, that a preaching which spoke of God as actually coming near to man, of a Spirit

working upon his spirit, was not favourable to morality. A regulative Revelation must be proclaimed instead of this, a revelation of things which it was fitting to believe and fitting to do, stamped with the Divine authority, but bearing no witness that man is intended with open face to behold the glory of God, and to be changed into His image. Has that attempt succeeded better than the other? Has not Methodism vanquished you, as Puritanism vanquished you before? Have not you been obliged to adopt its phrases, even some of the phrases which were most reasonably charged with leading to mischievous results, because it proved itself more strong and effectual over men's minds than any mere regulative Revelation ever was or ever can be?

Brethren, must this lesson also be wasted upon us? We have not indeed the same circumstances to deal with that we had in the seventeenth century or in the eighteenth. But we have men to deal with still,—men of all different classes, the criminal and the respectable, the sane and the maniac. Oh! shall we try again that old and worn-out experiment which has proved so helpless with them all? Shall we argue with men about the wickedness and folly of their unbelief? Shall we tell them how they may regulate themselves so that they may present a comely face to the world, distracted by no tumults, perplexed by no doubts? Or shall we speak to them as the Church speaks to them, declaring that God has verily manifested Himself, not to the eye, but to the spirit, and that His spirit is working with their spirits that they may be clean and pure within? Oh! if we could but proclaim that message to men, what would nicknames signify to us? Surely we might bear to be called Mystics or Rationalists or madmen or atheists,—all which titles have been bestowed upon Apostles and Martyrs,—if we could but be Christ's instruments in casting an evil spirit out of the age; if we could but bring one man who has been possessed with a legion of them, to sit at His feet clothed and in a right mind!

SERMON VI. CHRIST'S PARABLES

MATTHEW xiii. 14-17.

"And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing, see not; and hearing, they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: for this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them."

MANY have given their answer to the question why our Lord spoke in parables. Owing, it has been said, to the limitations of the human intellect, it is impossible for us really to know anything of divine, eternal things; they can only be presented to us through very imperfect likenesses derived from nature or the transactions of men. That is a general reason applicable to one human being as much as another. Then there is a special reason, drawn from the circumstances of our Lord's life on earth. He was instructing ignorant fishermen. Such wisdom as it was possible for men of this class to receive might, it is said, be expected to reach them best through stories and apologues.

Or thirdly: Why should not the parables be veils purposely contrived to hide sacred truths from the gaze of the profane multitude?

The Disciples were not less perplexed than any in later times have been on this subject. They took what appeared to them the simplest mode of freeing themselves from the perplexity. They said to our Lord, "*Why speakest thou to them in parables*?" He replied at once. The answer is contained in the passage I have read to you. Let us consider how far it accords with any of those we have invented for ourselves.

I. "*To you*," *He says*, "*it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven*." I need not remind you to whom He is speaking. They were those ignorant fishermen for whose sake He is supposed to have devised this kind of teaching. They are told expressly that they can dispense with it, that they are capable of a high knowledge. Yes, knowledge. He says it is given them to *know* the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven. Do not let us dismiss that phrase till we have examined it. We oppose the Kingdom of Heaven to the Kingdom of Earth. We call the one eternal, the other temporal or transitory. That is ordinary language; none, whatever their theory may be, object to it. Only they say: What is eternal is mysterious, inconceivable. Our Lord admits that it is. He speaks of *mysteries*. But He speaks of knowing mysteries. He means apparently what St. Paul meant when he says, "*Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him*." But He affirms that the Disciples—taken from the commonest order of men, sharing in their ignorance—have a capacity for *knowing* these mysteries, these eternal things which cannot be conceived.

Does it strike you that there is a force in the word 'given,' which I have neglected? Does it seem to you to take these simple men out of the common roll of men, and to signify that they had a privilege altogether special, not the least appertaining to their race? "*To you it is given; to them it is not given*." I admit all the value of the expression. It is of incalculable importance for the understanding of this passage, —and of every passage in the New Testament. But before you decide

that it can bear that sense which has just been suggested, reflect on the next sentence.

II. "*For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath*." Here a Universal Law is announced as the explanation of that gift to the Disciples, and of the difference between them and others. *Whosoever* hath. *Whosoever* hath not. Is it not assumed in that universal statement—is it not affirmed—that every man whatever has received certain things which the Bestower will increase if he hold them fast; but which he may let go and be left utterly bare? And what are these things? If there is the least connection between this verse and that which precedes it,—between the difficulty and the solution,—they are *mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven*. These are the treasures—not lying far from any man—to which these fishermen had not foregone their claim, which no one can relinquish without abandoning his rights, without renouncing his manhood.

III. For thus He goes on, "*Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand*." Seeing, hearing, understanding, these are admitted powers of human beings. They are *gifts*, in the truest, deepest meaning of that word; they should be owned as fresh gifts every morning. They are *felt* to be gifts by those who have suffered any temporary blindness, deafness, derangement of intellect. But still they are gifts to *men*; to be without them is a fearful penalty, the exception to a rule. To have them and not to exercise them is wilfulness. Is it not intimated to us that there is something exactly corresponding to these organs of sense in the spirit of man; that an eye is *there*, which may be opened or may be closed; an ear is *there* which may be awake to take in a voice that is speaking to it, or may be stopped; a capacity for profiting by the vision, for yielding to the voice, which may be continually expanded, or may continually become more contracted?

Would you say that this eye of the spirit was less truly and essentially *human* than the eye of the body? Would not you call it far *more*

truly and essentially human? Would not you say that that *appertained* to the man, that this was a part of his very being? Would not you say that that might be extinguished and he still remain; nay, that the loss might bring with it, as it certainly brought to Milton, an abundant compensation; that for the other to be put out is for the man himself to perish? Supposing this were meant, you would recollect at once expressions which would illustrate it, and would appear to be of precisely the same character. Such as these:—"*The light of the body is the eye. If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light; but if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness*!" The verity of this description, when we apply it to the external world, commends itself to us all. And oh! have we never thought—have we never known—that it must have the other application also, and that that application was the primary one? Have we never been brought to confess that the light of the sun cannot be *the* Light, the Light of the world, the Light of men,—that there must be an older, a more penetrating, a more universal Light than that, because there has been something in us which has quailed before it, which has wished to quench it?

But if there is this correspondence between the organs of the spirit and the organs of sense,—if experience assures there is,—does not that explain to us the meaning and power of the parables? May not all sensible things, by a necessity of their nature, be testifying to us of that which is nearest to us, of that which it most concerns us to know, of the mysteries of our own life, and of God's relation to us? May it not be impossible for us to escape from these witnesses? They may become insignificant to us from our very familiarity with them; nay, we may utterly forget that there is any wonder in them. The transformation of the seed into the full corn in the ear may appear to us the dullest of all phenomena, not worthy to be noted or thought of. The difference in the returns from different soils, or from the same soils under different cultivation—the difference in the quality of the produce, and the relation which it bears to the quality of the seeds,—

may be interesting to us from the effect such varieties have upon the market,—from the more or less money we derive from the sale;—not the least as facts in nature, facts for meditation. The relation between a landholder or farmer and those who work for him, between a steward and his employer, between a shepherd and his sheep, all in like manner may be tried by the same pecuniary standard; apart from that, they may suggest nothing to us. Thus the universe becomes actually "as is a landscape to a dead man's eye;" the business in which we are ourselves engaged, a routine which must be got through in some way or another, that we may have leisure to eat, drink, and sleep. Can any language describe this state so accurately and vividly as that of our Lord in the text? Seeing we see, and do not perceive; hearing we hear, and do not understand.

But is He not declaring to His disciples why He *spoke* in parables to the Jewish people? and am not I alluding to parables which are not spoken so much as acted,—acted before us as well as before them? I will not evade the question. St. Matthew says in this chapter:—

> "*All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake He not unto them: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world*."

Were it true that these secret processes of Nature, that the transactions of human beings, had been, from the foundation of the world, the lesson-books out of which God was instructing men, and revealing Himself to them,—were it true that these lessons had been perverted and misunderstood, changed into excuses for idolatry, as if He were made after the likeness of natural things or of man's caprices—what force then would be in this application of the prophet's sentence! How truly would Christ fulfil the words by withdrawing the veil which had been covering these common facts, by showing what was behind them! How wonderfully He would be proving that He knew the mind of the Father from whom He came,—that He had indeed been as one

brought up with Him! If this is not the import of the parables, does not St. Matthew's quotation sound inflated and exaggerated? How did mere apologues, intended to make truths more lively, or to recommend them to the ignorant (I say nothing of the other supposition, that they were intended to *conceal* truths), "*declare things that had been kept secret from the foundation of the world*"?

But the greatest satisfaction of our doubts upon this subject is derived, I think, from a comparison of this part of my text with the passage in the fourth chapter of St. Mark's Gospel, which corresponds to it. "*Unto them that are without*"—this is his version of our Lord's answer—"*all things are done in parables*." To those who never dwell on that which is within,—upon that which concerns their own selves,—but live merely in the outward world, these things,—the things of the Kingdom of Heaven,—become only in this form of parables. I use the expression '*become*,' as the most literal rendering of γίνεται, but I cannot think that our translators were wrong or unhappy in the phrase which they chose in preference to it. The divine things are not merely spoken through parables, they are *done* in parables,—the parables are about us, only, through the want of a light coming from within, we do not recognize them.

IV. But though on this ground I cannot look upon any passage as less really concerning one age than another, I do not for a moment deny that our Lord's words in the next clause had a special reference to the last age of the Jewish commonwealth.

> "*And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and by seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive. For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed: lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them*."

Such words intimate very clearly that the incapacity for discerning anything not material or sensual, which Isaiah lamented in the Jews of his day,—which he was told would make them heedless of all his

warnings and of all his consolations, till the armies of the Assyrians had laid the land waste, till there was great forsaking in the midst of it, and many cities were left without inhabitant,—was reaching its climax in the days of our Lord's Incarnation; all the Divine discipline which had been used for the correction of it, having been turned into a justification of it. In that day was fulfilled (or had come to its full maturity) all the coarseness, the covetousness, the pride, which had been corrupting and undermining the nation in former times, but had not then reached its vitals. For now there was no more the consciousness of wrong-doing which there had been in the days of hill-altars and of temples to Baal. "*Had we been in the days of our fathers, we would not have murdered the prophets*," was the comfortable conviction of a people who were just about to murder the Prophet of Prophets. No past lessons, therefore, were of the least avail. How did they concern men so free from all the crimes and wrong tendencies of their ancestors? They had the Holy Book in their possession; no heathen could claim it; all its sounds and letters were familiar to them; they could repeat them, argue from them, comment upon them,—only they were mere sounds, mere letters. Hearing they heard, and did not understand; seeing they saw, and did not perceive. No living voice came to them out of that which was read continually in the synagogue. No vision of a divine Presence or a divine Deliverer shone through the writings that testified of nothing else. And so idolatry—taking no shape, protested against and vehemently abhorred—crept inwards, took possession of the whole being of those who held idolaters to be accursed of God. The gold upon the altar became the measure by which they judged of the sacrifice that was offered upon it; the gold of the Temple was really for them the Presence that dwelt in it. To a race bound in these chains, our Lord spake of a Shepherd who went into the wilderness to seek after a sheep that was lost, of a Father who ran and embraced the prodigal when, after eating his swine's food, he had thought of the house from which he went out. These were parables of human duty, of human affection, witnessing to hearts that were open, of some divine

Shepherd who might lay down His life for the sheep, of a Father who might make a mighty sacrifice to bring back His children to Himself. These were witnesses that a care as actual as the care of the human shepherd, that a love as actual and personal as the love of the human parent, only free from all their limitations and partialities,—was about them in their daily walks. But if the shepherd was regarded merely as a servant hired to see that certain articles of merchandise were not lost to their owner,—if they, the shepherds of the people, were hirelings after the same pattern,—if the ties of father and child were changed into suspicion upon the one side, dread on the other, a calculation of worldly interests and advantages on both,—what would these Parables be to them? They would prove their truth even in these cases. It would be seen that the analogy between the human and the divine is not an imaginary or artificial one, but exists in the nature of things. For even such a shepherd, even such a father as they were, would they take God to be. They would worship a self-seeking tyrant under the name of the God of Abraham; and the true God of Abraham would manifest Himself by casting them forth as enemies alike of Him and of His creatures, to be a spectacle and a bye-word among the nations.

V. This terrible test of the veracity of these parables was not however to be the only one. "*Blessed*," says our Lord to the fishermen about Him, "*Blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them*." What was this blessedness which raised these poor men, these ignorant men, above David and Isaiah? Was it that they saw the outward face of Jesus? So did Caiaphas and Pontius Pilate. Was it not that One had apprehended them, whom they confessed to be the Lord and Master of the spirit within them,—who was speaking to that, illuminating that, delivering them from their own miserable conceptions, raising them above any judgments of God deduced from the objects of sense, educating them to know Him as He is? Was it not that they were under the teaching of One who repulsed no questions,

listened to all doubts, bore with all confusions, showing them that it was no will of His Father that there should be veils over their hearts when they heard His words or contemplated His works? Was it not that a sense of a union between men and God was dawning upon them, through all the acts and discourses of Him who called Himself the Son of Man? Did not that name testify to them that He who was speaking to them in the ear in closets, must be indeed the King of all human hearts, and that as such they were to declare Him to all nations? Was not this Revelation of the actual glory of the Unseen God in a man, that which kings and prophets had longed to see? Was not the message that He is the Lord of Gentiles as well as Jews,—is the head of every man,—what they desired to hear?

And so I think we find the explanation of a fact which has, perhaps, sometimes puzzled us. Why did not the Apostles, trained as they were in our Lord's school, when they went forth among the hardened Jews, amongst the idolatrous Gentiles, make more use of Parables? Why do we find so few in their discourses or their letters? I apprehend that when they preached of a Son of God and a Son of Man, of One in whom God was reconciled to men, in Whom God was showing forth His glory to men, they were going to the very root of this teaching; they were enabling mankind to profit by it as they had profited by it. For if once we receive that fact of God's union with our race in the Person of a Mediator as the interpretation of all other facts,—as the kernel mystery of the Universe,—we cannot suppose that we rise to conceptions of God through the things of time and sense, we cannot help supposing that through these things He is speaking to us. The Apostles who bore witness that a Spirit had been given to dwell among men, because the Son of Man was glorified at the right-hand of God, and that this Spirit testifies with the spirits of men that they are Sons of God, could not suggest the thought that men must ascend to the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven by an earthly ladder. They must invite all to enter into the mysteries of that Kingdom as they had done, through a sense of deep want, through the infinite need of a Deliverer

from their sensuality and their darkness. They must declare that their Deliverer, their Illuminator, was the Deliverer and Light of all, and that none need walk in darkness,—that any man might awake out of sleep, and see that Light which would one day fill the Universe. But this testimony, so far as it was received, converted all Nature, and all human acts, from dead letters into divine hieroglyphics, from instruments of idolatry into preachers concerning the Unseen and the Eternal.

Such preachers they have been to the humble and meek, who have asked Christ, as the Disciples did, to tell them why He spoke by parables, and to interpret the parables which they have found in every street and alley, as well as in every hill and stream. We are told, brethren, that they have been deceiving themselves. No real knowledge of the Eternal is possible; our conceptions are bounded by the finite and the visible. My answer is:—If that is the reason, no knowledge of the seen and the temporal is possible. Slavery to our conceptions, as the teacher of experimental science has shown us, is the hindrance to any real, solid acquaintance with the mysteries of Nature. When we try to bind her with the forms of our intellect, she will give us no faithful answers; she will only return an echo to our voices. Here is another proof of the analogy between things sensible and spiritual. The same enemy blocks the entrance into both regions. The determination to measure all things by ourselves, to bring everything under the conditions of our intellect, makes us exiles from the Kingdom of Heaven and the Kingdom of Earth. That determination in other days was called, Pride; in ours (words alter their meaning so strangely) it claims to be owned as the profoundest humility. We dare not presume to burst the shackles which God has imposed upon us; we dare not dream of ascending above the world in which He has seen good to place us; that we do not is the great sign that we accept Christianity with childlike submission. We prove our allegiance to the Gospel by affirming that it is *not* given us to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven; that the parables of Christ are *not* real revelations of it.

For this strange method of vindicating the faith and confuting its opponents, the venerable authority of Bishop Butler is sometimes pleaded. The man to whom some of us owe the first suggestion of the thought that there is an actual analogy between the things of Earth and the things of Heaven, between what we see and what we do not see, between the temporal and Eternal,—the man who courageously adopted the words of Origen, with whose mystical tendencies his cautious intellect could have no sympathy, as the text of his book and the exposition of its design, this man, because, through the coldness of his age, he gave a somewhat negative form to his argument, using it rather to refute opponents than to establish a principle, is now supposed to have employed his clear logical faculty chiefly for the purpose of undermining the hopes which he had himself raised, and of maintaining the melancholy proposition that the general scheme of the Universe is not on the whole much better or more intelligible than the particular scheme of Christianity, and that we should not be *more* ignorant and perplexed than we are, if we had not been obliged, under terrible penalties, to believe in the Bible. That it was the intention of this earnest and devout thinker to make good such conclusions as these, I can never convince myself; that such an intention has been imputed to him by admiring disciples, is one proof more how little in general we gain, how much we may lose, by abandoning our own positions that we may dislodge assailants from theirs.

But it is a comparatively light question, whether we are doing justice or gross injustice to luminaries of our own; whether, as the orator says, we are honouring them in their noonday, or bringing forth our hymns and symbols at the moment of their eclipse. It *is* a very great and serious question indeed, whether our patronage of Christianity is not subverting the revelation of Christ. It is a most serious question for ourselves, whether the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, the eternal realities, are indeed near to us all, and whether we may know them, or whether we may allege that they are far from us, and that by the very nature of our vision it is impossible for us even with

the divinest telescopes to discern them. It is a very serious question whether we have any message or not concerning the mysteries of the kingdom of Heaven, to those who are as poor as the fishermen of Galilee were; or whether we can only appeal to some vague fears which are in them, of a Kingdom of Hell,—not being allowed to tell them that the horror of the Kingdom of Hell consists in the absence of all knowledge of God's Righteousness and Truth and Love. These thoughts must press very heavily upon those who preach; I trust they press also upon some who hear.

Oh, let us desire for ourselves that we may, as humble men, as little children, receive the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven; that we may not substitute an acknowledgement of the Scriptures for a study of their contents, contempt of doubters for faith in Christ, and so become—as the Jews of old became from the same causes—deaf to the teachings of the Spirit within, blind to the parables of the world without!

SERMON VII. PRACTICE AND SPECULATION

1 Peter i. 13-18.

> "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance; but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."

I have chosen these verses as a fitting conclusion to the subject upon which I have been speaking to you during these weeks of Epiphany. I have been trying to ascertain what that Revelation of Jesus Christ is, of which the writers in the New Testament speak so continually. Is it, as the word seems to intimate, the actual unveiling of a Person to the conscience, heart, reason of human beings? Is it, as the Church appears to say, the unveiling of the character and nature of God to a creature who is formed to know Him? Or is it the announcement of certain opinions and maxims and rules of life to a creature who is formed *not* to know Him, and who, *because* that is his condition, must receive whatever, on probable evidence, he can guess to be divine? This has been our question—nearly the most important one with which it is possible for men to occupy themselves. The metaphysical arguments by which the latter opinion has been defended, I have touched upon very slightly. They involve subtleties which the hearers of sermons cannot be expected to follow, which they are likely to judge of rather by their wishes than by their convictions. I have contented myself with suggesting the inquiry whether these arguments, if they are truly stated, do not prove the impossibility of all knowledge whatever,—of that which refers to earth as much as of what is heavenly or

eternal. My business has been to show you that the Bible at all events solemnly repudiates the maxim which has been put forth in its defence; repudiates it by all the anticipations of the holy men and prophets of the Old Testament; repudiates it through every work and parable of Christ which is recorded by Evangelists, through every discourse which was delivered by Apostles.

There is, however, one justification of this doctrine which I have hinted at, but not yet fully discussed. It is said that practice, not speculation, is what God desires of men; that His Word sets before them objects of fear and objects of hope; that He tells them what kind of men He would have them be, instead of tempting them to lose themselves in endless mazes of doubt that they may ascertain what He is. To all these propositions I give a hearty assent. I wish you to see how they bear upon the controversy;—for they have, I am satisfied, a direct bearing upon it. What that is, we might have gathered from the Epistle which was read today. But as that Epistle is taken from St. John, and as those who show any special reverence for St. John are said by some to exhibit fatal symptoms of the disease which they call Mysticism, I prefer to take my text from St. Peter, whom all will admit to be the most practical, the least speculative of teachers,—who in this passage of his Epistle especially, is setting forth the hopes and fears which he would wish his disciples to keep in mind, and the maxims which were to guide them in the fight of life.

I. It will at once occur to you that the expectation which St. Peter speaks of here, is that expectation of the appearing or manifestation or unveiling of Jesus Christ which sustained the Christians of the first age, and which all the Apostles, none more than St. Paul, encouraged by their words and by their example. I have often spoken to you of the opinion which prevails so widely in our day, that this hope was disappointed,—that what they looked for as close at hand was deferred to an immense distance of time,—that there has been no fulfilment of their longings even yet. I have often declared that if that were so, their whole message to mankind, and the lives which illustrated it, would

seem to me utterly perplexing and bewildering. For this hope was certainly the staff of their being; if it was false, the acts and thoughts which were inspired by it and determined by it, must also have been false. I could not hope that such statements would produce much effect upon those who believed the Apostles to have been generally under the influence of a delusion; I desired that they might be weighed by those who suppose that they were the heralds of a truth to mankind which is as needful for this age as it was for theirs.

Now our inquiry respecting the word Revelation is closely connected with this subject. If it denotes wherever it is used, to whatever time it is referred the removal of a veil which had hidden the eternal God from men;—if from the hour in which men were created such veils had been removing;—if the sin of man, which had seemed to cut him off from God, had been a means of discovering the nature and essential character of God, by His warfare with it and forgiveness of it;—if no one step in Jewish history, or in any history, could be regarded by holy men except as the instrument of such a discovery, as setting forth something of the divine power and righteousness;—if the one desire of those holy men was for the complete rending asunder of that which had hidden from all nations the light in which they were intended to walk, and in which alone they could see themselves or see each other;—if the Son of Man did, while he was on earth, by all His acts, discourses, parables, declare the Kingdom of God to men, did manifest to men the Father;—if, when He had overcome the sharpness of death, He opened the Kingdom, and discovered the inner mind of the Father to all who believed in Him, who received Him as the well-beloved Son;—if this unveiling of His Kingdom to men was precisely that which the Apostles were appointed to preach, and did preach; if they preached it to a world which contradicted all they said, and treated it as ridiculous;—if the spectacle which that world presented seemed to make it ridiculous to themselves, so that to keep the faith that it was not all a dream for which they were giving up the traditions of infancy, old friendships, all that belonged to life, and life itself,

was often unspeakably hard, and would have been impossible if the partaking of God's nature had not been the one only refuge from the curse and plague of their own,—what encouragement could they hold out but this: 'There will verily be a revelation of the Son of Man and of the Son of God to the Universe; it will be, whether we look for it or not; it will be attested by that doom upon our own holy city and temple of which our Lord spoke when He was upon earth, and which He denoted as a revelation or appearing of the Son of Man; but if you look for it,—if you brace up your spirits to the expectation of it,—if you resist whatever dulls or stifles that expectation within you,—then this unveiling will indeed be to you the satisfaction of all your longings, and of all the longings of past ages. It will be this blessing to you, because it will be not for you, but for the world; because it *will be as the lightning, which lighteneth from one part of heaven, and shineth even to the other*.' You will see how consistent this language was with all their other language; how little the use of it was affected by any ignorance they might have of times and seasons, or of the exact nature of the change which was to take place in the condition of the outward world. If what they expected was not a full unveiling of the Eternal Mind,—of that which is the same yesterday and today and for ever,—points of chronology would have been of the most vast importance to them; a mistake about such points would have been fatal to their hopes. If what they expected was not the full manifestation of Him of whom the things of time and sense are all testifying, but about whom no conclusion can be deduced from them,—their conception of those things would have determined the degree and character of their hopes. As it was, the invisible things were no more limited by the narrowness of their intellects than the vision of sea and sky is limited by the size of the eye which took it in. Faith, not in some notions or communications about God, but in God himself, made them inheritors of His righteousness, capable of entering into His infinite love, and of losing themselves in it.

II. And therefore the practical exhortation, "*Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober*," had its proper ground in this hope; by this hope it was

changed from a mere verbal exhortation into an actual stimulus and power for work. Only the spirit can entertain such a hope as this; those to whom St. Peter wrote were capable of it only so far as they were living in the spirit. They must therefore continually be 'girding' themselves up to the conviction that they were spirits, that Christ had claimed them as spirits, that they could by His grace have all the rights of spirits. They must assure themselves day by day that the Spirit was working with their spirits, that they might not sink, as they were always inclined to sink, under the dominion of low, vagrant, fleshly impulses. Do you think that such an expectation was likely to intoxicate these early Christians with a sense of their own consequence? St. Peter thought it was the one thing which could keep them sober,—sober in the commonest application of the word, by restraining them from indulgences that make the senses their masters; sober, as raising them above the fumes of self-conceit and vanity. For he that is always looking beyond himself and above himself, who is aspiring after the revelation of a Goodness and a Truth which are not in himself, is flying from conceit and vanity, is regarding them as his torments and curses. Himself is his prisonhouse; Christ has come to set him free from it.

Till he has escaped from its bondage altogether, and has entered into the glorious liberty of the sons of God,—the liberty from selfish objects, selfish aspirations, selfish limitations,—he cannot be satisfied. No one had had deeper experience of this truth than the Apostle. Fisherman as he was, not to think himself above his Master and Lord, not to trust his own power of going to prison and death, had been the hardest of all things for him. It was, no doubt, a battle with him still. And he looked for victory in that battle by exercising the same hope to which he encouraged all his fellow-Christians. If he had any different expectation from theirs,—any dream of some private or special reward, such as he had entertained when our Lord was upon earth,—he would soon have lost all that he had learnt from His Cross and His Resurrection.

III. This is the next point on which I would fix your attention. The Apostle is addressing a society of men. He sets the same hope before them all. There is no discrimination of characters, no attempt to ascertain which were leading sinful, which were leading exemplary lives. Why so? Because the hope was itself the great test of what they were. Because the hope itself would be the means of raising those of them who would be raised. Because the raising would consist in their casting away partial and selfish ambitions, to entertain a common ambition, ambition for an object in which all might share. Because hereby it was shown that the Church is a communion of spirits, not a communion of mere creatures of flesh and blood, and that so far as they were pursuing a spiritual object, so far were they attaining the unity of a Church. Here then we have the Apostle's mode of educating men, by high rewards of glory, immortality, eternal life, to gird up their loins, and to be sober. Here we have his way of terrifying them with the thought of future damnation. What could be such a damnation as to lose that glory, immortality, eternal life,—as to be left without the knowledge of God?

IV. But this glimpse into the method of his teaching does not give us an adequate conception of its practical character, or of the principle on which it rests. We must turn to the next passage: "*As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to your former lusts in your ignorance; but as He which called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation*." He refers here to a former condition of mind into which there was a danger of their relapsing, if there was not that strenuous effort, that girding up of the loins of the mind, that sobriety, that hope to the end, which he had urged upon them. He describes this former state as one which was produced by their ignorance. I will not take for granted what this ignorance was. I will turn to one or two passages which may explain it. The first occurs in the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, the seventeenth and eighteenth verses: "*This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God*

through the ignorance *that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart*." There can be no doubt, I think, that when the Apostle who told the Athenians that they were living, moving, and having their being in God speaks of an alienation from the life of God, he means an unnatural separation from Him to whom they ought to have been united; that by blindness of heart he denotes the loss of a vision which they were created to enjoy. And if so, what other ignorance can he have thought of than ignorance of God? to what other cause than the absence of an actual knowledge of what He is of His nature and character—is the vanity of mind, the moral evil of the heathen traced?

Perhaps, however, a passage from the Apostle of the Gentiles may not suffice to illustrate one from the Apostle of the Circumcision. Take then the opening of St. Peter's own second epistle: "*Simon Peter, a servant and an Apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, according as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue: whereby* are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." Twice in this short passage is the knowledge of God assumed to be the ground of all good to man. Grace and peace proceed from that knowledge. Whatever belongs to life and godliness, whatever leads to glory and virtue, comes through that knowledge. And see whether this is a mere phrase which admits of different interpretations, which may be explained to mean anything or nothing. St. Peter leaves us no excuse for thrusting in our interpretation. He gives his own: Knowledge of God is that which enables us to become "*partakers of the divine Nature*." If there is not a way of ascending out of our nature into the pure and perfect Nature, he intimates that we have not received that which is necessary to life and godliness, that we have not learnt how we may escape the corruption which is in the world through lust.

I need not tell you that if I had followed up my quotation from St. Paul by an examination of the Epistle from which it is taken or any other of his Epistles, I should have found language exactly answering to this. To put on Christ, to put on the new Man, to be clothed with the righteousness of God, are not only expressions which occur continually in his writings, they are *the* expression of his own inmost mind, they come forth in the midst of his most earnest practical exhortations, they determine the character of his ethics. But, as I have chosen this sentence to make the purpose of my text more evident, I would leave this point to speak of the word "*called*," which occurs in both the passages of St. Peter;—in our text, "As He that hath *called* you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;" and in the second Epistle, "Through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue." The idea of a Calling is always present to the mind of the Apostle. How could he have entered so thoroughly as he did into the meaning of his nation's existence if it had not been? But what hindered that belief of a calling from being the hard, exclusive belief to him which it was to his countrymen? *This* hindered it. He attached a much fuller and deeper meaning to God's calling than they did. He supposed that a spiritual Being was in very deed calling out the spirits of men to behold His image, to be partakers of His Nature. It was no formal election of a set of favourites of Heaven, who were to earn rewards from which the rest of the world were excluded. It was the election of a people to know what are the rights of men, that they might be witnesses to all men of *their* rights. It was the election of a people to testify that God Himself is leading his creatures out of darkness to light, out of vague notions and conceptions of what is right and holy, to the knowledge, and so to the possession, of His righteousness and holiness.

V. *Because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy*. Here is the immutable morality of the Bible. It is uttered by Moses; it is repeated by St. Peter. Nothing that has happened in the interval between them has in the least affected it; everything that has happened has brought out its

meaning and power more perfectly. The protecting care and faithfulness of the unseen God were unveiled to Abraham; he became the faithful man in his care of his family and his flock. A vision of God's foresight was given to Joseph; he could teach Pharaoh to foresee. The *I am*, the Absolutely Righteous one, the guard of Law and Order, unveiled Himself to Moses, that name sustaining, not swallowing up, the old name of the Friend of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; so he could be the just Lawgiver, the teacher and patient guide of the people. A divine King caring for men, feeling with men, yet punishing them for their transgressions, was discovered to David; so he grew to be a king after God's own heart. Every prophet confessed his word speaking in his heart; so he was able to speak and not be dumb. The prophets felt that God was caring for the whole nation, and suffering on account of its sins; so they were able to feel themselves parts of the nation, and to suffer for its sins. The prophets felt that God had promised to bring all nations into His family; so they could long that He should make Himself known to all nations. Just so far as they had an apprehension of God's nature, just so far as they were partakers of that, just so far did they exhibit the gentleness, purity, truth, which the consciences of men recognize as truly human. And when the Apostles saw in Jesus of Nazareth Him of whom Moses and the Prophets did write, then they knew that this must be so, and why it must be so. They could doubt no longer that all practical goodness in men corresponds to a goodness in God and is derived from it, because they owned the Son of Man as the perfect concentration of that goodness. They were sure that He had united His divine nature to the human, that the human might share the divine. They could solemnly protest against all attempts of men to establish a righteousness of their own by obedience to the law, or by any acts, as hopeless and immoral; they could preach the Righteousness of God as manifested to all men in Christ, that all might with their spirits believe in it, know it, be conformed to it; and that those who did confess it might let their light shine forth to the world.

That practical morality,—morality, whether you regard it on the negative side or the positive, as resistance to evil, or as the being good and doing good,—is connected by the writers of the New Testament with the actual Revelation of God and the actual knowledge of God, —I have endeavoured to show. A less agreeable task remains. I must put it to your consciences and my own whether our morality has not been speculative rather than practical, whether we have not been full of vague, restless doubts as to the ends we should set before ourselves, as to our relations with other men, as to our standard of character and of duty, just because we have not believed, or have believed so weakly, that God has revealed His own holy nature to us, and that we may be partakers of it; that He has taken knowledge of us, in order that we may take knowledge of Him.

Brethren, I cannot help perceiving that the hope and expectation of any good to come is exceedingly weak among us all. There is a dread of an *evil* that may be threatening the world or threatening ourselves; in some minds, a dread of anarchy and infidelity; in others, a dread lest God should visit them for their own particular sins when they leave the world. But I cannot find that the first dread acts at all as a check upon infidelity. I cannot find that the second is effectual against any great temptation, far less against the daily and continual temptations to harshness, uncharitableness, injustice. Least of all does either of these dreads serve to bind us more closely together as members of a Nation or a Church. They isolate us from each other; they make us afraid lest every person we meet should be doing something to rob us of a comfort which we feel that we hold very loosely; they make us suspect that intercourse with our fellow-men on earth may lessen our chances of heaven. And so, it having become little more than a calculation of chances, men begin to reckon up what it is safe to retain, or worth while to give up, for the sake of obtaining a future good, or for the sake of evading a future misery. Which consideration, as the future misery and the future good are so indefinite, ends generally in our taking what lies before us; not expecting much enjoyment from

that, but being ready to bear it, since nothing better has been provided for us.

No man is at all times in this state of mind. Properly speaking, it is not a *state* of mind; it is an oscillation of mind, which, while it lasts, may allow us to be credulous or sceptical, impatient of everything, or eager to place ourselves under absolute authority. And there are moments, I am certain, when other thoughts altogether different from these visit him who is most under the influence of them. There come dim recollections of our being told that we are children of God—or if we are only too familiar with the sound of these words—a suspicion that they may have a meaning; a meaning for ourselves and a meaning for the multitudes from whom we are trying to distinguish ourselves. And with those words come others stranger and more mystical, but still the words of an Apostle—"*If children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ*." What can that mean? If it did mean that we, even we, are created to be partakers of the Righteousness, the Love, the Truth of God,—that we have not and cannot have any righteousness, love, truth of our own which can entitle us to any reward from God, but that these are His own rewards,—that these are offered us without money or price,—that these we may be claiming even here,—that these we enter upon as our full inheritance hereafter,—oh, what a difference it would make in our moral state! What a hope would be kindled in us,—a hope which cannot make ashamed,—a hope which we can boldly set before every human being! How little we should care then to convict men of their infidelity! With what shame and sorrow we should confess our own! How we should say to all:—A message has been brought us to which we have none of us given credence—or only a beggarly credence. Is it not the message which meets your questionings and longings as well as ours? Does it not present itself to you as that which in lonely sad hours you have been crying for? Oh, if it does, let us begin to hope together! You have the same right to do it as I have. There is no difference between us, except that I have offended more against God, by professing to hold that which I have

not held,—by repeating words without giving them their natural force. But now let us forget the things that are behind. You do not like our pride and self-glorification. Encourage us to hate them, for they keep us from that glory and virtue which are for you, as well as us, through the knowledge of that God who has called us—who is calling us—to be like Him.

And here also would be the remedy for those uneasy thoughts about their own lot in the world to come, which haunt so many gentle and so many ungentle minds; which often lead them to neglect plain practical duties, which aggravate the very sins that give occasion to them. What would they wish to have in this world, or in any other world? Is it not Righteousness, Love, Truth? Is it not the want of these which they feel so bitterly? Yes, surely; because they are seeking them in themselves, and not in God, in whom alone they dwell. Because they are dreading Him as one who requires these things of them, instead of trusting Him as the Righteous, the True, and the Loving,—who invites them to know Him, and so to possess His own infinite treasures.

Brethren! it is because I find here the one escape from the evils by which we are surrounded,—from the lusts of an evil nature,—from the restless speculations of our intellect,—that I have contended so earnestly against those who would take this hope from us. I do not for a moment say that they intend to take it from us. I know well that what men deny with their lips, they may hold in their heart of hearts. I am quite sure that some who, whilst they speak as logicians, seem to tell us that the love of God, which was manifested at the Cross of Christ is not really the same love which is to dwell in our hearts,—that the words which describe its nature are merely accommodations to our conceptions,—I can quite believe that those who use this language, which appears to me so frightful, have a far stronger hold than I have upon that love, and are exhibiting far better fruits of it in their lives. Nor ought we to forget that Logicians, as such, are occupied with the individual soul, which, as St. Paul tells us in the first Epistle to the Corinthians, *is* subject to all those conditions and limitations that

make the knowledge of spiritual things impossible. Schoolmen may naturally think that it is their business to investigate these conditions and limitations. And therefore we should have no cause to complain, if they did not intrude into another region,—if they did not deny the existence of that *Spirit of man* within us, of which the same Apostle speaks—that Spirit which acknowledges no such fetters, but claims fellowship with the Eternal, and is never satisfied till the Spirit of God has called it forth to know the truth which alone can make it free. Of such a human spirit the student in the poet's legend who was worn out with his books of Jurisprudence, Medicine, and Theology, and was ready in his despair to take the poison-cup, became conscious, when he heard the children singing their Easter Hymn of the risen Christ. He felt it again when he went forth into the spring air among the common people and cried, '*Here I am a man, here I dare be one*.' The legend goes on to tell that he committed that human spirit to the guidance of an evil, mocking spirit, and so fell into guilt and despair. Not for that terrible possibility which each one of us may have felt at times to be a possibility for himself, are we to suppress the lesson which the Apostle of the Gentiles and the Apostle of the Circumcision conspire to teach us. They were alive—how much alive, St. Peter's second Epistle will tell us—to the danger of men acquiring a devilish nature; they were all the more earnest to tell them they were intended to be partakers of the divine Nature. They felt that it was impossible, since the appearance of Christ, to conceal either the glory or the peril of humanity; that if we would awaken men to the last, we must speak to them of the other. There is a middle region, through which we may pass, but in which we cannot dwell. It is a region of clouds, with none of the brightness of Heaven or the firmness of earth. In that region all is speculation; there is no practice. It may be a region of dry logical formulas, or of emotions, sensations, individual feelings. But it is one which we are called to leave by the actual sorrows and miseries that we witness,—by the sense that we are kinsmen with the lowest and worst, as well as with the noblest of our race,—by the voices of friends who, on

earth, learnt that there must be an actual Kingdom of heaven, and are beckoning us to seek the home which they, we trust, have found,—by the voice of God Himself bidding us eat the flesh of His Son and drink His blood which are given for the life of the world. That life, that eternal life, is said by the Church to stand in the knowledge of God. When we partake of the sacrifice of Christ, we partake of the mind of God. To know Him is, in the words of the Apostle, to know that love which passeth knowledge. Think not that those who seek that knowledge,—who believe that the Supper of the Lord is the pledge and assurance that all men need it, that it is offered to all,—will have less of awe and trembling as they enter into the presence of God, than those who stand afar off and affirm they have no capacity for such a gift. Love is far more awful than power. The beloved Disciple who spoke most of knowing God and dwelling in God,—when the High-Priest of the Universe was actually revealed before him, fell at His feet as one dead. Those who most join in St. Paul's prayer for other men and themselves, that they may comprehend with all Saints what is the height and length and breadth and depth of the Divine mystery, are most sure to exclaim with him, "*Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been His counsellor? Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things; to whom be glory for ever. Amen*."

Note

The passage in the First Epistle to the Corinthians which is alluded to in p. 125, is that from the ninth to the sixteenth verse of the second chapter, inclusive. I shall refer to it in my Letters, in noticing Mr. Mansell's Lecture which gets its text (or motto) from that chapter.

The allusion in the next paragraph is to the speech of Faust when he hears the song 'Christ ist erstanden,' ending with the line—

Die Thräne quillt, die Erde hat mich wieder;

and to the one in the next scene ending—

Hier bin ich Mensch, hier darf ich's seyn.

(Goethe's Werke, 12ter Band, 12mo. pp. 46 and 54.)

LETTERS TO A THEOLOGICAL STUDENT PREPARING FOR ORDERS ON MR. MANSEL'S BAMPTON LECTURES

LETTER I. THE COST OF CONFUTATION

Introductory.—the Cost of a Confutation.

My dear Sir,

I do not wonder that you are spending a portion of the time which remains to you before your examination in the study of Mr. Mansel's Bampton Lectures. You have heard, on good authority, that they expose triumphantly different forms of unbelief or half-belief which exist in Germany and in England. This exposure is not, you are told, like many that have preceded it, made by a man who has only a second-hand acquaintance with the writers whom he condemns, or who condemns them with the zeal and passion of a Theologian. He is a scholar, and has mastered the books against which he warns us; he is a philosopher, and places his warnings on a philosophical ground. His maxim, you are assured, will be as effectual for future Rationalists and semi-Rationalists as for those who flourish in our day. It will be effectual for crushing the questionings that have arisen or may arise in your own mind. It informs you of the Hercules' Pillars beyond which you cannot, by the very conditions of your intellect, sail in quest of truth. How desirable to have such a monitor! What a help to a student in divinity, who must find himself often amidst the quicksands of written controversies! What a help to a preacher of the Gospel, who must encounter the doubts, old and new, of his lettered or unlettered hearers! Such are the motives which will induce you and very many in your position to hail the appearance of a book which is said to be the latest expression of Oxford learning and Oxford orthodoxy, which promises to become the *Ductor Dubitantium* for the nineteenth century.

You have been a little startled, I suspect, by the criticism upon these Lectures which appeared sometime ago in the 'Times' newspaper. No

greater homage could be paid to Mr. Mansel's ability and success than the writer of that article was willing to bestow; he had the knowledge of the subject, which makes compliments valuable. But without meaning in the least to qualify his praise, he pointed out, with the skill and conscientiousness of a logician, certain results which followed inevitably from Mr. Mansel's doctrine. Others, he said, besides Hegel and the Germans, our natural enemies, must be crushed beneath it. Thomas à Kempis he especially instanced as one who must henceforth be cast aside as simply ridiculous. With him, it was suggested, a number of divines will perish who are not accused of his mystical tendencies. Where, you have asked yourself, will this prophecy carry us? 'Am I quite prepared, were that all, to part with the Imitation of Christ, the most cherished book of devotion throughout Christendom, dear to Romanists, to Protestants, to Quakers,—the companion of the sick in hospitals, of the solitary prisoner?'

I should doubt the fairness or lawfulness of this inquiry into the consequences of a principle before you had thoroughly examined the principle itself, if I did not perceive that you were already bribed to accept it by the hope of other consequences which look particularly tempting to you. You should not refuse to try the Lectures by their own merits, because if you yield to their arguments, you must abandon some portions of theological literature which you have been used to consider precious,—even some convictions which have wrought themselves into your heart, and which come forth almost unconsciously in your language. But since you are prepared to admire Mr. Mansel from the hope that he will enable you henceforth to hold your Theology far more comfortably, with little disturbance from without or from within, you are not wrong in considering *what* it is that you will rescue from these dangers, what treasures you will have to surrender as the price for keeping the rest in security. I wish you to approach the investigation of his doctrines, and of the deductions from it, without an unfair bias for or against either. It will not be amiss, therefore, to calculate a few of the

losses we must reckon upon if we bring Mr. Mansel's powerful weapon into ordinary use; the gains you know already from higher judges.

(1.) First, then; I cannot doubt that the critic in the 'Times' was altogether right, and very felicitous, in his selection of Thomas à Kempis as a victim who must at once be sacrificed. Did you ask yourself, as you read, *why* he could not use the shibboleth which the Bampton Lecturer demands of all theologians? Is it on account of any qualities which appertain to him as a monk or as a Romanist? Is it for that defect which the Dean of St. Paul's[2] notices in him, that his devotion does not lead enough to active exertion,—that he does not tell us we are to imitate Christ as Him who went about doing good? Whatever of monastic or mediaeval notions may have mingled with his faith, whatever of justice there may be in Dr. Milman's criticism, —these are not the offences which bring him within the scope of Mr. Mansel's law, which subject him to its extreme penalties. His crime consists in his assuming that there is a divine Teacher of man's spirit; that it is possible for man's spirit to have converse with that Teacher. All that is expressed in books of divinity by the union of the soul with Christ, by living intercourse with Him, is impossible in the very nature of things, if Mr. Mansel's mode of confuting infidels is the right one. *Non meus hic sermo*. I am merely indorsing the statement of a highly intelligent admirer; one which I think Mr. Mansel would not himself disclaim.

(2.) When the objection to Thomas à Kempis is stated in this way, I scarcely know what divines of any age are not within the peril of it. The Jansenists must give up all their great authors; the Puritans the best of theirs. You are well read, I doubt not, in Leighton's Commentary, as well as in those 'Prelections' which Professor Scholefield edited so carefully; those, I mean, that were addressed to an assembly at Edinburgh, not altogether unlike the one which Mr. Mansel addressed at Oxford. These must fall upon the same ground with à Kempis, and

[2] 'Latin Christianity,' vol. vi. pp. 303-306.

upon other grounds, to which I may allude hereafter. In these cases it is not the theoretical part of the divinity which must be rejected; it is what the writers believed to be the essentially practical part, that which concerned the moral reformation of themselves and their hearers. And note this. Just the part of their teaching which brings them within Mr. Mansel's condemnation, is that which had fallen into oblivion in the last century, and which the conscience of England, the conscience of the most earnest and religious men in England, has demanded again with a voice so loud and imperative, that all the modern discourses even of those who are naturally disinclined to the use of its favourite language, are coloured by it.

(3.) For, next, all that history of mental and spiritual experiences which exists either in the old Hagiographies or in the Puritan biographies, or which has been brought forth among us since the days of Wesley and Whitfield, must be expelled from the libraries of Christians, or at least must be treated as merely fictitious. All these assume an actual living knowledge of God to be possible for men. They assume the conversion of the soul to consist in its awakening to that knowledge. Do you remind me that there is much in the narratives of such conversions which even those who attach most value to them trace to an enthusiastic or morbid temperament? I grant you that there is. But I think those who have most earnestly considered such stories, and have most brought them to the test of that self-knowledge which Mr. Mansel regards as the exclusive test of truth, have treated that as the fantastic element in them which concerns the senses and apparitions to the senses. This they could refer to the conditions of the writer's body or to his external circumstances; whereas just the part which, according to Mr. Mansel, we must discard as delusion, is what they would confess as sound and true—that which concerns the internal and spiritual apprehension, the recognition of the Eternal Being.

(4.) Again, there is one eminent theologian whose fate we have not to gather from the inferences of any of Mr. Mansel's supporters or disciples. The following passage from himself decides the question:—

> "'God,' says Augustine, 'is not a Spirit as regards substance, and good as regards quality; but both as regards substance. The Justice of God is one with His Goodness and with His Blessedness; and all are one with His Spirituality.' But this assertion, if it be literally true (and of this we have no means of judging), annihilates personality itself, in the only form in which we can conceive it. We cannot transcend our own personality, as we cannot transcend our own relation to time; and to speak of an Absolute and Infinite Person, is simply to use language to which, however true it may be in a superhuman sense, no mode of human thought can possibly attach itself." (*Bampton Lectures, 2nd ed. p.* 85.)

Now I would put it to Dr. Pusey, to the Dean of Westminster, to any person differing as widely from them as they differ from each other, provided he has devoted as much attention as they have to the writings of St. Augustine, whether the conclusion which is thus peremptorily announced, that "we cannot transcend our own personality, as we cannot transcend our own relation to time," annihilates a single passage of this Father; whether it does not annihilate the very man himself? If you cannot wait for their decision, read 'The Confessions,' read any passages which you may stumble upon by chance from the first book to the last, and then ask yourself whether every part of his experience, everything which raised him from a Manichean into a Christian, even from an animal into a man, is not associated with the conviction that he could and did transcend his own personality and his relation to time, that he could and did apprehend the Personality of God.

(5.) Augustine then must perish, and with him all that have thought and written in his spirit: a blow, I need not tell you, to nearly all the most powerful of the medieval thinkers, even to those who did not follow Augustine in his Platonism, but belonged to the Aristotelian pe-

riod. How Anselm is treated by Mr. Mansel we shall know by-and-by. Bernard has, of course, no chance of mercy at his hands. If Aquinas is not absolutely scorned, Bonaventura must be. The disciples of Luther might perhaps endure this violence to Schoolmen. They will be foolish if they do. Of all persons *their* Master has the least hope of escaping the new proscription. He hated the logicians precisely because they denied that faith was a way to a direct personal knowledge of God. His Reformation consisted in the assertion that there is a Gospel from God to men, revealing His Righteousness to them, announcing that Righteousness as the foundation of their own.

(6.) But may we not at least retain the Creeds of the Church? We may retain them to this extent: all objections to them can be proved utterly futile, because it is impossible for men to know anything certain about the Nature of God. But these Creeds profess to tell us something certain about the Nature of God. Nay, they assume that certainty to be the deepest certainty, the ground of all other. Must not they and their antagonists die by the same rule? Has not Mr. Mansel demonstrated the futility of both?

(7.) I cannot tell what your feelings are about alterations in the Prayer-book. You may dread them less than I do. But are you prepared —is any Dissenter in England prepared—for the changes which Mr. Mansel must demand in it—which the University of Oxford must demand, if the Bampton Lecturer is the faithful representative of her sentiments? Mr. Mansel has handled with great severity one of Schleiermacher's doctrines, "as involving something like hypocrisy in every act of prayer" (Note 16 to Lecture IV. p. 360). He has therefore a righteous horror of anything approaching to such hypocrisy. He could not mean to impute it to so devout and honest a man as Schleiermacher was in the judgment of those who differ from him most; he only dreaded that which might 'involve' it; might cause it in other minds if not in his. How much then must the Lecturer tremble at the thought of our using such phrases as these, "*We who know thee now by faith*," "*In knowledge of whom standeth our eternal life*." What 'hypocrisy' must be

'involved' in such language, what hypocrisy we must be propagating in our Congregations—if we have thoroughly persuaded ourselves that to know the Infinite and Eternal is impossible! And yet one of these prayers is read every morning; and the habit of thought which it indicates may be traced through the whole Liturgy. Can we be parties to such an imposture? Must we not purge our consciences of it, if we do not wish to bring down a curse upon ourselves and upon our land?

I shall not now speak of the revision—not of our translation of the Bible, but—of the Bible itself, which will be necessary if the doctrine of the Lectures is true. That is the subject of the Sermons I have sent you. That subject will recur again and again in the course of these Letters. I confine myself now to some topics which should press very heavily on the consciences of us who are offering up prayers in the Church, and who are inviting men to enter into actual communion with God. They need not press *so* heavily upon yours if you, before you take the irrevocable step of binding yourself by vows of Ordination, consider solemnly whether you can really, in a simple sense, use the words which the Church puts into your lips,—whether they are to you honest words or deceitful words. I conjure you, as you value your own peace, as you care for the souls that will be committed to you, not to evade that inquiry, but resolutely to grapple with it, arming yourself for any consequence to which it may lead you. I rejoice in the publication of Mr. Mansel's book nearly as much as its most vehement admirers can rejoice. I look upon it more, not less, than they do as a critical event in the history of the English Church. For the question must now be asked of each one of us,—Do you take those words about knowing God which occur in books of devotion, in old divines, in the Prayer-book, in the Bible, literally or figuratively,—in a less exact sense than you would use the word *know* as applied to some other subject, or in the most exact sense, the one which determines its use in reference to any other subject? Because we have not given a distinct answer to this question in our own minds, because we have used one kind of language on our knees before God and another in our arguments with men, our

discourses to the people have been confused and unsatisfactory; they have not understood whether we came to them with good tidings, or with ill tidings, or with no tidings at all. Thank God for any one who understands his meaning, and so can compel us to understand our meaning! Thank God for any one who compels two principles that have long fought blindly in the twilight to come forth and meet each other in the open day!

I am glad, also, that those two contradictory principles concerning the knowledge of God cannot be brought into conflict without discovering two contradictory methods in which the Bible may be presented to the acceptance of mankind. For those who say that no knowledge of the Eternal is to be had, and that the Bible offers us something in place of it, must regard every search which men have made after such knowledge with suspicion,—must delight to register their mistakes, their inconsistencies, their disappointments. If, in the height of their pride or in the agony of their failure, these seekers have uttered words like the east wind,—words in which reproaches, often just, against men were mixed with unbelief of God,—all these must be preserved and triumphantly proclaimed, there being, it would appear, some comfort or some virtue in recollecting that creatures of our flesh and blood have given us an excuse for condemning them. Scorn of their folly in attempting to reach some height which they could not attain is, however, in these days, a more favourite indulgence than indignation at the worst moral perversity. A man may grovel in the stye without attracting any special notice from the modern defender of Christianity; if he aspires by an irregular method after righteousness, no laughter is too loud for his punishment.

He who holds that the Bible testifies from its first page to its last that God has created men for the knowledge of Himself, and is kindling in them a thirst for that knowledge, a discontent with anything which comes short of it,—cannot by possibility listen without the profoundest interest to every cry of men after it in one age or another. He must not ask first what they have failed to attain, but what they have been

permitted to attain. He must be glad to learn from their blunders as well as their successes: perceiving in the first the likeness of his own; in the second, the guidance of God. He may not expect their opinions or conclusions to do much for him; their struggles and questionings and glimpses of light he will cherish, and be thankful for. All will appear to him to be pointing to a full-orbed Truth which is not in them but in God, and which He has manifested in the Eternal Word, the only begotten Son. The remembrance of hard and proud words spoken against those who were crying out for Truth will be always the bitterest in his life, that which recurs to him with the keenest sense of having grieved the Holy Spirit of God, of having brought upon him the curse of a brother's blood. And if he may look upon that sin as blotted out in the blood of the great Elder Brother of the whole family, he must ask that hereafter he may regard the Sermon on the Mount as if it were not an interpolation in the Divine Book,—that he may accept it as the law of his discourses and acts, not only in his daily life, but *even* when he is contending for the faith once delivered to the saints.

Yours very truly,

LETTER II. MR. MANSEL'S PREFACE.—SIR WILLIAM HAMILTON

My dear Sir,

In Mr. Mansel's preface you will find these words:—

> "It is to a philosopher of our own age and country that we must look for the true theory of the limits of human thought, as applicable to theological, no less than to metaphysical researches, a theory exhibited indeed in a fragmentary and incomplete form, but containing the germ of nearly all that is requisite for a full exposition of the system. The celebrated article of Sir William Hamilton, on the Philosophy of the Unconditioned, contains the key to the understanding and appreciation of nearly the whole body of modern German speculation. His great principle, that 'the Unconditioned is incognizable and inconceivable, its notion being only negative of the Conditioned, which last can alone be positively known or conceived,' has suggested the principal part of the inquiries pursued in the present work; and his practical conclusion, 'We are thus taught the salutary lesson, that the capacity of thought is not to be constituted into the measure of existence; and are warned from recognizing the domain of our knowledge as necessarily coextensive with the horizon of our faith,' is identical with that which is constantly enforced throughout these Lectures." (p. viii.)

Our attention is drawn in this passage to a very remarkable article published originally in the 99th No. of the 'Edinburgh Review' (Oct. 1829), included afterwards in a volume of 'Discussions on Philosophy and Literature, Education and University Reform,' which appeared in the year 1852. Obtain, if you can, the Essay in its latest form. The notes which have been added at the bottom of the pages

are very important for the illustration of this particular subject. The accompanying Dissertations are scarcely less important for the illustration of the writer's mind. But at all events, do not study Sir William Hamilton merely in the pages of his Oxford disciple; if you take that course, you will not appreciate either his philosophy or Mr. Mansel's theology.

I do not give you this caution because I think Mr. Mansel has perverted the doctrine of his Edinburgh teacher, but because that doctrine, as it stands in his quotation, I apprehend would be simply unintelligible to the majority of those who turn to his Lectures as to an armoury which will supply them with weapons against unbelievers. Hence I fear they will be involved in practical dishonesty. They will not care what the ground of the argument is. That they will leave to Mr. Mansel, taking it for granted that so profound a logician knows all about it. Nay, I am not sure that their want of comprehension of his fundamental maxim will not lead them to regard the conclusions which he has deduced from it with more devout astonishment, and more perfect credence. "These great words, *unconditioned, incognizable*," so they will reason, "must be sufficient to demolish the German speculations. We may receive the practical advantages of the demolition in the security of our own opinions."

No such satisfaction to easy inquirers was contemplated by Sir William Hamilton. He did not overlook the fact that there was a relation between his maxim and the controversies of theologians. But he was nearly indifferent to the use which adverse divines might make of it. The theological hints which are contained in his notes are of great worth from their sincerity, from their not being adapted to fit into any system, sometimes from their startling boldness, sometimes from—what you would less expect in so accurate a thinker, such an abhorrer of contradictions—their obvious inconsistencies. But the substance of the Essay has an interest of another kind. What strikes one in Mr. Mansel's quotation as a piece of dry technical logic, insignificant till we can see its effects in the downfall of some party foe,

is taken out of its folds and translated into life. It suggests an historical examination of English, Scotch, French, German habits of thought. It is not merely destructive, for Sir William Hamilton appears as the patriotic champion of Reid and his doctrine of consciousness, if the schools of other countries are to be swept utterly away.

The Essay is a criticism on M. Cousin's *Cours de Philosophie*. It explains, with a clearness and candour which the subject of it generously acknowledged, what the design of M. Cousin's work—properly speaking, of his life—was; how he had rebelled against the sensualism which Condillac had developed out of Locke; how much he had been influenced for a time by the philosophy of Reid, which had expanded the limits of experience as they were settled by Locke and his French followers, but had confined itself rigidly within those limits; how he had yielded to the influence of certain Germans who held that the pursuit of the Absolute is *the* pursuit of Philosophy; how he had attempted to reconcile the two in an Eclectical or Catholic Philosophy of his own. Sir William Hamilton's object is to show that this experiment is hopeless; that all which Cousin had learnt from the Germans was mere delusion; that for the mind to discover that which is beyond its own conditions, is simply impossible. He thus enumerates the opinions which may be entertained respecting the *Unconditioned* as an object of knowledge or thought:—

> "1°, The Unconditioned is incognizable and inconceivable; its notion being only negative of the conditioned, which last can alone be positively known or conceived.— 2°, It is not an object of knowledge; but its notion, as a regulative principle of the mind itself, is more than a mere negation of the conditioned.—3°, It is cognizable, but not conceivable; it can be known by a sinking back into identity with the absolute, but is incomprehensible by consciousness and reflection, which are only of the relative and the different.—4°, It is cognizable and conceivable by consciousness and reflection, under relation, difference, and plurality. The first of these opinions we

regard as true; the second is held by Kant; the third by Schelling; and the last by our author." (p. 12.)

The mere statement of the opinion of so eminent a man as Sir William Hamilton, that these experiments are utterly unreasonable, would of course carry great weight with ignorant people like you and me. But, moreover, how much there is in our own minds which seconds his decision! He appeals directly to our common sense. He asks whether the notion of thought passing beyond the boundaries of thought is not absurd upon the face of it,—whether we can conceive the inconceivable,—whether we can know that which we do not conceive? Set such questions before any number of civilized persons,—say in a London drawing-room,—and what answer could you expect but just as much laughter as the courtesies of society permitted? What need, as Sir W. Hamilton sometimes asks himself,—and Mr. Mansel frequently echoes him,—of debating the point? Is it not like entering into a controversy with lunatics?

I wish you to give this consideration all possible weight; to observe how ridiculous a pursuer of the Absolute makes himself in the eyes of these eminent logicians and in his own; and then to reflect upon a few other facts which also are vouched for by Sir W. Hamilton, and are as indisputable as any in history.

I. The first is expressed in these words:—"From Xenophanes to Leibnitz, the Infinite, the Absolute, the Unconditioned, formed the highest principle of speculation." In other words, from the beginning of the most earnest Greek philosophy,—of that Eleatic school of Greek philosophy to which the discovery of the science of logic is commonly attributed,—down to the commencement of the eighteenth century,—after Bacon and Locke had written,—the most thoughtful and vigorous minds were devoting themselves to that pursuit which it would seem that only madmen can engage in. This conclusion is deduced, not from any statement of mine, but from one which I have given you in the very words of Sir W. Hamilton.

II. But a time came shortly after Leibnitz, when one might have hoped that this running after visions would have been stopped for ever. That which was not effected by the sensualism of Locke, was on the point of being effected, Sir W. Hamilton thinks, by Kant's 'Critique of the Pure Reason.' If there should chance to linger in any Scotch or English mind the notion which was very prevalent at the beginning of this century, that the philosopher of Königsberg was himself a dreamer or an idealist, the following sentences from one who did not speak of him from hearsay, but from study, may suffice to scatter it.

> "In his first *Critique*, Kant undertakes a regular survey of consciousness. He professes to analyze the conditions of human knowledge,—to mete out its limits,—to indicate its point of departure,—and to determine its possibility. That Kant accomplished much, it would be prejudice to deny; nor is his service to philosophy the less, that his success has been more decided in the subversion of error than in the establishment of truth. The result of his examination was the abolition of the metaphysical sciences, of rational psychology, ontology, speculative theology, etc., as founded on mere *petitiones principiorum*. Existence is revealed to us only under specific modifications, and these are known only under the conditions of our faculties of knowledge. 'Things in themselves,' Matter, Mind, God,—all, in short, that is not finite, relative, and phenomenal,—as bearing no analogy to our faculties, is beyond the verge of our knowledge. Philosophy was thus restricted to the observation and analysis of the phenomena of consciousness; and what is not explicitly or implicitly given in a fact of consciousness, is condemned, as transcending the sphere of a legitimate speculation. A knowledge of the unconditioned is declared impossible; either immediately, as a notion, or mediately, as an inference. A demonstration of the absolute from the relative is logically absurd; as in such a syllogism we must collect in the conclusion what is not distributed in the premisses: And an immediate knowledge of the unconditioned is equally impossible." (p. 16.)

With such a champion arising in the very country of the enemy, what might not have been expected? But hear the result:—

> "Kant had annihilated the older metaphysic, but the germ of a more visionary doctrine of the absolute, than any of those refuted, was contained in the bosom of his own philosophy. He had slain the body, but had not exorcised the spectre of the absolute; and this spectre has continued to haunt the schools of Germany even to the present day. The philosophers were not content to abandon their metaphysic; to limit philosophy to an observation of phenomena, and to the generalization of these phenomena into laws. The theories of Bouterweck (in his earlier works), of Bardili, of Reinhold, of Fichte, of Schelling, of Hegel, and of sundry others, are just so many endeavours, of greater or of less ability, to fix the absolute as a positive in knowledge." (p. 18.)

What have we been told here? In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, after a denial, by Hume, not only that the Absolute and Eternal could be known, but that there was an Absolute and an Eternal,—after all the efforts of Reid and his school to vindicate the results of experience from what seemed Hume's inevitable inferences,—finally, after Kant's annihilating criticism, which seemed to leave no scope for Metaphysic, in its old sense, ever again to lift its head,—there has been more eager search after that which passes the limit of experience, more feeling that somehow that *must* be the business of human search, than even in the period between Xenophanes and Leibnitz. The kind of ridicule which Sir William Hamilton has poured upon such inquiries, was poured upon them in every age. Schelling knew such jokes from his boyhood; Hegel must have learnt them from doctors and jesters old and new. Yet these men, whose dialectical faculty has never been disputed,—is not disputed by Mr. Mansel,—acquainted with history, interested in the condition of humanity,—amidst the falls of thrones and empires, in the country which most felt the shock of the French earthquake,—could not be withdrawn from these wild inquiries,—could not be prevented from drawing a multitude of disciples after them, or from influencing more or less decidedly the politics, the

religion, even the ordinary life of Germans who knew little of the nature or course of their speculations!

III. A line which Sir William Hamilton adopts from an old author with whom his extensive reading had made him acquainted,—

Gens ratione ferox et mentem pasta chimeris,

may perhaps account satisfactorily to some minds for these phenomena in Germany. But what is the occasion of this Dissertation? The passing of the same delusion into France,—that country from which all dreams of the Absolute seemed to have been banished since the days of Malebranche,—that country which is called by our learned author, "the metaphysical antipodes of Germany." He was led to notice it because some of its most dangerous symptoms appeared in a man who had passed under the healthful discipline of Reid and Stewart, who busied himself, as we all know, in the most practical questions concerning the education of his own country and of other countries, to whose "learning, elegance, distinguished ability," his Edinburgh critic bears abundant testimony. And it was not a monomania. "Two thousand auditors" (I quote again from the Essay, p. 2) "listened all with admiration, nay with enthusiasm, to the eloquent exposition of doctrines intelligible only to the few; and the oral discussion of philosophy awakened in Paris and in France an interest unexampled since the days of Abelard."

IV. A madness spread over so many countries and ages, resisting so many remedies which were suggested by the wisest men, starting up again when it was least expected, is a fact demanding investigation. I cannot think that Sir William Hamilton has investigated it. He has merely announced it. Mr. Mansel may perhaps tell us something, in the course of his book, about the causes and growth of the disease which he proposes to extirpate. But we must recollect that his book itself adds one more startling fact to those I have already enumerated. It is not only France which has taken the infection. If he did not believe that England, practical England, was liable to the same danger—if he

did not discover indications of it in Oxford, in spite of the number of influences which are likely to counteract it there,—he would not of course have devoted so much of time and toil to the subject of his Lectures. How have *we* come within the reach of this temptation? How is it that neither the religious culture of Oxford, nor that more thorough and continual discipline of the Stock Exchange to which we are subjected in London, has been effectual to ward it off? It is a point which is worthy of the deepest study. Shall I try to give you one or two reasons which have occurred to me, and which I should like you to ponder?

(1.) You may be surprised when I say that the earnest attention of Englishmen to physical studies and to mathematics as the chief instrument for arriving at any clear and sound acquaintance with physical studies,—has somewhat deadened the force of the ridicule which Sir W. Hamilton would bestow on those who from Xenophanes to Schelling have tried to surmount the conditions of their own minds. For that effort which is said to be monstrous when it is made in the search of metaphysical truth, is the very one which Bacon taught the student that he must make if he would advance one step in the knowledge of Nature. The Schoolmen, who had done such good work in ascertaining the terms under which we judge and name things, had wished to limit Nature by those terms. Therefore, Bacon said, all her secrets were hidden from them. Was it not the business of the 'Novum Organum' to show men how they had failed to enter into the true meaning of the objects which they pretended to examine, because they had made their senses and the notions of their understandings the measures of them? Was it not the purpose of that book to point out a method of investigation by which we might rise not only above the conceits of our individual minds, but above those which belong to us as members of a species? The possibility of such a method was easily recognized by the Mathematician. He was rather inclined to affirm that it was not new at all, but the one to which he had always been accustomed, the method of ascending from a particular case to the

affirmation of a universal law. The Logician, trained to the opposite method, of descending from general propositions to individual cases, rebelled against the lesson, nay, has never heartily admitted it to this hour, though compelled to pay it a conventional respect. Sir William Hamilton, a Logician in the most thorough and exclusive sense, was too consistent and too honest not to avow his abhorrence of Mathesis.[3] No wonder he thought Mathematics 'not an improving study,' likely to 'induce credulity,' likely also to 'induce Scepticism.' A brave man doubtless, reckless of popularity, ready to overthrow the discoveries of generations past, or the prospects of generations to come, rather than sacrifice his consistency. One cannot but honour him for his sincere, cordial, 'unconditioned' hatred of that which had no meaning for him. It is amusing to hear such denunciations connected with the cultivation of humility; but that boast too is instructive, as the fierceness of Sir W. Hamilton's contempt for some scientific men of European reputation, and for some scholars not thought wholly despicable, at least on this side of the Tweed, is also instructive. The rules of the Logician could not bind the man. The victims of his scorn may have sometimes laughed that such a man should be, and have oftener wept that Atticus was he. Those who contemplate him from a distance may be thankful for all contributions to the illustration of a mind so remarkable in its weakness as well as in its strength. But since Sir William Hamilton has not succeeded in his raid against English Mathematics, he has not succeeded in persuading Englishmen that there is not a way, and a most legitimate way, in which men may ascend above the conditions of their own intellects, in which they *must* do it if they are not to account the belief ridiculous that the earth moves round the sun, as well as every other belief in that which is, instead of that which appears.

(2.) But if our experimental studies, which we generally regard, and I think rightly regard, as a great protection against some of the worst tendencies of the German mind, makes us indisposed to accept *that*

[3]See 'Discussions,' p. 257.

protection against them which Sir William Hamilton and Mr. Mansel would offer us, I believe there is another influence which works still more powerfully in the same direction. The Bampton Lecturer would speak of the reverence for the Scriptures which we acquire in our nurseries, and which our public Schools and Universities at least design to foster, as one of our great national possessions, which especially distinguishes us from Germans, and which we are jealously to watch over. I entirely accede to this opinion; only expressing my conviction that we are not guarding the treasure, but endangering it, if we make it an excuse for boasting of ourselves, or for triumph over any other country. But this reverence for Scripture is that which, in my judgment, makes it impossible for us to look upon Sir W. Hamilton's dogma as conclusive against the search after the Absolute which he shows to have had such an attraction for the most thoughtful men. I will not repeat what I have said already, or anticipate what I may say hereafter upon this subject. I will merely refer you to one or two of the passages in Sir W. Hamilton's notes, in which he gives his own theological application of his position. The first occurs in a note to p. 15. "True, therefore, are the declarations of a pious philosophy:—'A God understood would be no God at all;'—'To think that God is, as we can think him to be, is blasphemy.'—The Divinity, in a certain sense, is revealed; in a certain sense concealed: He is at once known and unknown. But the last and highest consecration of all true religion must be an altar Ἀγνώστῳ Θεῷ,—'*To the unknown and unknowable God*.' In this consummation, nature and revelation, paganism and Christianity, are at one; and from either source the testimonies are so numerous that I must refrain from quoting any. Am I wrong in thinking, that M. Cousin would not repudiate this doctrine?" Now it cannot help striking any person brought up in our English reverence for Scripture, that Sir W. Hamilton is here, not by inference, but in direct terms, contradicting St. Paul. *He* affirmed that the altar to the Unknown God was *not* the last and highest consecration of true religion. "*Him whom ye ignorantly worship*," he said, "*declare I unto you*."

I am not the least anxious to strain this point, or to use it as the ground of a charge against Sir William Hamilton. Every one knows what an excuse it would have been, if it had occurred in any German philosopher, for raising the cry that he wished to set aside Christianity as an obsolete and imperfect religion, and to "consecrate" a higher system. But God forbid that I should make a man an offender for a word, even if that word is the legitimate deduction from a proposition which is used for the purpose of making all other men offenders, and is vaunted as the basis of all orthodoxy! I rejoice to believe that Sir W. Hamilton meant to be a pious philosopher; I rejoice to discover in this very passage a wavering and uncertainty of mind, showing that the spirit within him demanded that resting-place in the Absolute and Eternal, which he said that men were not permitted, by the conditions of their intellect, to seek after.

A still stronger evidence that it was so, is contained in a note to the 19th page. After quoting a line from Manilius, "None can feel God who shares not in the Godhead," (which is used as a statement, though Sir W. Hamilton thinks an inadequate statement, of that kind of Pantheism which Schelling at one period of his life advocated,) he goes on to say:

> "Manilius has likewise another (poetically) laudable line, of a similar, though less exceptionable, purport:—
>
> > 'Exemplumque Dei quisque est in imagine parva;'
> > ('Each is himself a miniature of God.')
>
> "For we should not recoil to the opposite extreme; and, though man be not identical with the Deity, still is he 'created in the image of God' It is, indeed, only through an analogy of the human with the Divine nature, that we are percipient and recipient of Divinity. As *St. Prosper* has it:—'Nemo possidet Deum, nisi qui possidetur a Deo.'—So *Seneca*:—'In unoquoque virorum bonorum habitat Deus.'—So *Plotinus*:—'Virtue tending to consummation and irradicated in the soul by moral wisdom, reveals a God; but a God destitute of true virtue is an empty name.'—So *Jacobi*:—'From the

enjoyment of virtue springs the idea of a virtuous; from the enjoyment of freedom, the idea of a free; from the enjoyment of life, the idea of a living; from the enjoyment of a divine, the idea of a godlike —and of a God.'—So *Goethe*:—

'Wär' nicht das Auge sonnenhaft,
Wie könnten wir das Licht erblicken?
Lebt' nicht in uns des Gottes eigne Kraft,
Wie könnte uns das Göttliche entzücken?'

So *Kant* and many others. (Thus morality and religion, necessity and atheism, rationally go together.) —The Platonists and Fathers have indeed finely said, that 'God is the soul of the soul, as the soul is the soul of the body.'

'Vita Animae Deus est; haec Corporis. Hac fugiente,
Solvitur hoc; perit hac, destituente Deo.'

These verses are preserved to us from an ancient poet by John of Salisbury, and they denote the comparison of which Buchanan has made so admirable a use in his *Calvini Epicedium*." (p. 19, note.)

This interesting, if somewhat startling, passage exhibits a noble struggle in the heart and mind of a man after a living God, a God nigh and not afar off. By the light of it we must study that passage which Mr. Mansel has taken as the text of his lectures; "We are thus taught the salutary lesson that the capacity of thought is not to be constituted into the measure of existence, and are warned from recognizing the domain of our knowledge as necessarily co-extensive with the horizon of our faith." The first half of this proposition brings out with great clearness the philosophical question which is at issue between Sir W. Hamilton and his opponents. Have we anything in us which can apprehend that which *is*? Are we merely circumscribed by that which we think? In other words; is the opinion of one man or of all men that which determines what we know? This is a fair way of stating the case. We may play with the words Absolute and Infinite for ever; but here is the problem which applies to the least things as much as the greatest. Can we come into contact with the meaning, the substance, the reality

of anything in earth or Heaven? Have we nothing in place of that knowledge but a semblance or appearance which is presented to us? Now here I think our child's faith in the Bible comes in to give its vote, whatever that may go for, in favour of those philosophers whom Sir W. Hamilton and Mr. Mansel condemn. This faith certainly has assumed the Bible to be a book which witnesses against the appearances and notions of men about the Being of whom it speaks,—which testifies that He wishes us to rise above all appearances and notions, and to believe in that which He actually is. And if it be so, then this same childlike reverence for the Bible would lead us to look at the second clause of Sir W. Hamilton's sentence in quite a different light from that in which it presents itself to his admirer. Our faith may have a very wide horizon, far beyond the limits of our conceptions. But *the* Being will be the limit and the object of it. It will not be concerned with a multitude of opinions about Him. It will be in direct affiance to Himself. It will be always craving for the knowledge of Him, just as the eye craves for the sight of any of His visible works. I could almost venture to adopt Sir W. Hamilton's own question to Cousin, "Am I wrong in thinking," that he who made those quotations from St. Prosper, from Seneca, from Plotinus, from Jacobi, "would not repudiate this doctrine?" Am I wrong in thinking that so far as here on earth he repudiated it, he did so because he had not quite accepted St. Paul's statement of the way in which *the* eternal Being has met the seekings of His creatures after Him?

In one of his discussions, that on the Philosophy of Perception, p. 89, Sir William Hamilton has said, "Plato has profoundly defined man, 'the hunter of truth;' for in this chase, as in others, the *pursuit* is all in all, the *success* comparatively nothing. 'Did the Almighty,' says Lessing, 'holding in his right hand *Truth*, and in his left *search after Truth*, deign to proffer me the one I might prefer;—in all humility, but without hesitation, I should request— *Search after Truth*.'" I love Plato's definition as much as Sir W. Hamilton does. I should agree with him and with Lessing, if I did not believe that the revelation of

Truth was at once the awakening and the satisfaction of the search after Truth; because it is the revelation of Him who is Truth to the creature who is made in His image. This is the ground of my conflict with Mr. Mansel. He seems to me to crush the search after Truth, all that is expressed in the word *Philosophy*, by crushing at the same time the discovery of Truth, all that is expressed in the word *Revelation*. I do not believe that the heart of Sir W. Hamilton would have gone along with him in this experiment, whatever excuse may be found for it in his formal dialectics. I am sure that neither the practical sense nor the reverence of the English mind will go along with him. There is one reason more, besides those I have given, why it should not. It is not only philosophers, Greek, German, French, English, from Xenophanes to Hegel, who have been busy in the search after the absolute. That eminent Oriental scholar, whom Oxford has done herself so much honour by adopting among her sons, Mr. Max Müller, will tell us that Buddhism, the most extensive religion in the world, is just as much as Hegelism a search after the Absolute, may just as much as Hegelism terminate in Nothingness. Is the best message we can send from the West to 300,000,000 of people, "You have been dreaming a dream; we can show you that all you have been living for does indeed mean Nothing"? Or may we say this? "The search after the Absolute becomes a contradiction when we try to comprehend it in a notion of our own minds. But the Absolute Himself has stirred you to it, because it has been His purpose to reveal Himself to you."

Faithfully yours,

LETTER III. MR. MANSEL'S PREFACE.—BUTLER

My Dear Sir,

I think we shall save time in the end, if we dwell a little longer upon Mr. Mansel's Preface, before we proceed to his Lectures. He has introduced us to an eminent Scotch Philosopher. I have tried to show you what good we may derive from him, and where he fails us. The next paragraph brings before us an English Divine, with whom we are acquainted already; whom we both, I trust, regard with reverence and gratitude. "But if the best theoretical expression of the limits of human thought is to be found in the writings of a philosopher but recently removed from among us; it is in a work of more than a century old that we find the best instance of the acknowledgment of those limits in practice. *The Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitu-tion and Course of Nature*, furnishes an example of a profound and searching philosophical spirit, com-bined with a just perception of the bounds within which all human philosophy must be confined, to which, in the whole range of similar investigations, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to find a parallel. The author of that work has been justly described as 'one to whose deep sayings no thought-ful mind was ever yet introduced for the first time, without acknowledging the period an epoch in its intellectual history;' and it may be added that the feeling of admiration thus excited will only be increased by a comparison of his writings with the pretentious failures of more ambitious thinkers. Connected as the present author has been for many years with the studies of Oxford, of which those writings have long formed an important part, he feels that he would be wanting in his duty to the University to which he owes so much, were he to hesitate to declare, at this time, his deep-rooted and increasing conviction, that sound

religious philosophy will flourish or fade within her walls, according as she perseveres or neglects to study the works and cultivate the spirit of her great son and teacher, Bishop Butler." (pp. ix., x.)

Mr. Mansel could not more happily have distinguished Sir William Hamilton from Butler, than by speaking of one as a theorist and the other as a practical man. They are admirable specimens of two diametrically opposite kinds of intellect. With an immensely wider range of reading, perhaps with far greater metaphysical power, Sir W. Hamilton's natural dwelling-place is evidently amidst notions and opinions. Whatever subject he contemplates, he must reduce under some notion; till he can do so, it has no interest, scarcely any existence, for him. Bishop Butler is impatient of notions; he would translate them all into facts if he could. It is among facts that he lives; he cares for nothing else. What he wants is to find out their meaning; he would go into the depths or the heights for the sake of ascertaining that. He would never be tempted to forsake the firm ground of earth by the finest theory that was ever invented.

Mr. Mansel therefore has good reason for thinking that he has here found a man who is exceedingly unlike Schelling or Hegel, or even Cousin. But he has not a right to say that he has found a man who will run in the same team with Sir W. Hamilton. If by saying that one has "expounded the limits of human thought," and that the other is "the best instance of the acknowledgment of *those* limits in practice," he merely means that Butler, in his judgment, is not a madman,—since all in his judgment *are* madmen who attempt to transgress the limits of thought which Sir W. Hamilton has marked out,—the admirers of Bishop Butler must accept that compliment with becoming gratitude. But if he means that Butler has alluded anywhere to those limits of thought, and has signified his intention of confining himself within them, the passages in his writings which contain that announcement should have been produced. I cannot find them. His work is of the tentative, experimental kind. He begins from what he sees, not from some definition of what he could or could not conceive. He does not

descend from Generals, but ascends from Particulars. He will start from the very lowest probability; but what he is feeling after is something fixed and certain. I then "should be wanting in my duty to the University to which I owe," not so much as Mr. Mansel, but very much, "if I did not declare at this time my deeply-rooted conviction that Oxford cannot cultivate the spirit of her great son and teacher, Bishop Butler," if she confounds two methods of study which are so entirely unlike as these,—if she accepts the dissertation on the Unconditioned as the measure and rule by which she is to try the 'Analogy.'

Wishing as heartily as Mr. Mansel can do, that the students of Oxford should continue to reverence Butler, and should receive even greater benefits from him than any which they have received hitherto, I cannot conceal from myself that there are serious difficulties in the way of the accomplishment of this desire. They are difficulties which may be overcome if we state them fairly to ourselves; if we believe that Butler, like every great and generative thinker, has the power of adapting himself to circumstances and conditions which he did not contemplate, and which did not exist in his day; if we suppose that the principles which he enforced are not dependent upon the accidents of the moment to which he applied them, or even upon the peculiarities of his own temperament,—but will prove their force most when they are loosened from phrases which he adopted chiefly from compliance with the habits of a dry and dreary period, and which have not borne the test of later experience. Above all, I think those who look upon Butler as a great apologist for the Scriptures, will not suppose he has failed in his object, if the Scriptures themselves should be found to tell more than he could tell. In trying to state the difficulties to which I have alluded, and to point out how they may be removed, I shall not be speaking at random or from guess; I shall be giving the results of my own personal experience, as well as of my experience among young men of your class. I set them down in the conviction that both you and the Undergraduates of Oxford may attain a sounder religious

philosophy through Bishop Butler than can ever be attained through the Bampton Lecturer.

1. Mr. Mansel has wisely quoted the entire title of Butler's book. The ellipsis, *The Analogy of Natural and Revealed Religion*, often makes us forget those pregnant and important words, without which the others have no significance,—*to the Constitution and Course of Nature*. I can answer for myself, that what I owe more than anything else to Butler, and to Butler, so far as I can trace and define obligations, more than to almost any other man, is the sense of being in such a Constitution,—one that I did not create, and have no power to alter, but with which I must be in conformity, or suffer the penalty of being at war with it.

It is not the force of the comparison one thinks of first; it is not the conclusiveness of the argument. What facts are these by which you are illustrating your Religion, natural or revealed! How profoundly important *they* are to me? This is a thought which startles and frightens a man before he has time to calculate the effect of what he is reading on the mind of an opponent. I do not wonder that any one who has felt this should speak of his first acquaintance with Butler as an "epoch in his life". His rapid and brilliant Irish namesake would never, I am persuaded, have used that language about any one who had merely supplied him with a new illustration or argument. His own wit would have produced hundreds of these for or against any cause, on the plaintiff's side or the defendant's. It is quite a different thing when one is forced to ponder the path of one's own life,—to know what it is that wit and argument cannot devise or change. That remains with us as part of an everlasting history when arguments that seemed to us very decisive, have faded from our recollection, or even have proved fallacious.

Any one who cares to know the man Butler, should study the 'Sermons on Human Nature' as much as the 'Analogy.' Both, I believe, will make the same impression upon his mind. In one as much as the other, Butler is proving himself a *constitutional* writer, in the fullest sense of that word. He is helping us to understand what the sense of the

word is by bringing us gradually into an experience of the fact which it denotes. How we become partakers of that experience is as hard to say as it is to trace the steps by which one is familiarized to a tree, or a face. By slow, repeated strokes, each of which in itself is scarcely perceptible, the conviction is wrought into you. The seriousness of the writer's own conviction has had more share in communicating it to you than any skill of which he is master.

2. Butler was well aware of one obstacle to the reception of this belief. Our frivolity, our delight in our own conceptions rather than in the observation of facts and the reflection upon them, *this* kind of danger was constantly present to his mind. He speaks of men's levity and impatience of trouble with sorrow, sometimes almost with bitterness.[4] But there was a hindrance to the acceptance of his teaching which he was not prepared for, which no man living just at his time, and with his education, could fully appreciate. What is it that commonly awakens a man *out* of his frivolity? What is that fact which presents itself to him when he begins to think earnestly? It is the sense of his own evil; what is commonly called—and I do not think there is any better phrase to describe it by—the conviction of sin. Not the perception of an order at all, but of a disorder; not an interest about the laws of the universe, but about my own very self; this is what takes possession of me. All religion, it seems to me, has to do with this. I cannot understand what it means if it is not occupied about this fact of which I have become so terribly conscious, if it does not explain that fact to me, and make known to me some other fact concerning myself which may render that less intolerable. Nature gives me apparently no information about it. Sea, sky, air,—each say, "The secret of thy trouble and of the deliverance from it is not in me." I resort to the Bible only because I have been told it is there. Slowly out of the words of some Prophet or Evangelist or Apostle it comes. The dream is told as well as the interpretation.

[4]See especially the Preface to the 'Sermons,' one of the most important of all documents for the understanding of Butler's character.

Now a man returning to Butler in the midst of this experience, or when he has just attained the result of it, feels what can only be described as a bitter discontent. He may pursue the study as a school-task; he may prepare himself for an examination in the Analogy; he may hope that it will serve his turn hereafter in combating the objections of infidels. But all personal sympathy with it is gone.

He does not understand its nomenclature. The religion which it speaks of does not look like the religion with which he is occupied in his closet. He begins to regard it as an artificial, outward thing, which has acquired, unfortunately, the same name with the real inward thing. There is a bewilderment in the equivoque; he submits to it, reluctant and protesting, supposing that there must in the nature of things be one religion for the schools, and another for the man himself. Yet he feels more in Butler than in any of the writers upon evidences like Paley, the sharpness of the contradiction. He can fancy that arguments about credibility and authenticity lie outside of him. The analogy appeals to himself. And yet it talks to him about Nature, and a constitution of Nature with which he, the sinner, can recognize no fellowship, in which he has the least possible interest. It merely introduces the Bible as containing certain difficulties like those in this constitution of Nature, whereas he has fled to it as a refuge from the only difficulties that have really ever tormented him, or which appear to him of any consequence.

3. That these feelings should exist in some of the most serious readers, must be a great discouragement to any University teacher who wishes to promote the study and cultivate the spirit of Butler. Perhaps the discouragement may be lessened for a time when he perceives amongst other young men, also in earnest,—amongst some of those even who have passed through this state of mind, a strong reaction against it. From such he will hear loud denunciations of what they call merely "subjective" religion, cries as loud for a well defined religious system which shall come with the authority of a long tradition, which is given to all, not submitted to the private judgments of any. Those

who demand a religion of this kind unquestionably turn to Butler with far greater respect, with far more expectation of finding sympathy in him and support from him, than the class to which I referred just now. They welcome the introduction to the Analogy with great delight. They put it forward as the protection against the craving for certainty which characterizes scientific men on the one side, the believers in an infallible authority on the other. 'See,' they say, 'what Butler teaches us respecting Probability as the guide of human life; see how he admonishes us that we ought to take the safer course, even if the arguments in favour of a more dangerous one actually predominate! Wise and excellent counsellor! What can we do better than apply his maxim in determining whether we shall accept or reject any of the traditions of our fathers?'

Such preparation is there in these minds for the study of Butler by their sympathy with some passages in his opening chapter. But what disappointment awaits them when they actually pursue that study through the subsequent chapters! All the promise of an appeal to the traditions of the past as a protection against the exercise of the understanding upon the facts of the present is utterly belied. On such a question as that of a future state, I am led to think, not of what has been said about it in other days, but of the deep, awful fact of my own personal being,—of the strong evidence which there must be to show me that that can be dissolved,—of the absence of any such evidence in the world around me or in my own experience,—of the presence of a number of facts in both, which corroborate a conclusion that would be weighty without them. Even when I come to the chapter on Punishment,—where the argument for believing anything whatever on the ground of safety must be strongest,—I am still led along in the same quiet unexcited method to notice, not what has been said or threatened of punishment in another state, but the actual connection between ill-doing and punishment in this state,—the signs which there are of a fixed, unchangeable law in the midst of apparent anomalies,—the warrant there is for believing that that law

must fully assert itself some day. This is a method of proof so entirely alien from the notions and habits of those who looked to Butler as the champion of Church authority against the exercises of a profane reasoning, that their expectation must be numbered among one of the main hindrances to the "study of his works and the cultivation of his spirit."

4. But these students may reckon, like the others, that if the 'Analogy' does not meet their own especial wants, it may at least furnish them with effectual weapons against different prevalent forms of avowed unbelief. That all-inclusive argument, *There are not more difficulties in our hypothesis than yours;—Without Natural and Revealed Religion you would still meet with a number of unsolved problems in the Course and Constitution of Nature*,—what mouths may it not stop, what subtle reasonings may it not put to rest? My friend! have you tried? Do you know in yourself, do you know in the case of others, what it can effect? It is well that you should understand before you take Orders, or—permit me to say it—in your ministrations to your brethren, in your own heart, there will be a hollowness greater than you can guess. You have worked through the Analogy, you have strengthened your knowledge by reading all the books of Mr. Rogers, and many others who support the same thesis. You can produce the confutation of this and that objection at a moment's notice. But what if you are met with agreement, not objections? What if the unbeliever should say to you,—*You are quite right. I am tormented with perplexities, difficulties, anomalies in the course and Constitution of Nature. They haunt me by night and by day. The condition of millions of human beings in this country, in every country of the world, their physical condition, their moral condition, crushes me; it has taken away from me all faith that there is an Order in the Universe, or that there is a God of Order. I thought, perhaps, as you spoke of a Revelation of God, that might have helped me out of my infinite darkness, that might have given me some light and hope. I find from your own confession that it will not. You wish me to receive your Revelation because it leaves me where it found me—not more hopeless, more Atheistic than I was before. I thank you for the offer, but it is not what I want*.

Or what if you are met with such an answer as this, coming from a person of quite another class? *There are unsolved problems, you say, in the Constitution and Course of Nature. No doubt there are thousands and ten thousands of them. But a number have been solved. We are always hoping for the solution of more. It is the work of the lives of us scientific men to seek after the solution. We feel that we are dishonest men when we are not busy in that work, when we are not pursuing it with hopeful earnestness. We start with ignorance,—the sense of our ignorance increases at every step. But that does not hinder us from seeking after truths, after certainties. As long as we float about among hypotheses and probabilities, we are self-conceited enough; as long as we acquiesce in ignorance, we are conceited enough. It is when we demand truth and refuse to abandon the search of it that we become awe-stricken and humble. In your subject, if we understand you aright, the opposite rule holds. You do not seek for certainties; you are content with hypotheses. Therefore it seems to us there is no Analogy between the Constitution and Course of Nature, and Religion, Natural or Revealed, as you expound it to us*.

Now all these very serious hindrances to the study of Butler proceed, you will perceive, from the kind of men whose opposition he would the least have dreaded, upon whose sympathy he would have most counted; from those who are looking earnestly upon the world, and really desiring to do their own work in it. And you, as an Oxford man, cannot be ignorant that nowhere more than in Oxford is each class of these feelings likely to exist,—to exist in great strength and liveliness. In Butler's own day, it was the first home of that Methodist movement which has affected England so mightily ever since. In our day it has been the starting-point of the High Church movement. Numbers there must be groaning over social anomalies and contradictions. Mathematicians and experimental students are vigorously and successfully asserting their claim to be heard there. A splendid Museum is rising to attest the conviction of the University that something is known, that more may be known, of the Course and Constitution of Nature. Are all these influences, so different, some of them so contradictory,—to conspire in ostracizing Butler?

I am sure they need not. If I had Mr. Mansel's knowledge and faculty of persuasion, and could get the ear of one and another young man who was strongly possessed with any of the thoughts to which I have referred, I believe I could show him that the more he was determined not to part with any of his deepest convictions, the greater might be his respect for the Analogy, the more he might learn from it.

1. I would begin with the man who is absorbed by the sense of personal evil, and the need of personal deliverance. I would long for him that he might never let go that deep, awful truth of which he has become conscious,—might never care less for the discovery that has been made to him of a goodness and forgiveness mightier than the sin within him. I should agree with him altogether that to the Bible, and not to anything in the order and constitution of nature, he was indebted for that discovery. I should agree with him that to the study of the Bible, in its simple and literal signification, he was called by all his past experience, by all the deepest monitions of God's Spirit. Then I would ask him, whether, as he enters upon this task in this hope, it does not strike him that he has overlooked some words which stand out, very prominently, in the Gospels, I mean these—*The Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of Heaven*. Are not these actually the *most* prominent words in the Evangelical narratives, those which a literal student has least right to pass by or to treat carelessly? Is it not the professed business of the narratives to unfold the meaning of those words, to remove the vulgar apprehensions respecting them which existed in the minds of the disciples, which are likely to exist in our minds? That a man in the eagerness and passion of an inquiry concerning the condition of his own soul should scarcely see these constantly recurring expressions, at least not attach any significance to them, is exceedingly natural. Any man who knows anything of himself will understand such an oversight, strange as it is. But can it safely continue? May not the indifference about words, to which our Lord himself attached so much importance, be one cause why those facts of personal experience, once held strongly, become weak in so many minds,—why they are held

rather as recollections of the past than as present truths,—why the phrases take the place of that which they signify, why violent reactions banish even the recollection, or cause it to be contemned? If we knew what that Kingdom of Heaven was which is said to be about us, to be within us, might not we know better, more deeply, what our own radical evil has been; why only a Divine power can extirpate it?

But supposing we begin with very solemn purpose to consider this language of the Bible, are we not reminded a little of the language of Butler, of some of the lessons which he sought to impress upon us? There is a Constitution belonging to us as men, a different Constitution from that which is to be seen in Nature, but not a less real one. There is an Analogy between it and the Constitution and Course of Nature. Does not our Lord say so? What do His parables mean if He does not? Must not we be under the deepest obligation to a writer who tried to fix those truths upon us,—who probably *did* fix them upon us more than we knew,—even if in a particular crisis of our moral history his was not just the kind of assistance that we craved for?

Is there still something in these words, 'Religion, Natural or Revealed,' which grates upon your ear which does not connect itself readily with our Lord's phrase, 'Kingdom of Heaven,' or with your own sense of what religion is? Well, on the subject of nomenclature I will not dispute with you. I think Butler adopted his from the custom of his age. If it strikes you that the word 'Religion' is better limited to internal life,—if it is for you, as the Germans and Sir William Hamilton and Mr. Mansel would say, merely '*subjective*,' (remember, that is no word of mine, I dislike it heartily,) I shall not complain. In truth, I am not so careful as some are to ascertain the force of a word which is Roman and Pagan, rather than Jewish and Christian, which has nothing strictly corresponding to it either in the Old or New Testament. I find Evangelists and Apostles speaking not of Religion, but of God. I think, if Butler had lived in our time, he would have much preferred their language to that which he accepted because it was current in the eighteenth century, and that it would really have accorded much

better with the meaning of his books. That change would no doubt involve another, also, I think, very favourable to the full understanding of his lessons, and to the scattering of clouds which have hidden from us their real purpose. St. Paul speaks of God as revealing, through the works He had made, His eternal Power and Godhead. Having started from that point, he is able consistently and harmoniously to speak of the perfect revelation in the Son. The phrase, 'Natural and Revealed Religion,' is, apparently at least, inconsistent with his view of the case; is it not also in itself ambiguous and bewildering? Would not many chapters in Butler become plainer if we took him to mean that the Author of Nature, whose existence he assumes, was revealing a part of His mind through the constitution and course of Nature, was indicating in that, a revelation that should be more complete and more directly addressed to man?

2. But if I make this concession to one class of serious and devout students, am I not abandoning all chance of recommending our author to that other class which appears to demand first of all what they call an objective Religion,—something given to us, not merely experienced by us? I should be very sorry if I thought so. For among these men have I met also with a devoted purpose, a thorough conviction, which I should count it a sin to weaken in them, which I am sure their friends and fellow-sufferers, if not their teachers, should do their utmost to strengthen in them. I tremble when I see those "first affections," even those "shadowy recollections" which once dwelt in them and coloured their lives, passing away,—their life's star "fading into the light of common day." I know the loss must be grievous; and yet I think it is inevitable so long as they fancy that it is a religious system which they are craving for; that it is not rather a City that hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God,—a Temple in which they themselves are to be living stones. This is the true High Church longing. Those who become half-conscious that it is *this* they want, and yet retain a confused notion that it is something else which they want, rush to Rome for the satisfaction of a hope which is mixed of

the thinnest dream and the firmest substance, fancying that the vague anticipations of the future which she cherishes in them will meet the one, and her present materialism the other. Alas! how many who do not take this course may find in the vagueness of their own thoughts and speculations, in the materialism of ordinary social existence, a drearier *caput mortuum* of all their early expectations than even the Romish confessional and the Romish ceremonial offer to them!

Is there nothing in their old friend and teacher which might save them from this alternative,—which might point to the actual realization of that which in their youth was only a fair ideal? Those dry, hard sermons of his upon Human Nature are founded upon the text, "*For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another*." In the opening of his first sermon you see the man of the eighteenth century. He feels the extreme beauty of St. Paul's comparison; he knows how it was drawn out by the Apostle himself in the Epistle to the Corinthians; but he supposes that such passages must have belonged "to the condition and usages of the Christian world at the time they were written," to "circumstances now ceased and altered." He hovers about the language with a bashful tenderness; with an evident feeling that it must be universal; that if ever language was universal, that is. Yet he is tied and bound by the usages and conditions of the Christian world in *his* time. The religion of hoops and ruffles enchains even his heart and intellect. But what a noble effort he makes to emancipate himself from it! What a sense he has that the Apostle was pointing to a fellowship grounded in the very nature of things, in the very constitution of humanity, which had nothing to do with hoops and ruffles at all! He longs to speak of men as constituted in Christ. His words often become feeble and contradictory because he cannot utter what is struggling within him. But how he may help us to utter it! How he may enable us to clear away the difficulties in himself and in us, in the eighteenth century and in the nineteenth, which hinder us from acknowledging the one Body in Christ, and all as being members one

of another! How he drives us to seek a real not an artificial ground for a society of men—a Church of men—to rest upon! How, in his slow, clear, calm way, never taking two steps at a time, he makes us feel that every idea of our human nature must be inadequate, must be false, which does not assume a righteous ground for its thoughts, movements, activities; which does not treat every departure from that righteous ground as an act of rebellion on the part of our individual tempers and inclinations against the Order in which we are placed, against the law of Love which is holding us together! How much we gain in the force of the demonstration by those very circumstances of the author which make his statement of it scientifically imperfect!

Most affectionately then I would commend Butler to these students, in the confidence that if they will meditate both this work and the Analogy by the light of that higher wisdom which he and they would both confess to be in St. Paul, they may attain to such a grounded belief in a Church—as an actual family in heaven and earth, named in the Name of one Father, united in the Person of an elder Brother who sacrificed Himself for it, inhabited by the Spirit of the Father and the Son,—as no system, Romish or Anglican, could ever give them. And will not they then have an understanding with those who dwell in their experiences of individual sin, of rebellion against Christ's law of love, of the blood which cleanseth away even that sin, —such as they never had before?

3. And will not both be able, having the wisdom which is taught by their different disciplines, to meet with a kindlier sympathy, with a bolder proclamation, those who demand a revelation which shall explain some of the perplexities in the course and constitution of Nature that have baffled them? Will they any longer assume that miserable attitude of defence which they pretend they have learnt from Butler, arguing that the Incarnation and Sacrifice of the Son of God, the revelation of the second Adam, the descent of the Comforter, do not make the condition of the universe more dark than it was before? Have we not faith to put the Gospel of the Son of Man, who came

down from Heaven, and ascended into heaven, and is in heaven, upon another issue than this? Dare we not say, "Yes, we beseech you to consider whether this is not the interpretation of the anomalies which you see in the world; whether you are not told here how those anomalies shall be brought to an end; how the law which Butler declared to be latent in the constitution and course of Nature,—to be visible in the constitution of man,—shall triumph over all that has fought against it"? Dare we not say to the investigator of Nature—"In God's Name go forward; His blessing be with thee! All the secrets that are hid in His works He would have thee search out. He rebukes only the cowardice which hides the talent in the napkin, because it counts Him an austere ruler. Work on with ever-increasing courage, and therefore with ever-increasing reverence and love. For there is an analogy,—as Butler has shown us there is,—between the Kingdom of God in man, His highest Kingdom, and His Kingdom in Nature. He has revealed the first in Christ, that we may know it, and enter into it. He will reveal the other to the patient inquirer who believes Christ's promise as Butler believed it, that those who seek shall find."

Blessed shall he be whosoever carries this message into the lecture-rooms and pulpits of Oxford. Butler's spirit, and a higher Spirit than Butler's, will be his guide and teacher!

Faithfully yours,

LETTER IV. DOGMATISM AND RATIONALISM

Mr. Mansel's First Lecture.—Dogmatism and Rationalism.—the Atonement and Incarnation.

My dear Sir,

Let me entreat you to read Mr. Mansel's first Lecture carefully, and with the accompanying notes, before you look at this Letter. Nothing is further from my wish than that your impression of it should be determined by my criticism or by isolated passages selected from it. I am too deeply convinced of the injustice which is done to authors by this treatment—what I had thought on the subject before has been too firmly fixed in my mind by the perusal of the Bampton Lectures, and by considering how they handle the statements and beliefs of eminent men in all ages and countries—not to be most desirous that I may not fall into that method of proceeding myself, or tempt any one else into it.

The Lecture is a denunciation of two evils to which the preacher supposed that his hearers were exposed. The errors are, *Dogmatism* on the one hand, *Rationalism* on the other. 'Between these two extremes religious philosophy perpetually oscillates' (p. 1). Mr. Mansel's business is of course to ascertain (1st) what each of these evils is, (2nd) what is that middle between them in which Religious Philosophy ought to rest from its oscillations. What help the Lecturer gives us for understanding the force of the words which he uses is contained in the following passage:—

> "In using the above terms, it is necessary to state at the outset the sense in which each is employed, and to emancipate them from the various and vague associations connected with their ordinary use. I do not include under the name of *Dogmatism* the mere enunciation of

religious truths, as resting upon authority and not upon reasoning. The Dogmatist, as well as the Rationalist, is the constructor of a system; and in constructing it, however much the materials upon which he works may be given by a higher authority, yet in connecting them together and exhibiting their systematic form, it is necessary to call in the aid of human ability. Indeed, whatever may be their actual antagonism in the field of religious controversy, the two terms are in their proper sense so little exclusive of each other, that both were originally employed to denote the same persons; the name *Dogmatists or Rationalists* being indifferently given to those medical theorists who insisted on the necessity of calling in the aid of rational principles, to support or correct the conclusions furnished by experience (1). A like significance is to be found in the later language of philosophy, when the term *Dogmatists* was used to denote those philosophers who endeavoured to explain the phenomena of experience by means of rational conceptions and demonstrations; the intelligible world being regarded as the counterpart of the sensible, and the necessary relations of the former as the principles and ground of the observed facts of the latter (2). It is in a sense analogous to this that the term may be most accurately used in reference to Theology. Scripture is to the theological Dogmatist what Experience is to the philosophical. It supplies him with the facts to which his system has to adapt itself. It contains in an unsystematic form the positive doctrines, which further inquiry has to exhibit as supported by reasonable grounds and connected into a scientific whole. Theological Dogmatism is thus an application of reason to the support and defence of pre-existing statements of Scripture (3). Rationalism, on the other hand, so far as it deals with Scripture at all, deals with it as a thing to be adapted to the independent conclusions of the natural reason, and to be rejected where that adaptation cannot conveniently be made. By *Rationalism*, without intending to limit the name to any single school or period in theological controversy, I mean generally to designate that system whose final test of truth is placed in the direct assent of the human consciousness, whether in the form of logical deduction, or moral judgment, or religious intuition; by whatever previous process those faculties may have been raised to

> their assumed dignity as arbitrators. The Rationalist, as such, is not bound to maintain that a divine revelation of religious truth is impossible, nor even to deny that it has actually been given. He may admit the existence of the revelation as a fact: he may acknowledge its utility as a temporary means of instruction for a ruder age: he may even accept certain portions as of universal and permanent authority (4). But he assigns to some superior tribunal the right of determining what is essential to religion and what is not: he claims for himself and his age the privilege of accepting or rejecting any given revelation, wholly or in part, according as it does or does not satisfy the conditions of some higher criterion to be supplied by the human consciousness (5)." (*Bampton Lectures*, 2nd ed. pp. 2-5.)

I have left the figures in my extract, that you may not suppose Mr. Mansel's account of the two opposing terms is his only instrument for "emancipating them from the various and vague associations connected with their ordinary use." Some of these various and vague associations, his readers may think, cleave to this elaborate exposition. The very words 'philosophical' and 'religious,' which recur so frequently in this passage, and which are so ambiguous, are not explained; it is presumed that we must know what they mean. Perhaps the audience at St. Mary's did not need the information we want, for if they comprehended what is involved in "regarding the intelligible world as the counterpart of the sensible, and the necessary relations of the former as the principles and ground of the observed facts of the latter," they were already great adepts in philosophy; their minds must have been exercised on some of its hardest problems. Yet even they may have needed some light as to the way "in which the Scripture is to the Theological Dogmatist what Experience is to the philosophical," since it is generally supposed—and Mr. Mansel seems himself to confirm the opinion—that Experience is a ground which is common to the theologian and the philosopher, and that the dogmas of one are as much affected by it as those of the other.

But, as I said, the mystical numbers in the text show that Mr. Mansel has not trusted exclusively nor principally to definitions. They point to the persons who are condemned for Dogmatism or Rationalism, or both. I will enumerate them just as they occur, without reference to their chronology, their sect, or their importance. Wolf,[5] Paulus, Wegscheider, Schleiermacher, Hegel, Strauss and certain spiritualists[6] Anselm,[7] Gerhard,[8] Chemnitz,[9] Jowett, Greg, Mackay,[10] Socinus, Froude, Priestley, Maurice,[11] Kant, Coleridge,[12] Wilberforce, Damascenus, Schaller, Gischel, Dorner, Marheinecke,[13] Occam,[14] Fichte, Parker, Emerson, Leechman, Foxton (with others previously sentenced),[15] Baden Powell,[16] Schelling, Plotinus, Angelus Silesius (with others previously sentenced),[17] Bruno Bauer, Feuerbach, Comte.[18]

This list, drawn from a few pages, proves surely the extent of Mr. Mansel's reading, and his right to the title of Public or University Prosecutor, which his friends have vindicated for him. I have collected it that I may suggest the question which most concerns us: How are you and I to be delivered from these curses of Dogmatism and Rationalism which we know, upon such high authority, are always threatening us? Suppose you agree that all those whom the Bampton Lecturer cuts off as exceeding on this side or on that, or as mixing the two evils in one, are guilty of the charges brought against them,

[5]Note 3 to p. 4.
[6]Note 4 to p. 5.
[7]Notes 6, 7, 8, to p. 10, and 11 to p. 11.
[8]Note 9 to p. 10.
[9]Note 10 to p. 10.
[10]Notes 13 and 14 to p. 11.
[11]Note 15 to p. 11.
[12]Note 16 to p. 13.
[13]Note 17 to p. 13.
[14]Note 21 to p. 17.
[15]Note 22 to p. 17.
[16]Note 29 to p. 30.
[17]Note 29 to p. 30.
[18]Note 30 to p. 30.

—supposing you had the opportunity which he possessed, of telling a large congregation that such and such men were Dogmatists, such and such Rationalists, and that neither were in the least free from the enormities of the other,—would that be an absolute security against any taint of Dogmatism in yourself? Might not you possibly be driven now and then to explain the grounds upon which you rested your conviction that you were right and they were all wrong? and might you not, in submitting to that necessity, find yourself dropping all unawares into Rationalism? I submit these topics to your consideration, wishing you always to recollect what terrible dangers those must be which could have induced Mr. Mansel to undertake the painful task of passing judgment upon divines and philosophers of all schools and ages, that you may spare no pains in discovering some adequate precautions against them.

In the eloquent peroration to his eighth Lecture (p. 266), Mr. Mansel announces the oracle, *Know thyself*, as the one guide to all safe thought upon any subject. In cases like this, that oracle has taken even a more distinct and awful form, as it has issued from a more sacred shrine. "*Cast first*," it has been said, "*the beam out of thine own eye; then shalt thou see clearly to take the mote out of thy brother's eye*." This principle, being so exactly in accordance with the maxim of the Lectures, must, we are bound to assume, have been diligently weighed by the Lecturer. Before he proceeded to charge any one else with Dogmatism or Rationalism, he went through, we may be sure, a laborious process of inquiry, to ascertain what seeds of them there might be in himself. But his performance of that task, and his success in it, cannot absolve us from a similar one. I, at least, who have been warned by Mr. Mansel in some of the notes to which I have referred, that I have caught the infection of one or both diseases from greater men, am bound to look diligently for the signs of them in the only region in which I may truly judge of their nature or their effects.

I have not far to search for either. If you do not recollect moments in your past life when you have deserved the name of *dogmatical*, when

you knew that it must have been applied to you by those who were about you,—especially by those with whom you were disputing,—when you knew they had a right to apply it,—if those moments do not come back to you with a sense of unspeakable shame,—oh, friend, how I envy you! But I do not envy you, if you are not aware with what fierceness that temptation may come back at any moment,—if you do not feel that it is one against which there is need constantly to watch. Now no one, I believe, who has this experience, need be ignorant in what the vice of Dogmatism consists, whence it springs, whither it may lead. *My* opinion about this or that class of facts, the conclusion to which *I* have been led,—whether I have accepted the general judgment of the world about them, or have dissented from it,—has a worth in my eyes which raises it not only above every other man's opinion, but above the facts themselves. For *this* do I throw down my gage, this will I maintain against the Universe. Is not the world justified in saying that I am very disagreeable, very insolent?

Can I refute the charge? But what if, because that is the case—and I know it is the case—I should resolve to cast all my dogmatism aside? What if I should appear in quite a new character, yielding to everybody, maintaining no ground for myself, admitting that one conclusion is just as likely as another? Such a reaction against our own dogmatism most of us may have known; the more dogmatical we have been in one period, the more likely we are to exhibit that change in another. Is not the verdict of mankind just in condemning this state of mind also? Is it not just in demanding that a man should have something to hold by, in pronouncing him worthless if he has not?

There is then—it is not a question, but an admitted fact—something good at the bottom of this Dogmatism; there is something very evil in the exercise of it. Do you serve me much if you tell me that I am not to be *too* dogmatic; that a little dogmatism is well, but that *ne quid nimis* is the maxim of life? You do not serve me at all. You insult me with a pompous, unpractical rule, which fails me every moment I want to use it. My conscience, and the conscience of mankind, witnesses that

Dogmatism, in the sense of maintaining a notion because it is mine, is *altogether* detestable. It does not admit of degrees; there cannot be too little of it; there ought to be none. My conscience and the conscience of mankind witnesses that Dogmatism, in the sense of standing by a principle, is altogether good; there cannot be too much of it; my want of it is my sin. Here is a distinction which must somehow be sustained. But how is it to be sustained? Every one is aware of the difficulty in his own case; every one knows that he has transgressed, and does transgress continually the boundary; every one therefore has a call to be compassionate when he sees or suspects that his neighbour transgresses it. Every man knows perfectly why he commits this transgression, and what would be the escape from it. He knows that he is a Dogmatist in the offensive, immoral sense, whensoever he confounds that which *seems to him* or to any man with that which *is*; that he is a Dogmatist in an honest and true sense whensoever he swears with deliberate purpose that something is, and that from that no man and devil shall tear him away.

You see how rude and poor my way of arriving at the force of this word is in comparison with Mr. Mansel's. But you and I are not schoolmen; we are roughing it in the world. We have to look upon all questions as they bear upon the actual business of life. I know that Mr. Mansel's account of Dogmatism must strike every one as far more profound and philosophical than mine; but I am thinking of it as a great sin which I have to avoid for the sake of my own being,—as a great moral habit which I must preserve for the sake of my own being. My words will be nothing to you if they do not meet your mind, and point out something which you must fly from, and to which you must cleave; if they do, perhaps they may be some help to you hereafter, if not now.

Well, and Rationalism! Is this 'Know thyself' of Delphi and Oxford not applicable to the investigation of that tendency also? I can attest in my own experience the truth of Mr. Mansel's assertion that Dogmatism and Rationalism are not necessarily in contradiction; that

these habits of mind in their most evil form may dwell together, nay, *must* dwell together. I have listened to the words of some wise man, a lecturer on Moral Science, it might be, or on Physical. I have been asking myself the reason of his statements; I have not had my ears open to take in what he said, just because I was busy with that question. I have looked at a picture which other people admired, which it would have done me good to admire, I have asked for the reason why I should admire, and that occupation of mind made it impossible for me to receive any blessing from the picture. This restless rationalism pursues us though our lives, into every corner of them; those who have been and are tormented by it themselves, may not be quite as ready as those are whose consciences are clearer, to cast a stone at other sinners; but they will be most ready to receive hints about the way in which the evil may be overcome, and to assist their fellows with any hints which they have found beneficial.

There is one remedy which most of us have tried with more or less of hope. The reaction against Rationalism is at least as fierce in a man's soul as the reaction against Dogmatism. When our eyes have been straining themselves with looking into vacancy, the natural inclination is to close them, to go to sleep if we can. When our reason has been acting as if it had power to create its own objects, the natural inclination is to say, 'We will have nothing more to do with it. Tell us what you please; we will take it upon trust. *Logical deduction, moral judgment, religious intuition*, all are equally hateful to us. We want nothing but the repose of authority. Give us that, and our souls will be at peace.' So you have got rid of Rationalism.

And it *is* peace—if a solitude and peace are the same; peace till the Conscience of which Butler spoke awakes; peace till some words like those of St. Paul, "*Christ shall give thee light*," tell it that at least it is not obeying Him when it is denying its own function, when it is refusing to act. Then comes a very strong conviction that the last state was worse than the first, that the most eager and profitless questionings and debatings were better than dreary inanition, that one condition

betokened a dim belief that God must be, the other a practical denial of Him. For we insult ourselves and we insult mankind if we say there was not a truth at the bottom of our Rationalism as well as of our Dogmatism. In the one case as much as the other, the discovery of the truth is the only way to the clear acknowledgment of the falsehood.

God teaches me to assert; for there is that which I did not make by my thought, belief, reason, and which I cannot unmake. I glorify my assertions, and so actually constitute my belief, thought, or reason, into a ground of things. God teaches me to question, that I may separate the one from the other, that I may not accept Opinions for Realities. I turn my questioning into an excuse for denying Realities. So I come round to the same point again. My Rationalism becomes impotent Dogmatism, as my Dogmatism becomes the most hopeless Rationalism.

I have tried to test these words by common experience, not mixing at first any theological associations with them. That I suppose was Mr. Mansel's original intention. If he could have fulfilled it, his treatment of the subject would have been more orderly and satisfactory; perhaps a little fairer to his opponents. But he did not find it possible. He could not produce the moral effect which he desired to produce on his hearers, unless he instantly connected Rationalism with a special mode of treating the Scriptures, unless he sometimes contracted and sometimes expanded the definition of it, in order that it might reach all who differed from him, and might by no possibility touch himself. I have shown you that I do not protest against either of his definitions because it includes me. I demand that each of them should include me. A Dogmatist and Rationalist in their worst sense, I know that I am liable to be. A Dogmatist and a Rationalist in their best sense, I desire to be.

But though I think that this method of determining the signification of the words would have been pronounced the honest and reasonable one by Sir William Hamilton, though I am satisfied Butler would have adopted it, I am anxious that it should be applied to the

same use to which the Bampton Lecturer applies his. He plunges at once into the doctrines of the Atonement and the Incarnation, testing by the ways in which they have been treated the dogmatic and rationalistic tendencies. I will follow him, trembling indeed, but only on account of the awfulness of the subjects, not the least because I shrink from stating my own convictions respecting them, or from saying what there is in his statements which from the bottom of my heart I repudiate. It is no time for concealing what one believes on any great questions, least of all upon those which form the central subjects of my preaching, as they will do, I trust, one day of yours.

The following sentences bring the first of these subjects directly before us:

> "Thus, to select one example out of many, the revealed doctrine of Christ's Atonement for the sins of men has been alternately defended and assailed by some such arguments as these. We have been told, on the one hand, that man's redemption *could not* have been brought about by any other means:—that God could not, consistently with His own attributes, have suffered man to perish unredeemed, or have redeemed him by any inferior sacrifice:—that man, redeemed from death, must become the servant of him who redeems him; and that it was not meet that he should be the servant of any other than God:—that no other sacrifice could have satisfied divine justice:—that no other victim could have endured the burden of God's wrath. These and similar arguments have been brought forward, as one of the greatest of their authors avows, to defend the teaching of the Catholic Faith on the ground of a *reasonable necessity*. While, on the other hand, it has been argued that the revealed doctrine itself cannot be accepted as literally true; because we cannot believe that God was angry, and needed to be propitiated:—because it is inconsistent with the Divine Justice that the innocent should suffer for the sins of the guilty:—because it is more reasonable to believe that God freely forgives the offences of His creatures:—because we cannot conceive how the punishment

of one can do away with the guilt of another." (*Bampton Lectures*, 2nd edition, pp. 10, 11.)

One remark respecting this passage will strike you immediately. It is the foundation of ten notes, condemning a large portion of those writers whose names I have given you already. And yet the Lecturer does not waste even a single line in telling us what "that revealed doctrine of Christ's Atonement for the sins of men" is, which they have assailed and defended. He must be perfectly aware that more than one able series of Bampton Lectures has been delivered for the express purpose of ascertaining what it is and what it is not. He must be aware that in those able treatises some notions which have attached themselves in the minds of many men to the revealed doctrine of the Atonement, are dismissed as untenable. Whether it ought to be received with these additions or without them, in what terms it should be stated or presented to men generally, we are not told. Nevertheless a number of actual men, living or dead, are held up as examples of mischievous Dogmatism or mischievous Rationalism for their way of attacking or maintaining it. Of all outrages upon philosophical method, and upon ordinary English justice, which are to be found in our literature, I believe this is the most flagrant. Mr. Mansel must have had a very strong suspicion that if he *had* stated the "revealed doctrine of the Atonement" according to his notion of it, a number of the most earnest, the most confessedly orthodox and Evangelical clergymen in England, would have said either, 'We do not accept it in that sense;' or, 'That method of setting it forth does not satisfy us;' or, 'Such an explanation may do very well for the schools, but it is not the doctrine we preach in our pulpits to sinners.' It was therefore convenient to leave the whole subject in vagueness. In virtue of that vagueness he is able to deal his blows right and left; he can at least frighten his readers with the belief that there is something which they ought to eschew, though he is unable or unwilling to tell them what they should embrace.

But, my dear Sir, however convenient this course may be to a University Doctor, it is not convenient, it is not right, for those who believe that they are actually entrusted with a Gospel, and who must give account to God for the way in which they discharge the trust. We must be able to say what we mean when we declare that "*God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and that He has committed to us the word of reconciliation*." It cannot be our chief business to find out what mistakes men have made in arguing about our message on one side or the other. What *is* the message itself? that must be our question. From whom does it come? To whom is it addressed? That it is a message of peace from a Father to His children: that that Father is a righteous Father, and that the children have been unrighteous because they have been separated from Him; that the peace is made in the body and blood of a righteous Son, one with the Father, who has given Himself for men; that the peace is carried home to men's hearts by a righteous and reconciling Spirit,—is this heterodox doctrine? Because if it is, it is what I mean, so help me God, to live and die in declaring to those among whom I minister; what I am ashamed that I have declared so little and with so cold a heart; what I hold has the mightiest power to reform and renew human society. This is what I understand by the doctrine of the Atonement; this is what I believe Saints and Martyrs understood by it. In it, I hold, is revealed the goodness and truth and long-suffering of God.

Wherein do I suppose that this statement differs from any that Mr. Mansel would make? I have very imperfect means of judging, as he has kept his counsel about that which he believes, and has only been communicative about that which he deems dogmatical or rationalistic. But I should suppose that he would construct from different passages of Scripture a doctrine which he would call the doctrine of the Atonement, and that he would object decidedly to my saying that the passages of Scripture are far more distinct and intelligible than all that has been constructed out of them or on them, and that they declare not a doctrine about Reconciliation, but the actual Reconciliation of

God with Man in the person of His Son. Perhaps I ought not to assume this point at present, for you must remember that he has not yet given us his application of the doctrine of the Unconditioned. This present Lecture is only preliminary to the series. The holocaust of writers in the Notes is doubtless offered to the genius of Sir William Hamilton; but he has not yet been brought forward himself to determine what is included in the horizon of our faith, what are or are not the possibilities of a Revelation. Nevertheless, I think we shall find presently that I have stated the Lecturer's meaning fairly, and therefore that what I have said of the Atonement must necessarily subject me to his condemnation.

Assuming this difference then, I wish to show you how it bears upon the question of Dogmatism and Rationalism. I am tempted, of course, to dogmatize upon this as upon every subject; that is to say, to put certain notions of mine concerning the Atonement before my hearers, in place of the Atonement itself. The hindrances to my doing this are, first, the strength of my conviction that it is very horrible to intercept the direct communication between God and His creatures which I believe the Bible bears witness of; secondly, the conviction that just what I and all men want, is to be delivered from our notions and conceits about Him, and the relation in which we stand to Him, which notions and conceits have led to infinite disorder and unrighteousness; thirdly, to the discovery that the more I introduce these notions and conceits into my teaching, the more I am out of harmony with the practical teaching of the Bible, and unable to profit by it,—the less I am able to do justice to the various thoughts and speculations and reasonings of men who are seeking after righteousness through communion with a righteous God. The Revelation of God Himself, as the Reconciler and Atoner of man, is, it seems to me, the substitute for Dogmatism, which tries to measure and confine Him by our narrow and carnal notions.

To escape from Dogmatism about the Atonement is also, I think, to escape from Rationalism about it. The unveiling of a Charity such as I could form only the faintest dream or conception of,—of a God who

makes a perfect sacrifice for the sake of reconciling to Him those who have wandered from Him, takes from me all excuse for measuring and circumscribing Him by any thoughts and notions of mine. Of course I try again and again to do so. I make all sorts of silly experiments to bring this love down to my level. I devise arrangements and form imaginations to account for it, and to determine the limits of it. But the more the Atonement itself, in its own mighty power,—not as a doctrine, but as the Sacrifice of a Divine Person,—is brought home to me and overpowers me, the more I am driven out of this false and wretched Rationalism; the more I am content to let God manifest Himself to me as He has done in His Son, as He promises to do in us all by His Spirit. And this because I become in the truest and fullest sense a Rationalist, because a spirit that was asleep in me before, is awakened, to perceive a length and breadth and height and depth of Divinity which could, so far as I know, only reveal itself in that way, and which must open the eye that was created to discern it.

How does this way of contemplating and presenting the Atonement affect one's judgment of those whom Mr. Mansel declares to have made shipwreck, either as Dogmatists or Rationalists? I would take an instance of each kind. I do not know whether you are a reader of *Anselm*. I own myself to be a very affectionate and admiring reader, though certainly in no sense a disciple of him. Perhaps I may venture to quote some sentences which I wrote about him several years ago, certainly with no purpose of their serving any argumentative purpose:—

> It is an agreeable characteristic of Anselm's works that a very small portion of them indeed belong to controversy. There is one treatise, written at the instigation of the Pope, on the Greek doctrine of the procession of the Holy Ghost, and one against Roscellinus, on the Incarnation. With these exceptions, meditations, prayers, letters, and books written for the solution of difficulties which had actually occurred to some person who had consulted him, generally to some brother at Bec, form his contribution to Middle Age literature. Not

more for the honour of Anselm himself than for the comprehension of his books, this last characteristic should be recollected. They were not hard dogmatical treatises written in cold blood, to build up a system or to vanquish opponents. They were actual guides to the doubter; attempts, often made with much reluctant modesty, to untie knots which worthy men found to be interfering with their peace and with their practice.

"The characteristic of Anselm as a man was, we think, a love of righteousness for its own sake. That noble habit of mind is illustrated in his conversation respecting Alphege, scarcely less in a sentence of his, reported by Eadmer, which has given rise to some very uncharitable Protestant commentaries, that 'he would rather be in Hell if he were pure of sin, than possess the Kingdom of Heaven under the pollution of sin.' This too is the spirit of his writings. It is from this that they derive their substantial and permanent worth. Right there must be—that is the postulate of his mind. Then, partly for the sake of entering more deeply into the apprehension and possession of that which he inwardly acknowledged, partly for the sake of removing confusions from the minds of his brethren, he undertakes to establish his assumption by proof. Oftentimes we are compelled to doubt the success of these demonstrations. We have an uncomfortable feeling, that the principle which we are to arrive at by an elaborate process of reasoning has been taken for granted at the commencement of it; some of the arguments seem scarcely worthy of their object, some of them seem to interfere with it, by tempting us to accept one mode of contemplating it instead of the object itself. Theology has cause to complain of Anselm for having suggested theories and argumentations in connection with Articles of the Creed, which through their plausibility and through the excellency of the writer have gained currency in the Church, till they have been adopted as essential parts of that of which they were at best only defences and explanations. But viewing him, as we are privileged to do, simply as philosophical students,—caring less about the results to which his treatises have led dogmatists, than about his principles and about his method of thought,—he offers us a very interesting subject of examination. In Johannes Scotus the

> metaphysical element was evidently predominant over the ethical; in Anselm the moral absorbs everything into itself. Moral ends are first in his mind; scientific truth he learns to love, because he is too honest a man not to feel that Goodness is a contradiction if it has not Truth for its support. But the difference in the starting point of these two writers affects all their intellectual habits. Anselm is much more of a *formal* reasoner than Johannes; amongst ordinary school-readers he would pass for a much more *accurate* reasoner. He supplies many more producible arguments; he meets the perplexities which the use of words occasions more promptly; though far enough from a superficial thinker, he keeps much more the high-road of the intellect, and is not tempted to explore caverns. For such a person, Logic becomes an invaluable auxiliary; he has not the dread of its limiting the infinite which the other had; he secures his moral truth from all verbal invasions; then he can let verbal refinements have their full swing in the discussion of objections and in the effort to remove them."

I believe this is a faithful description of the man. It may explain to you the passages from the *Cur Deus Homo* which Mr. Mansel has quoted. Anselm was no doubt a Dogmatist. He received with the simplest affection the creeds of his childhood, and not only the creeds, but the ordinary medieval system. He was also, no doubt, a Rationalist. He tried to meet difficulties, to account for facts, to establish formulas, with what result I have tried to express. But what saved him from being a mere Dogmatist and a mere Rationalist? What gave his books a beauty and worth which I am sure every earnest student will find in them, now in this nineteenth century, when all the forms and habits of the time to which he belonged have passed away? It was this, that God was to Anselm more than all systems; that he was sure God was a righteous Being,—that, and only that; that he was sure God had revealed His Righteousness to men, and meant that they should know it. Caring then very little for his arguments and proofs about the Atonement, I know of no truer witness for its essential character, no stronger witness against those who would bring back Paganism under the name of

Christianity, and who suppose that the notions of men concerning an Atonement, instead of pointing to the one which God has made, are to be the measures and standards of its character or its method.

I will pass from the earliest instance in Mr. Mansel's Notes to the latest. I will venture, not without diffidence and hesitation, to speak of a passage he has quoted from his own learned and devout contemporary Professor Jowett. I have the misfortune to differ from that excellent man, not only in particulars of his interpretation of St. Paul, but in the fundamental maxim of it. Modern thought, it seems to me, has been approaching more and more near to a condition in which no teachers can meet it so directly as St. Paul and St. John, taken in their most literal sense. I could have recognized the chasm which he finds between their revelations and English thoughts and hopes in the *eighteenth* century. The nineteenth, I believe, as much by its doubts, perplexities, contradictions, as by what is noblest in it,—as much by its political as by its philosophical and theological movements,—has been brought into a state in which all glosses upon them will be cast to the winds; in which they will be received as the clearest, simplest messages to the scholar and to the wayfarer, capable of meeting what we sometimes fancy are the newest demands of humanity and Science. I differ from him therefore not as radically as I differ from Mr. Mansel, yet partly on the same ground. Nevertheless, I recognize in him one of the honestest and bravest of men,—honest and brave as few men are in this day,—in that he will not express more than he thinks, and that he will state what he thinks, without regarding consequences,—a quality all the more remarkable in one who evidently hesitates so much before he assumes a position. Such a habit of mind must, I should conceive, have a salutary effect upon us all, seeing that one of our great temptations is to use 'unreal words,' and to let our statements outstrip our convictions.

Having these feelings respecting this eminent Teacher, it is the greater duty as well as pleasure to express the most hearty concurrence in a sentiment which Mr. Mansel quotes from him for the purpose

of fixing on him the charge of Rationalism on the subject of the Atonement. "In what did this Satisfaction consist? Was it that God was angry, and needed to be propitiated like some heathen deity of old? Such a thought refutes itself by the very indignation which it calls up in the human bosom." — (*Jowett, Epistles of St. Paul, vol. ii. p. 472.*) Now mark for what purpose this passage is quoted. It is not to relieve St. Paul, or any writer of the Old or New Testament, from the possible imputation that he represented the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, the God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but not clearing the guilty, the God who is Just and without iniquity, as resembling 'a heathen deity of old.' It is not to show that the anger against sin which is attributed to the Lord God throughout the Bible is the most opposite thing possible to the anger against particular persons who had done them injury which is attributed to heathen deities. It is not to quote those long chapters of the Prophets in which God appeals to the conscience of His people against their revolts from Him, or in which He is contrasted with idols. It is not to urge that the declaration of our Lord, "*He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father*," if it is taken as it stands, will at once settle all controversies respecting His character and Nature. No! but it is to say either that there is no moral indignation in the human bosom against the confusion of our God and Father with Moloch and Siva; or to say that that moral indignation is good for nothing. And this comes from a pupil of Butler, the great champion of the Conscience! And this comes from an Apologist for Prophets and Apostles, every one of whom would have died, many of whom did die, because they would not worship the gods of the nations! And this comes from the apologist of Apostles who said that in Jesus dwelt the fullness of the Godhead bodily! Mr. Mansel has put forth a defence of what is denounced by some as anthropomorphic language. I prize that language, little as I like his way of pleading for it. I hold, for instance, the name of 'jealous,' which is so often given to God in Scripture, to be a true epithet for a holy and good Being. I believe God *is* jealous

of His name and character, jealous of that confusion with wicked beings which Mr. Mansel implicitly authorizes; which he pronounces it Rationalistic to abhor. Have not all dogmatists, when their schemes of accounting for the purposes of the Most High have been most gratuitous and even most profane,—have not all Rationalists, when their cries have had the most of an atheistical form and character, been useful protestants against this last, most hopeless, most horrible kind of orthodoxy? Can we dispense with their testimony while this language is heard in high places, while it goes forth from the central pulpits of the land? May we not at least be sure that it will be listened to, and that we shall have ourselves to blame for any consequences that may proceed from it?

I must repeat what I have said already in my Sermons. I do not impute to Mr. Mansel what his language seems to convey. I fully believe he would start with horror at the thought of identifying the God in whom is light and no darkness at all, with the dark beings whom men have made for themselves to worship. But see what a Nemesis awaits those who treat the most sacred portions of the Gospel—those portions which speak most of union and reconciliation—chiefly as excuses for finding out how much of wrong and unbelief there is in their fellow-men! These doctrines lose their very nature. They are to be received at the point of the bayonet because they are set down in a book. *What* is set down there *what* we are asked to receive—*what* is involved in the reception of them—there is not leisure to inquire. The words are to be eaten; but it is the great business of those who enforce the eating, to prove that we have no organs wherewith we can masticate or digest them.

There is one eloquent passage in this Lecture which, if I had read it without the context, I should have claimed as a testimony on behalf of the truth which Sir W. Hamilton, we have seen, was willing to acknowledge, that man is made in the image of God, and therefore that a participation of divinity is implied in his constitution. I should have supposed it was meant to show philosophers that our assertion

of the union of the Godhead and Manhood in one Christ, far from being the stumbling-block to the Reason which they have taken it to be, is the one possible reconciliation of that human belief which has pervaded the hearts of all human beings,—which has been at the root of all mythologies,—with the protest against it which their consciences have borne, and which the Bible bears,—against the confusion of God with the works of His hands. Read it, and judge for yourself.

> "The origin of such theories is of course to be traced to that morbid horror of what they are pleased to call Anthropomorphism, which poisons the speculations of so many modern philosophers, when they attempt to be wise above what is written, and seek for a metaphysical exposition of God's nature and attributes. They may not, forsooth, think of the unchangeable God as if He were their fellow-man, influenced by human motives, and moved by human supplications. They want a truer, a juster idea of the Deity as He is, than that under which He has been pleased to reveal Himself; and they call on their reason to furnish it. Fools, to dream that man can escape from himself, that human reason can draw aught but a human portrait of God! They do but substitute a marred and mutilated humanity for one exalted and entire: they add nothing to their conception of God as He is, but only take away a part of their conception of man. Sympathy, and love, and fatherly kindness, and forgiving mercy, have evaporated in the crucible of their philosophy; and what is the *caput mortuum* that remains, but only the sterner features of humanity exhibited in repulsive nakedness? The God who listens to prayer, we are told, appears in the likeness of human mutability. Be it so. What is the God who does not listen, but the likeness of human obstinacy? Do we ascribe to Him a fixed purpose? our conception of a purpose is human. Do we speak of Him as continuing unchanged? our conception of continuance is human. Do we conceive Him as knowing and determining? What are knowledge and determination but modes of human consciousness? And what know we of consciousness itself, but as the contrast between successive mental states? But our rational philosopher stops short in the middle of his reasoning. He strips off from humanity

just so much as suits his purpose;—'and the residue thereof he maketh a god;'—less pious in his idolatry than the carver of the graven image, in that he does not fall down unto it and pray unto it, but is content to stand afar off and reason concerning it. And why does he retain any conception of God at all, but that he retains some portions of an imperfect humanity? Man is still the residue that is left; deprived indeed of all that is amiable in humanity, but, in the darker features which remain, still man. Man in his purposes; man in his inflexibility; man in that relation to time from which no philosophy, whatever its pretensions, can wholly free itself; pursuing with indomitable resolution a preconceived design; deaf to the yearning instincts which compel his creatures to call upon him. Yet this, forsooth, is a philosophical conception of the Deity, more worthy of an enlightened reason than the human imagery of the Psalmist. 'The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers.'

Surely downright idolatry is better than this *rational* worship of a fragment of humanity. Better is the superstition which sees the image of God in the wonderful whole which God has fashioned, than the philosophy which would carve for itself a Deity out of the remnant which man has mutilated. Better to realize the satire of the Eleatic philosopher, to make God in the likeness of man, even as the ox or the horse might conceive gods in the form of oxen or horses, than to adore some half-hewn Hermes, the head of a man joined to a misshapen block. Better to fall down before that marvellous compound of human consciousness whose elements God has joined together, and no man can put asunder, than to strip reason of those cognate elements which together furnish all that we can conceive or imagine of conscious or personal existence, and to defy the emptiest of all abstractions, a something or a nothing, with just enough of its human original left to form a theme for the disputations of philosophy, but not enough to furnish a single ground of appeal to the human feelings of love, of reverence, and of fear. Unmixed idolatry is more religious than this. Undisguised atheism is more logical." —(*Bampton Lectures*, 2nd ed., pp. 17-20.)

I cannot imagine a man writing such fervent sentences as these, denouncing men as 'fools' for fancying that God has not human qualities and sympathies—telling them that they had better worship the most miserable idol, than hold what they hold,—assuring them that they would be wiser to be undisguised atheists—if he is not prepared to say, 'I can show you a more excellent way. I can tell you what God has done to satisfy "that marvellous compound of human consciousness which He has joined together, and which man cannot put asunder." I can show you how He has made Himself known to us in His only-begotten Son, so that we may not any longer confound Him with his feeble and sinful creatures, or yet divide Him from them as if His nature was not really the ground and archetype of theirs.' If this cannot be done, are we not bound, by the preacher's own showing, to take refuge in one or other of his terrible alternatives?

How then does Mr. Mansel speak of the union of the Godhead and Manhood in Christ? Thus: "*We believe that Christ is both God and Man, for that is revealed to us. We know not how He is so, for this is not revealed, and we can learn it in no other way*." (pp. 14 and 15.) Now you will see at once that the revelation of this union is not presented here *in any sense whatever* as the interpretation of the doubt whether men are to worship God as one of His creatures, or whether they are to regard Him as separate from them all. It is an additional, a hard, an insoluble difficulty, which we must receive in addition to all other difficulties, because God commands us in His book to receive it. We are left by this amazing revelation—that He who was the express Image of the Father, was made man and dwelt among us—just where we were before. We are left just as much as ever to oscillate between unmixed idolatry and undisguised atheism, with only this additional comfort, that every attempt of a man to find a middle between them, makes him more irreligious than if he chose the first course, more illogical than if he chose the last.

To me this result is a very shocking one. Nor is the shock at all diminished as I trace the course of thought which justifies it to the

mind of the Lecturer. A man whom many of us remember with gratitude and affection, who, we hope, is now in communion with those from whom on earth he thought it right to separate,—the late Mr. R. Wilberforce,—wrote a book, as you know, on the Incarnation. In that book he appears to ground the idea of the union of the Godhead and Manhood in Christ upon the assumption of a real Human Nature, distinct from the nature of each individual man. Mr. Mansel at once perceives that the writer has introduced into theology the realism of Duns Scotus and those schoolmen whom, as we commonly suppose, Occam confuted. Here, then, is a plausible excuse for warning his hearers that, if they receive the Incarnation as anything more than a tenet which is revealed in the Bible, they will certainly fall into all the medieval confusions, will again blend Theology and Philosophy together, so destroying the simplicity of the one and the freedom of the other.

I have called this argument *plausible*, by which I mean that it is one which was quite sure to commend itself to a great majority of those who heard it. The word Realism would be just sufficiently understood by an Oxford congregation to cause a vague terror; the practical conscience of Englishmen would protest against the mixture of scholastic refinements with the faith of God; the events in the later life of the author who was criticized would be inevitably connected with the theses he had defended; that indolence which Butler considered so fatal to *his* course of inquiry, would make the moral palatable to all the no-thinkers among the crowd that listened to the Lectures; those whose minds had been exercised by the realistic and nominalistic questions, might eagerly welcome any promise of repose from them. I gave the argument no *better* name than plausible, because I regard it as the argument of an able rhetorician, not of an earnest philosopher or theologian who cares to explain what these medieval strifes meant; to satisfy the honest conviction of the practical Englishman; to arouse the no-thinker out of his slumbers; to show the perplexed thinker how he

may find a way out of his perplexities without losing the great blessing of them.

It is the easiest thing in the world to talk as Mr. Mansel talks about "the forgotten follies of Scholastic Realism," and about "endangering the cause of Religion by seeking to explain its deepest mysteries by the lifeless forms of a worn-out controversy." Many such things has one heard; there is always a certain response to them in our minds. But they help us exceedingly little. Why do these 'forgotten follies' start up so often in connection with these 'deep mysteries'? Why could not Realistic and Nominalistic controversies sever themselves from the doctrines of the two Natures in Christ, and of the Trinity? Why have Divines and Philosophers both been protesting for so many centuries against the confusion of their provinces, while yet there is more of it in our day than in any previous one? Why does Mr. Mansel protest against it, and yet put forth a work which contains more appeals to the religious feelings against Philosophers, and (as we shall see when we come to his next Lecture) more of verbal subtleties that are likely to disturb simple faith, than almost any book of the century? These facts are not to be got rid of by loose declamation. They require the most serious pondering. May I give you one or two hints which will possibly assist your own reflections upon them?

If one considers the history of Medieval Philosophy, not for the purpose of laughing at 'forgotten follies,' but of understanding what a set of very earnest men were engaged in, and how God was leading them by a better way than they knew, this conclusion forces itself upon us. These men could not be satisfied with regarding "the deepest mysteries of our faith" as dogmas; if they were to be believed at all, they must be more. They must be involved in the very Constitution of things. They must be at the very ground of it. The schoolmen were inclined enough to say, "We have received them as a tradition. They are, *because* we have received them." But they could not. The tradition must surely speak of that which is; if it did not, it was a lying tradition, to be cast aside like those over which the Gospel had

triumphed. Hence the vehement protest on the part of the orthodox in the eleventh century against Nominalism, because it seemed to them that the deepest realities by this teaching were changed into mere names; hence the fight, no less honest, on the part of the Nominalists, to prevent a confusion of notions in our minds with actual things. Through this school conflict, I believe, if we use it aright, we may discover true principles which do not belong to the schools but to mankind have asserted themselves—we may discover what work the schools can do and cannot do. As in the case of the conflicts between the King and the Priest, between the King and the Barons, between the King and the Commons, it is not by ranging ourselves on either side, least of all is it by despising both sides and setting up ourselves as superior to both, that we arrive at the right historical lesson. Rather should we confess what a strong conviction was working in the heart of each, and how that conviction proved its worth and its stability in spite of all the dogmatical vehemence and the dogmatical feebleness with which it was accompanied.

The battle ceased for a time when the practical and personal faith of the Reformers broke through the webs of Scholasticism, and claimed a personal affiance in the Son of God, who had taken our nature. Then for awhile Theologians—Protestant at least—were ready enough to take a position of their own, and to let the Philosophers take theirs. But this assignment of provinces was soon disturbed again; it was felt that the personal faith could not determine that which it believed; that into this determination, processes of the understanding entered; the philosophers and logicians must give their opinions about these processes. Theology became as dogmatic as it was in the Middle Ages; *apparently* there was not the same conflict to ascertain whether its dogmas pointed to realities or were only notions of the understanding. But that controversy soon reappeared in another shape. Personal faith again put in its vehement protest against dogmas; its claim to some actual living ground on which it might rest: again it had to be asked, 'Can personal faith affirm *what* is to be believed?' The seventeenth

century was full of these strifes. The eighteenth seemed to promise the subsidence of them. Theology, it was hoped, might keep its own ground, Philosophy might keep its ground. In no period did each more resolutely attack the province of the other. In no period were there more efforts, unsuccessful efforts, made for the adjustment of their respective claims. Meantime the strong convictions of men once more became violently impatient of religious dogmatism, as well as of mere moralities. The deep mysteries again were sought for, as realities to which the Conscience must betake itself as a refuge from its own torments. The *Cur Deus Homo* was a question debated in the hearts of peasants and miners with as much earnestness as it had been seven centuries before by the monks of Bec.

These miners and peasants cared little about philosophers or school Theologians; would have regarded them as profane men. But they affected, more than they knew, the speculations of both. It has been found impossible in our day for Theologians to shut themselves up in a set of opinions. They must answer, not to a demand of the schools, but to a demand of the people; 'Have those opinions any counterpart in Reality? Do they mean anything? You call them mysteries; do you tell us, by using that word, that we have nothing to do with them,—that they stand in no relation to us? Speak! for we will know.' On the other hand, it has been found absolutely impossible for Philosophers, from whatever point they might start, not to come into contact with the question of the union of Humanity with Godhead. Read Sir William Hamilton's discussions; look through Mr. Mansel's Notes; no further evidence is necessary. Warn philosophers off the ground as you will; call it a violation of neutrality, a venturing into the Theological preserves. Denounce it, laugh at it, persecute it; you cannot hinder it. Remember, it has happened not only in spite of Theological protests, but of Philosophical. Numbers of Philosophers voted solemnly that they would leave us to manage our own nonsense. They could not. A necessity has urged them on. Take the extreme cases. Choose them from whatever country you please. Shall it be

Strauss? shall it be Feuerbach? shall it be Comte? The question is still forced upon us. What is Humanity? Has it anything to do with what has been called Divine? Yes, or No? What if some answer, 'No —absolutely nothing'? What if some answer, Yes, but on exactly the opposite principle to the one you set forth,—'Humanity is to make itself divine.' What if there are all degrees of opinion intermediate between these? Supposing we are not asserting a truth; supposing the Incarnation is *not* a fact, but only a dogma; supposing the union of the Godhead and Manhood in a Person is *not* involved in the very existence of man, in the very order of things—all these contradictions, from the greatest to the least, are very alarming. No wonder that we quake at them; no wonder that we try by any means to stifle them. No wonder that we sometimes groan over the paucity of the means which are left to us,—that the sword and the fire, which, if they are used with a consistent, exterminating purpose, have done something, should be exchanged for the paltry machinery of argument and ridicule. But what if that which we say is even so? What if the Incarnation *is* a fact? What if the union of the Godhead and Manhood in Christ is involved in the very existence of man, in the very order of the Universe? Would it then be a cause of sorrow that so much of questioning from all quarters should be directed towards this point? Should we then shuffle, and evade the conflict, saying that a mystery of the faith could have no connection with the thoughts that are working in the minds of philosophers? Should we not rejoice and give thanks that it has so much to do with them? Should we not tremble lest any one of these inquiries should be hidden or suppressed which indicate what men are needing,—which compel us to offer them realities, and not opinions, in exchange for the doubts and objections which they offer to us?

I am as eager that Theology should hold its own simple, positive ground as Mr. Mansel can be; I am as eager that Philosophy should have its fullest range and freedom. But I do not think that Theology has any ground at all, if it merely accepts as a Tenet what is revealed as a Truth; I do not think Philosophy has any freedom at all, if

philosophers are forbidden to learn anything but what Sir William Hamilton teaches them. I admit that theologians may do more than mere philosophers, to mark out the respective spheres of Theology and Philosophy; by preserving their own simplicity they will best assert its liberty. But I am also convinced that theologians will not arrive at this result by falling back upon the maxims of the eighteenth century. They may arrive at it if they proceed in the course into which they have been led, as I think, by a higher wisdom than their own; if they sincerely ask themselves what has caused one and another to fail in that course.

What I mean by the course into which they have been led, is this. The Person of Christ, as distinguished from a mere doctrine about Christ, appears to have become more and more the absorbing subject among those divines who exercise any considerable influence over the thought either of England or of Germany. Even the growing Mariolatry of Romish countries, even the new Papal decree respecting the conception of the Virgin, points in this direction. That a 'Leben Jesu' should be the favourite work of each of the eminent theologians of Germany, is all the more remarkable from their specially abstract tendencies. That such a book as Mr. Wilberforce's on the Incarnation should have been written by one whose habits of thought inclined him to be peculiarly dogmatic, is also a very striking sign of the times. The study of Butler at Oxford must have affected the writer even more than he was aware of. He owns himself how much he had been led into that line of inquiry by finding the necessity of something to complete and sustain that personal faith, the all-importance of which he had learnt from the school in which he was educated. Other books, scarcely less significant, and pointing to a different kind of discipline, might be referred to; one of them, Mr. Young's 'Christ of History,' is quoted with qualified approbation by Mr. Mansel.

All these are attempts to escape from Dogmatism to a ground of reality. All of them, I think, may teach us much. All of them are open in some measure to the criticism which the Bampton Lecturer has di-

rected against Mr. Wilberforce. They mix philosophy with revelation; at times you fancy they are forming a Christ out of their own thoughts, —at times, that they are recognizing a Christ such as is set forth by the Evangelists. The writers are perfectly innocent of any such confusion, —as innocent as I believe Mr. Wilberforce was of any wish to put a universal notion of Humanity between himself and Christ. They would gladly escape from notions. If they are hampered by them, it is from some defect of method. I suspect it is from their being too anxious to meet the thoughts of philosophers halfway; whereas if they had assumed a different standing-ground, they would have had a hope of meeting them altogether.

I will explain this statement to you. These writers suppose that their opponents would never concede to them the *Divinity* of Christ; 'We will stand, therefore,' they say, 'on your own ground. We will talk to you about His Humanity. We will see if that does not command your affection and reverence. We will then inquire whether that affection and reverence must not ascend to a higher region still.' Mr. Wilberforce did not act on *this* maxim. He had discovered a deeper necessity than those who contemplate the life of Christ merely as the life of *a* man, he had felt the force of the expression, *Son of Man*, which occurs so continually in the Gospels; of St. Paul's expression, "*He is the Head of every man*;" of that other, "*The Firstborn of every creature*." But with his method of ascending from the earthly to the heavenly, I do not see how he could give effect to this language, without falling into the Realism which Mr. Mansel objects to him. And I do not see how he could practically escape another danger to which his critic has not alluded. Duns Scotus, the great champion of Realism in its strongest sense, was also he who won laurels at Paris for defending the doctrine which Pius IX. has erected into an Article of Faith. The mere universal Humanity was an abstract notion, though he might invest it with reality; its dreariness must be sustained by this worship of a concrete Humanity in the nature of the Virgin.

To that point I believe we shall tend,—Auguste Comte, as much as Pius IX., leading the way to it,—if theologians are not willing to be theologians again, and to proceed in directly the opposite method to that which I have just been indicating,—the method which the Church points out in the Epistle and Gospel for Christmas Day,—the old method of the Creeds. Then suppose we believe the Incarnation to be true, may we not cry, must we not cry, to the cities of England, as the Prophet cried to the cities of Judah, "*Behold your God*?" We declare how He has manifested Himself to us in that Son who is the brightness of His glory, the express image of His Person. This is the Being whom we praise and declare to be the Lord. We say that Christ has come to make known the Father; we say that in Him all may know Him, because He has revealed Himself, fully revealed Himself, not in words and letters, but in a Man.

Here, it seems to me, is the office of the theologian. He comes with this Gospel to mankind. So far as he is asserting, he is a dogmatist. But he does not rest his assertion upon his own judgment or upon the judgment of ages; he addresses it to the conscience, heart, reason of mankind. He leaves God to justify it in His own way, by the sorrows, needs, sins, contradictions of men. He desires only that the news should go forth with no force but its own. He can trust it; for he can trust Him who has shown us in His Son what He is, who has promised His Spirit of Truth to guide us into all Truth. Dogmatism and Rationalism cannot be reconciled in words; the verbal middle between them is feebler than either, destructive of what is good in both. Here is the living, real, uniting Mean between them. The verbal middle between the idolatry which is the worship of creatures, and the atheism which is the worship of nothing, is "less religious than the one, less logical than the other." God declaring Himself to His creatures in a Man, that the creature may rise to the full knowledge of Him,—here is that middle which you, if you are to be a clergyman of the Christian Church, must hold forth in the practical and living words of the Scripture, to the righteous and the sinful, to the wise and the unwise.

Very truly yours,

LETTER V. THE CRITERION OF TRUTH

Mr. Mansel's Second Letter.—Religious Philosophy.—Mysticism.—the Criterion of Truth.

My dear Sir,

I did not enter upon the theological topics which were considered in my last letter, because I was in a hurry to introduce them before we had settled whether the maxim of Sir William Hamilton did or did not prove that a knowledge of the Infinite or Eternal or Absolute is impossible for human beings. It was Mr. Mansel who forced me into them. He could not, apparently, lay the ground of his religious philosophy without referring to them. He could not begin to build himself, till he had swept away certain thoughts about the Atonement and Incarnation which had been put forth by divines or philosophers. Being driven to this necessity, I have inquired what those doctrines are which the Bampton Lecturer complains of other men for not believing, or for not fully believing. I have asked what is implied in the *most* full belief of them, in the reception of them as an actual Gospel to be delivered to mankind. Clearly *this* was implied, that they were not mere doctrines or opinions contained in a book, or generalized by us from a book. If the doctrine of the Atonement was not false as a doctrine, as an opinion, there must have been an actual Reconciliation between God and His creatures in the person of His Son. If the doctrine of the Incarnation was not false as a doctrine, the Eternal Son must have actually come forth from the Eternal Father, and have taken human flesh, and have dwelt among men; the nature and glory of the Eternal God must have come forth in the man, so that He could say, "*He that hath seen me hath seen the Father*." You and I had to determine whether, *in this sense*, we could receive the Incarnation and Atonement,—whether,

in this sense, we could proclaim them to men. For if we called on any human being to receive them as doctrines, and yet did not set them forth as facts, it seemed that we were committing a huge injustice to our fellows, deceiving our own selves, violating the trust we had received from God. But supposing we could do this,—supposing we believed that the word Gospel was not a treacherous sound, and that there is indeed a message from God to man,—then it seemed that we must rejoice in every indication which we found anywhere that men are seeking after the knowledge of God, and cannot be content without it. From whatever point such inquiries might start, whatever forms they might take, however they might be blended with confusion, contradiction, denial, there could be no doubt that they denoted a craving and a necessity which God Himself had awakened, and which He would satisfy. If they were attempts to solve by forms, phrases, and notions, that which demanded a real, not a verbal solution, the perplexity of those attempts which, of course, we had experienced ourselves and felt to be a human perplexity, would give them a deep interest for us; if they were attempts to break through all phrases, formulas, intellectual subtleties, and to reach that which lies behind them and beneath them, —then, however they might fail, they would be still more affecting proofs that God was inspiring men with a passion for that which they found was too large for them to grasp, and yet was altogether necessary to them. If, in the endeavour to get rid of their own partial conceits and notions, and to find a ground which was beneath all, they were often entangled in those conceits and notions, we should again recognize men struggling as we struggle,—we should again perceive how wide, human, universal, God's revelation must be.

For these reasons, I contended that the controversy which gave so much occupation to men's thoughts in the Middle Ages, the realistic and nominalistic controversy in its different stages, was a subject of profound interest and instruction to the modern theologian, inasmuch as it taught him how near words and things lie to each other,—what demands the Conscience and Reason of men make for Realities,—

how they witness that the highest of all must be the most real, the ground of other reality, how apt we are to confound notions and dogmas and conclusions of our intellect, with the truths to which they refer, and so to turn truths into mere names or mere opinions. I thought the rebellion against school logic just as full of meaning as the perplexities of that logic, and more consolatory,—because it is a deep, authentic testimony that human beings, the moment they are roused to the feeling that they are human, must look above and beyond themselves, must rise out of themselves, whether they can prove their right to do it logically or not. And for us even more interesting is that direction of men's minds which has been so manifest during the last hundred years,—that direction which, as I said, made it impossible for us to adopt Butler's phrase of Natural and Revealed Religion, —though it made Butler's teaching respecting a revelation of God through the Constitution of Nature and through Man all the more precious.

I follow an excellent precedent, which Mr. Mansel has set us at the close of each of his Lectures, in thus recapitulating the lessons which we have been learning from his statements and from the facts which he has adduced. I am particularly anxious to do so at the commencement of his second Lecture, because that is (1) the one in which he has formally announced what is the object and the character of his "religious philosophy;" (2) the one in which he has applied himself most vigorously to the work of demolishing the dream of Mystics and Rationalists that there is any criterion of truth in man; (3) the one in which he has exhibited most of his scholastical skill in dealing with our notions of Cause, of the Absolute, and the Infinite; and in destroying Pantheism. This last portion of the Lecture I reserve for a separate letter. To the other two divisions I address myself now.

(1.) I have used the phrase "Religious Philosophy." It is Mr. Mansel's. The following extract will tell you what he does and does not mean by it.

> "A philosophy of religion may be attempted from two opposite points of view, and by two opposite modes of development. It may be conceived either as a Philosophy of the Object of Religion; that is to say, as a scientific exposition of the nature of God; or as a Philosophy of the Subject of Religion; that is to say, as a scientific inquiry into the constitution of the human mind, so far as it receives and deals with religious ideas. The former is that branch of Metaphysics which is commonly known by the name of Rational Theology. Its general aim, in common with all metaphysical inquiries, is to disengage the real from the apparent, the true from the false: its special aim, as a Theology, is to exhibit a true representation of the Nature and Attributes of God, purified from foreign accretions, and displaying the exact features of their Divine Original. The latter is a branch of Psychology, which, at its outset at least, contents itself with investigating the phenomena presented to it, leaving their relation to further realities to be determined at a later stage of the inquiry. Its primary concern is with the operations and laws of the human mind; and its special purpose is to ascertain the nature, the origin, and the limits of the religious element in man; postponing, till after that question has been decided, the further inquiry into the absolute nature of God."—(*Bampton Lectures*, 2nd ed., pp. 34, 35.)

Though we are entering, you see, upon an inquiry that is to be very accurate and scholastic, the two principal words which are to engage our attention are left undefined. We are not told what Religion is; we are not told what Philosophy is. I have explained already why I do not pretend to supply Mr. Mansel's deficiencies with respect to the first word. I think it is a peculiarly ambiguous one, and one that is likely to continue ambiguous, because we connect it habitually with the study and treatment of the Bible, though the Bible itself gives us no help in ascertaining the force of the word, apparently sets no great store by it or any similar one. So as far as I am able to make out, it is best used to denote certain processes or habits or conditions of our own minds, so that, "the subject of religion," as opposed to the "object" of

it, will be the subject of a subject, our thoughts about our thoughts—about what?

Philosophy is a word which is much more easy to define. Sir William Hamilton has given it its natural, legitimate force, when he has called it a Search after Wisdom; he has shown what is its relation to man, when he has adopted Plato's phrase, and described man as a Hunter after Truth. Supposing, as I have said already, there was a Truth to meet this search, a living Object to present itself to a creature who was made to pursue that object, we might have something to speak of which is not philosophy, whatever other name you give it. But with such an Object Mr. Mansel will have nothing to do. To begin from that, is to involve yourself in Mystical Theology; to suppose we have any faculties for seeking that or testing it when it is presented to us, is to involve yourself in Rational Theology. The only escape from both is a philosophy of religion, *i.e.* if we add the definition we have now got to the previous one, a search after the way in which we should think about our thoughts—about what? See whether the following passages do not bear out my statement.

> On the other hand, the second method of philosophical inquiry does not profess to furnish a direct criticism of Revelation, but only of the instruments by which Revelation is to be criticized. It looks to the human, not to the divine, and aspires to teach us no more than the limits of our own powers of thought, and the consequent distinction between what we may and what we may not seek to comprehend…. Religious criticism is itself an act of thought; and its immediate instruments must, under any circumstances, be thoughts also. We are thus compelled in the first instance to inquire into the origin and value of those thoughts themselves.—(*Bampton Lectures*, 2nd ed., pp. 36, 38.)

I wish to make one remark before I proceed. Mr. Mansel has been celebrated by one of his reviewers as a writer who appeals to the common sense of Englishmen against the wild and fantastic notions of the Medieval period, or of modern Germany and France. Here, if

anywhere, we are to look for the justification of that claim. The religious philosophy which is announced in this programme, is expressly designed to deliver us from the absurdities and ravings of Mystics and Rationalists. This is the sword which is to lay low the Eckarts and Taulers of the fourteenth century, the Hegels and Schellings of the nineteenth. Now, I ask you to make this experiment with any English gentleman you know. Set before him Mr. Mansel's statement of his purpose, not in my words but in his. You and I ought to make our message intelligible to the uneducated as well as the educated: it is meant for both. But you would not be dealing fairly with Mr. Mansel if you made that demand upon him. He is a learned man, addressing a University audience. Choose then the most educated man you can find, in the English sense of the word 'educated.' I mean, let him have had the full advantage of our public school and university training, and have profited by it. Let him then have had the discipline of public life, all that discipline which goes to cultivate what we call our practical faculty, our common sense. Let him be a man who has sounded the meaning of words, but who loves things better than words, and tests words by their relation to things. Let him have, if you please (I should like that additional qualification), an excessive prejudice against German philosophy. Try him with Mr. Mansel's account of *his* religious philosophy, and tell me if he does not make some such observations as these upon it. 'Why, my good Sir, you know that this is just what I abominate in those Teutonic doctors and divines. They seem to me to be always thinking about their own thoughts. I cannot open one of their books without finding something about the *Begriff* of this, or the *Begriff* of that; most of all they torment me with their *Begriff* of Religion. What do we want of any *Begriff*? We who are tossed about in the world want a God. Tell us of Him if you can. If you cannot, hold your peace. The other thing or nothing we do not need at all.'

(2.) Mr. Mansel's purpose in submitting our thoughts about our thoughts about religion to a searching criticism, is that he may save Revelation from it. That is a delicate plant which the winds of heaven

must not be permitted to visit too roughly. But the *word* Revelation surely is not exempted from criticism; we are not obliged to leave it in the vagueness which enwraps the word Religion. It must be the revelation of something to something. Is it the revelation of a religion? If it were, we should be able to know something of what that is; it would not be covered with the thick veil which Mr. Mansel allows to rest over it. Is it a revelation of God? So the Bible seems to say. That is its simple, obvious language. But if a revelation of Him, a revelation also to something. To what? Not to Angels, unless the Bible speaks falsely, but to Men. Not to the bodily eye of men, unless the Bible speaks falsely, for it says that the eye of the body has not seen God and cannot see Him. Then to some eye which is not in the body? So our Lord seems to say, for He speaks of a light that is in us which may become darkness. Here comes in Mr. Mansel's critical religious philosophy. He undertakes to show that there is no such eye in man which can receive a revelation of God. Thus he proceeds with his demonstration:—

> "Such a conviction may be possible in two different ways. It may be the result of a direct intuition of the Divine Nature; or it may be gained by inference from certain attributes of human nature, which, though on a smaller scale, are known to be sufficiently representative of the corresponding properties of the Deity. We may suppose the existence in man of a special faculty of knowledge, of which God is the immediate object—a kind of religious sense or reason, by which the Divine attributes are apprehended in their own nature: or we may maintain that the attributes of God differ from those of man in degree only, not in kind; and hence that certain mental and moral qualities, of which we are immediately conscious in ourselves, furnish at the same time a true and adequate image of the infinite perfections of God. The first of these suppositions professes to convey a knowledge of God by direct apprehension, in a manner similar to the evidence of the senses: the second professes to convey the same knowledge by a logical process, similar to the demonstrations of science. The former is the method of Mysticism,

and of that Rationalism which agrees with Mysticism, in referring the knowledge of divine things to an extraordinary and abnormal process of intuition or thought. The latter is the method of the vulgar Rationalism, which regards the reason of man, in its ordinary and normal operation, as the supreme criterion of religious truth.

On the former supposition, a system of religious philosophy or criticism may be constructed by starting from the divine and reasoning down to the human: on the latter, by starting from the human and reasoning up to the divine. The first commences with a supposed immediate knowledge of God as He is in His absolute nature, and proceeds to exhibit the process by which that nature, acting according to its own laws, will manifest itself in operation, and become known to man. The second commences with an immediate knowledge of the mental and moral attributes of man, and proceeds to exhibit the manner in which those attributes will manifest themselves, when exalted to the degree in which they form part of the nature of God. If, for example, the two systems severally undertake to give a representation of the infinite power and wisdom of God, the former will profess to explain how the nature of the infinite manifests itself in the forms of power and wisdom; while the latter will attempt to show how power and wisdom must manifest themselves when existing in an infinite degree. In their criticisms of Revelation, in like manner, the former will rather take as its standard that absolute and essential nature of God, which must remain unchanged in every manifestation; the latter will judge by reference to those intellectual and moral qualities, which must exist in all their essential features in the divine nature as well as in the human."—(*Bampton Lectures*, 2nd ed., pp. 38-41.)

These, you perceive, are the two possible ways of arriving at any knowledge of God. Mr. Mansel has told us already that neither the Mystic nor the Rationalist necessarily rejects a Revelation. The principle of one or the other is just as absurd, according to him, with a Revelation as without it. All the attempts therefore which are made in this Lecture to enlist the sympathies of believers in the Bible on the side of his religious philosophy, by dwelling on the different objections

to the Bible and the denials of the Bible which have proceeded from those who speak of a reason in man that can judge of a revelation, are rhetorical artifices, deserving of all commendation for their cleverness, but utterly worthless so far as the argument is concerned. What is said here against Mystics and Rationalists applies as directly, as sharply, to every person who believes as you and I believe, that we are bound in our sermons to set forth Christ as the Wisdom of God and the Power of God, and to take the words addressed to the Apostle Philip literally: "*Have I been so long a time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father. How sayest thou then, Show us the Father*?"

Do I then confess myself a Mystic or a Rationalist because I do not put in any plea for exemption from the charges of folly or of heresy which Mr. Mansel would fix upon them? I have answered that question already as far as Rationalism is concerned.

I have confessed that I have in myself an evil Rationalism, and that there is also a Rationalism which I desire to cultivate, which I believe it is killing the spirit in us not to have. I make the same confession precisely about Mysticism. I find a number of men, in all ages of the Christian Church, who have been called Mystics; I find them amongst Germans, Frenchmen, Englishmen, Italians, —amongst princes, priests, scholars, shoemakers, women,—amongst Franciscans, Dominicans, Jansenists, Lutherans, Calvinists, English High Churchmen, Quakers; I find among them those who have led the life of recluses, those who have stood by dying beds in hospitals, those who have preached to crowds and drawn crowds after them, those who have produced a moral reformation in the most hardened and ignorant. I find among them those who have been charged, perhaps rightly charged, with affecting obscurity, and those who have written the broadest, homeliest, most thoroughly idiomatic German or English. These men have differed in all their opinions, feelings, habits of mind. Even those who have stood to one another in the relation of pupil and teacher, like Eckart and Tauler, have been markedly unlike each other.

Under the same name stand Sterry the chaplain of Cromwell, and Law the Nonjuror. There must be something which associates men so dissimilar together. In Mr. Mansel's eyes it is something altogether evil, something worthy of his profoundest contempt. I cannot say so, seeing that I find every one of them to be an immeasurably better and wiser man than I am,—seeing there is not one of them, whose writings I have read or into whose life I have had any glimpse, that has not instructed me and done me good; scarcely one from whom I have not learnt increased reverence for the Scriptures and more distrust of my own judgment. Nevertheless I do think I have seen a tendency in them which offers an excuse for the bad name they have earned; I should not have understood it if I had not discovered it in myself. Mr. Mansel has represented it harshly, but perhaps not wrongly, when he speaks of the Mystics referring "the knowledge of divine things to an extraordinary and abnormal process of intuition or thought." The description does not apply to any one of those I have named, in his highest and best moods. Some of them fought vehemently and almost to the death against it. Those who were followed in the fourteenth century by multitudes of listening peasants, could scarcely have deemed that they had some special "abnormal" insight. Still that is unquestionably the mystical temptation. Out of it have come a multitude of conceits respecting the meaning of Scripture, a number of fantastical speculations respecting Nature, a number of harsh judgments respecting men of a different character from their own, a number of sensual apparitions which often contradict the principles they are most eager to assert.

There is that in this habit which may ripen into a settled spiritual pride. Of that pride these men, so far as I can make out, gave few indications. But whence could the motive to it have arisen in minds like theirs? They had been dwelling, most of them, in a scholastical atmosphere, talking and thinking much about religion and religious motives, contemplating the world around them with some pity, speculating much on opinions right and wrong. At one crisis of their lives

they were aroused to feel that they wanted something else than a religion, or a philosophy of religion. One whom they could not see, or who they thought was afar off, seemed to come very nigh to them, to question them about themselves, to bring not their acts and words merely, but *them*, the doers of the acts, the speakers of the words, into His clear and piercing light. The process was terrible. Out of it they emerged different men. The visible things with which they had conversed, looked shadowy and indistinct; that which was unseen had a fixedness, a certainty, which they could not express in words, which none who were about them appeared to recognize. 'We are out of the region of notions and appearances. We are in contact with Him who is.' For a time they were sure this was the sane, healthful condition of a man. 'In himself nothing, living by trust on One always near him, growing more and more into acquaintance with Him,—is not this what every one of us is meant to be? Is not being out of this condition the anomaly?' So they felt, so in their practical discourses they spoke. But yet, when they looked round upon the people with whom they associated, the religious, the respectable, was not there an excuse for saying, 'These convictions of ours are special, abnormal? They do not belong to our race; they belong to us, a certain favoured and select portion of the race. Are we not *new men, spiritual men, who can judge of all things*, *but can ourselves be judged of no man*? Does not that text of St. Paul warrant us in vindicating to ourselves an intuition altogether unlike that which belongs to the herd of mere natural or *soulish* creatures.'[19]

Excuses for self-exaltation surely! I have mentioned some of the antidotes to it; the sympathy of crowds, tendance on the sick. Insufficient, I should think, without actual bodily sufferings, and the discovery of internal evils, which all the knowledge of Good had not destroyed, perhaps had only brought into stronger illumination. But in the course of history has there not also been a counteraction to these dangers? Mr. Mansel has pointed out one, which in our day, I

[19]Ψυχικὸς δὲ ἄνθρωπος οὐ δέχεται τὰ τοῦ Πνεύματος τοῦ Θεοῦ.

suspect, is working more effectually than we know, and which those who trace God's hand in His Church and Universe will not fancy has existed without His providence and appointment. There are those *vulgar Rationalists*, so Mr. Mansel calls them, "who regard the Reason of man in its ordinary and normal operation as the criterion of religious Truth."

It is not necessary that I should go over again the ground I travelled in my last letter. I tried then to show you that there is a *disorderly* operation of the Reason in us to which we are all prone, that which is busy in creating the object which it beholds, or else argues about it instead of contemplating it; —that there is a true and normal operation of the Reason, which we all recognize in reference to common things, an operation by means of which we discern that which is from that which merely seems or appears. Not to use this Reason in the daily pursuits of life, is to sink into the condition of an animal. One sees it in the liveliest exercise among those who are utterly incapable of drawing conclusions, who are not logicians, who can neither form dogmas nor understand them when they are formed. Among pure, true-hearted women, among honest mechanics, among those upon whose powers of sense and even of reflection death has laid his hand, this power of discerning the truth from the lie, the thing that is from that that is not, dwells often with enviable clearness. We turn to them as to oracles; does not the Statesman, with his hard experience, the Divine, with his well-learnt maxims and systems, find that they are seers while he is well-nigh blind?

Is this Reason critical only of low things? May it not also exercise a discernment in the highest? That is the question which has been especially raised in our time; that is the one to which Mr. Mansel gives his emphatic "No." To me it seems that in making that denial, he is either forgetting what is the 'normal' use of the Reason in lower things, and speaking merely of its irregular use; or that if he is saying there is nothing in man which can distinguish between "*the thief who cometh to steal and destroy, and the Shepherd who cometh that we might have life, and*

have it more abundantly"—he is simply setting at nought the words of Christ, and overthrowing the whole Bible. But I wish to show you how the assertion of this power by the Rationalist—whether he exercises it legitimately or illegitimately—affects the Mystic who is not only under Mr. Mansel's ban for his abnormal intuitions, but is humbled in himself by the recollection of having claimed them. Now he begins to perceive that what he has to thank God for with his whole heart, was not for giving him something which He has refused to the race generally, but for opening in him that eye which belongs to us as men, and which, through our desire to magnify our own individual souls and to separate them from other men's, we put out. So the words of St. Paul on which he had been used to rest his case, assume an entirely different aspect, and come forth to chastise his vanity, as well as to nourish his hope. Is not the spiritual man, as we are told in that very Epistle, the man who will not divide himself from others, division being the sign of carnality,—who will not make his own notions or opinions the standards for men, or the measures of God's acts,—who will receive the things that are freely given him of God—who *therefore* has a faculty of discrimination, which does not suffer him to be deluded by impostors, or to confound the Devil with the true God?

In what I have said about the faculty of Reason, which one finds most alive in the simplest, truest, humblest people, often most dead in the clever and the learned,—in the writers of leading articles, and in doctors of divinity,—I may have seemed to take for granted a distinction of which Mr. Mansel has spoken in one of his notes thus:—

> "If there is but one faculty of thought, that which Kant calls the Understanding, occupied with the finite only, there is an obvious end to be answered in making us aware of its limits, and warning us that the boundaries of thought are not those of existence. But if, with Kant, we distinguish the Understanding from the Reason, and attribute to the latter the delusions necessarily arising from the idea of the unconditioned, we must believe in the existence of a special

> faculty of lies created for the express purpose of deceiving those who trust to it."—(Note 24 to p. 127; p. 364.)

This sentence, you perceive, settles the whole question. That happy, courteous phrase, 'a faculty of lies,' proceeding from an eminent philosopher, a great enemy of Dogmatism, one who sets out from the maxim, 'Know thyself,' ought to silence every objection and every argument. You will appreciate the full force of it, even though you may not be a reader of Kant, if you will turn back to that account of him and his special objects which I have extracted from Sir William Hamilton's discussion on the Unconditioned. You will see there that the tendency of Kant's mind was destructive,—that he applied the severest logic to the overthrow of the metaphysical or ontological notions of his predecessors,—that he did effectually sweep away, so Sir W. Hamilton thinks, all mere notions and conceptions about the Infinite. It was this man who, *because* he was a logician, could not bring himself to deny that there is something in us which takes hold of fact, something which will not be circumscribed by notions and conceptions, which confesses that which is. He felt that if there is no such faculty in man as this, there is not and cannot be any morality for man, there is not and cannot be any truth for man. It is because a stern necessity drove this philosopher to overleap the bounds of his own philosophy for the sake of reality, that Mr. Mansel says he believed in a faculty of lies created for the especial purpose of deceiving those who possess it. It is because he affirmed a principle so very like the principle of a conscience, for which Butler contends, that every blow to the one is practically and effectually a blow to the other, that a disciple of Butler, one who desires to cultivate the study and spirit of Butler in Oxford, uses language respecting Kant which is scarcely paralleled in philosophical, even in theological controversy.

You and I, however, are not concerned with the vindication of Kant. We *are* concerned in claiming that great concession which Kant

made to common human beings, a concession of which the religious philosophy of Mr. Mansel seeks to deprive us.

If there is nothing in the people to whom we deliver our message but a faculty which forms notions, judges of opinions, criticizes documents, we know that we have not a Gospel to the poor—it is monstrous to pretend that we have. That faculty of forming notions, judging opinions, criticizing documents, is a peculiar one; it requires a special cultivation; the degrees in which those possess it in whom it has been cultivated, are more various than it is possible to express. The difference between Bentley and the most ignorant undergraduate who answers a question at an Oxford or Cambridge examination, is an inadequate measure of the variety in one direction. Those in whom the faculty exists in the highest degree, are not always the persons to whom one would appeal with confidence on a moral question. And when one compares their different exercises upon their own ground, *e.g.* the Discussion on the Epistles of Phalaris with the Commentary on Paradise Lost, one feels how a homely perception of facts is needful even to a critic, how worthless the merely critical power becomes without it. Even therefore if one wanted to bring out this power in its strength, one would have need to educate another first, one which is not special, but human. In a university, if that human faculty is denied or not appealed to, all special studies will be worthless,—yes, mischievous and accursed. But for the Minister of the Gospel, *that* is what he has to speak to: I had nearly said *that* only. It is because the Bible addresses that human faculty and not some special faculty, that it can bear to be translated into every tongue of the earth, that it can speak to all tribes and nations. For *us* to deny the existence of such a faculty, is simply to deny our own work. Any one who tells us that it does not exist, is bound also to tell us that if we are honest men we must relinquish that work.

'What,' you say, 'does it depend upon our acceptance of a certain philosophy whether we shall do our work as Evangelists?' Not the least. You need know nothing about philosophy. If you do not, you will take

for granted the existence of this faculty to which you can speak. It is the ordinary postulate of an Englishman's life that there is such a one. That is what he means when he says, 'I do not care for your fine notions; I have something in me which tells me when a man is speaking truth or falsehood.' Of course, he may be very much deceived about his own preference for truth over falsehood in any particular case; he may be bribed to like a lie better than the truth. But are you justified in telling him that he has not that faculty? Are you not destroying his soul if you do? Are you not saving his soul alive if you can persuade him to use that faculty, if you can teach him how he may use it,—who is helping him to use it,—who would deliver him from the falsehoods which are corrupting and enchaining him? This, I say, is the ordinary judgment of a practical man. And the part of Kant's philosophy which Mr. Mansel rejects is the part which owns that the philosopher *cannot* interfere with this practical human faith,—that it is worth more than all the notions of the understanding, because it takes hold of that which is substantial,—worth more than all the conclusions of the understanding, because it converses with premisses.

'Yes,' Mr. Mansel will say, 'but I acknowledge a faith which goes beyond these notions; I admit that the realm of existence is not bounded by the realm of thought. What I object to is your speaking of the Reason, as if that had anything to do with this faith, as if that were distinct from the Understanding.' Now observe; about nomenclature I care nothing, or next to nothing. Throw over Kant's nomenclature if you dislike it. There is no sacredness in the names of Understanding or of Reason; one cannot be quite certain whether they are respectively the best equivalents for the words which Kant has used—supposing that were a point of any importance. But we must not be cheated by compliments to our faith, nor yet by the distinction—all-important as it is when rightly apprehended—between thought and existence. Does the faith you speak of take hold of existence, or, as I should say,—for I do not like school-terms when I can get plain words,—of that which is? If not, it is not what we mean by faith; it is not the faith which is

the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. It is an act of the mind; therefore I have to ask, Of what mind? It is the belief in something; then I have to ask, What is that something? The mind, according to Mr. Mansel, only gives out thoughts, and thoughts are in no connection with existence or that which is. Whence then comes this faith? Whither does it go? How should it be described? I know how it would be described by some persons; they would call it a faculty or the exercise of a faculty of lies. I do not like such language. Mr. Mansel who does, must vindicate the Faith which he speaks of from the imputation which he has bestowed upon Kant's Reason.

What concerns you and me is that faith should be the act of the man himself, of that which is most truly, radically human in him, call it by what name you please, and that it should be in direct contact with that which is most living and most substantial. Less than this we will not accept from any philosopher, religious or irreligious. Any one who tells us of another faith than this, must begin with erasing the 11th chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews out of the Bible, must go on to destroy the whole Gospel which the Bible contains. Remember that that is the issue. We are not now talking about the Finite or the Infinite, the Relative or the Absolute. To those words, and to Mr. Mansel's treatment of them, I hope to come in due time; I have not the least wish to avoid the fullest examination of what he says about them. But that is not our business now. I will repeat it even to weariness: the question is concerning that which *is* and that which is not; whether there is any faculty in man that can be brought to perceive that which is, and to reject that which is not, *in any matter whatsoever*; whether that faculty is extinguished when we are called to pay the highest reverence and worship to a certain object or objects; or whether it is this to which God himself appeals. For I must again beseech you not to be deceived by Mr. Mansel's rhetoric into the supposition that what he is saying only concerns those who reject the Bible, or fancy that they are wiser than the writers of it. It concerns quite as much every one who accepts

the Bible as God's speech to man; it concerns the humblest believer in every cottage, on every hospital pallet.

He himself has told us that he is equally at war with those who start from the Divine and reason down to the Human, as with those who start from the Human and reason up to the Divine. He *must* be equally at war with both. On the other hand, those who accept a revelation of God to man, *i.e.* of the Divine meeting the Human, must be very careful indeed how they trifle with any of those efforts, even if they have been failures, of the Human to meet the Divine, lest haply they should be fighting not merely with the spirit of man, but with the Spirit of God. Mr. Mansel has said himself:—

> "The Philosophy which reasons downwards from the Infinite is but an exaggeration of the true conviction that God's thoughts are not our thoughts, nor His ways our ways: the philosophy which reasons upwards from the human, bears witness, even in its perversion, to the unextinguishable consciousness that man, however fallen, was created in the image of God." (p. 43.)

Just so. It is the very point for which I am contending, and therefore it must be your business and mine to recognize the truth of both these opposing principles, quite indifferent who calls us Mystics and who calls us Rationalists, because it is our business to show that God's thoughts are not our thoughts, nor His ways our ways,—because it is our business to tell men that they are created in the image of God, and that Christ, the express Image of God, has come to raise them out of their fall, and to renew them after that image. Our preaching is continually encountered by the argument, 'We are fallen creatures; what can we know of God? how can we ever rise to the perception of the Eternal Truth and Goodness?' Must we not answer that argument by appealing to every witness of the heart, the Conscience, the Reason,—if you will, to every contradiction of Philosophy,—that the spirit of man within us demands the knowledge of God, demands the perception of Eternal Truth and Goodness? If we can say also, 'What

the spirit of man seeks, the Spirit of God will give,' may we not feel that we have indeed preached good news to our fellows?

Faithfully yours,

LETTER VI. STRUGGLE FOR REALITY

Latter Part of the Second Lecture.—Philosophical Terms.—Struggle for Reality.

My dear Sir,

You are very much nearer to your undergraduate years than I am to mine. But they do rise up at times vividly before me. Certainly nothing has brought them back so vividly as reading the latter part of Mr. Mansel's second Lecture. I listened to many sermons in St. Mary's, when I was at Oxford, which chilled my heart. I think, if I had heard that one, it would have turned my brain. I do not think it would have made me a sceptic, for I fancy I had met with most of the statements about the Absolute, the Infinite, and the Cause, in the pages of different sophists, or that they had been presented to my own mind. That which would have utterly bewildered me would have been to hear them reproduced in a Christian pulpit as a defence of Christianity. I hope I should have profited by the preacher's last words. I hope I should have said, '*Lord, to whom shall I go* when Thy servants consider it their business to uphold Thy cause by proving to us that there is nothing around, beneath, above, but confusion and darkness?' I hope I should have said, '*Thou hast the words of Eternal Life*,' though we are told that the Eternal lies at a hopeless distance from us, that we can have no fellowship with it. But I *might* have said, 'If that is true, what Lord is there to whom we can go? Where is He? What have I to do with Him?'

It is because I feel painfully convinced that many who heard and who read Mr. Mansel's sermon *will* say this;—that the argument which he looks upon as so conclusive that it must shatter every form of unbelief, is likely to shatter the feeble faith which it finds, and to bewilder

the more earnest faith;—it is because everything in the circumstances and temptations of those who sat in the galleries when this Lecture was delivered, is likely to make it more mischievous to them than it would be to those of any other class or age,—it is therefore that I undertake the task—which, when I am right-minded, is very disagreeable, which I tremble at most when it becomes at all pleasant—of pointing out why I look upon the whole course of his argument on this subject as worthless for its professed object of exposing either Rationalists or Pantheists, and as utterly mischievous if it is supposed to be a mode of removing objections to the Bible. I will begin with quoting the passage which introduces the subject:—

> "There are three terms, familiar as household words in the vocabulary of Philosophy, which must be taken into account in every system of Metaphysical Theology. To conceive the Deity as He is, we must conceive Him as First Cause, as Absolute, and as Infinite. By the *First Cause*, is meant that which produces all things, and is itself produced of none. By the *Absolute*, is meant that which exists in and by itself, having no necessary relation to any other Being. By the *Infinite* is meant that which is free from all possible limitation; that than which a greater is inconceivable; and which consequently can receive no additional attribute or mode of existence, which it had not from all eternity."—(*Bampton Lectures*, 2nd ed., pp. 44, 45.)

Will you read over to yourself the first line of this passage? "There are three *terms*, familiar as household words in the vocabulary of Philosophy." These are key-words to the after discourse. It is with the *terms*, First Cause, Absolute, and Infinite, that Mr. Mansel deals here and throughout his volume. Terms are all in all to him. To get beyond terms is with him impossible. "Words, words, words" do not drive him mad as they did poor Hamlet; they entirely satisfy him. He does not deny that there is something lying beyond them, something which they express. There is a region of mist and darkness, what he considers the region of faith, which cannot be put into formulas of logic, and therefore about which nothing can be known, which we have no criterion

for judging of. But within this circle lies his world, and any one who tries to find a ground for his feet outside of that world, is for him a fool if he can reduce him under the notion of a Dogmatist, a dangerous disturber of men's serenity if he can bring him under the notion of a Rationalist. Once, with exceeding *naiveté*, he intimates that there must be reality, but that we are quite unable to conceive what it is, it cannot be brought under its proper notion. His book should be studied as the great apotheosis of Logic. Terrible as the name may sound to him, he actually becomes transcendental in his reverence for the formulas that are to exclude all transcendentalism.

You may remember that I noticed this tendency as characteristic of Sir William Hamilton. I spoke of him as emphatically a *notional* Philosopher. I believe that grand forehead of his showed that he was capable of being something immeasurably higher than this. If he had not been possessed by a love of fact, a reverence for fact, he could not have admired the phrase of Plato as he did; he could not have risen so far above his predecessors in the schools of Consciousness, whom he, somewhat haughtily, patronizes. He brought Scotch Philosophy to its climax. So now we know all about it, what it can and cannot do. He enables us to understand that fierce reaction against it which one discovers in his countrymen. Evidently they must have been utterly crushed under 'notions' and 'consciousnesses;' crushed till all breath and life seemed to be impossible for them. It has been nothing less than a question for them whether the woods and fields in which Burns grew up, and of which he sang, should be withered by a school Sirocco; whether the life of those who fought and bled on the soil should be turned into mere moralities about life and fighting and bleeding; whether the manhood of the present generation should perish along with the manhood of their forefathers. Mr. Carlyle has been welcomed by Scotchmen and Englishmen as the great protester against notions, the witness for Fact and History. He has avowed his indifference to anything else. He long ago abjured metaphysics, German or Scotch. In his latest work he has abjured poets as not sufficiently savouring

of the reality; he has complained of Shakespeare and Goethe for devoting their amazing powers to dramas or novels, when they might have explained what has been actually done in the world.[20]

A reaction against logical formulas, proceeding from an entirely different quarter, prompted by different feelings, and leading to quite different results, is more associated with English history than with Scotch, with Oxford than with Edinburgh. A young member of University College, who, while he was there, delighted, it is said, especially in the services of the chapel and in all the venerable traditions of the place, having been deprived of those opportunities of culture by the wisdom or unwisdom of the authorities of that time, became the pantheistical poet of our land, the man who embodied in his verse and character the thoughts, dreams, aspirations, to which that name is most correctly affixed, those which were floating and are floating in the atmosphere of England as well as of France and Germany. In his 'Queen Mab,' his 'Alastor,' his 'Sensitive Plant,' his 'Skylark,' some only discover the denial of all which Christians believe; some have heard "the wailings of a child seeking for its Father." But one as much as the other must feel that that spirit could be circumscribed by no terms of logic. Sea, sky, air, birds, trees, flowers,—to these he fled from notions and formulas; with these he was certain he had a sympathy and a fellowship. They gave him his sense of the Infinite, the Absolute, the Eternal, by which he meant that which could not be put into the terms and forms of logic, that which a spirit within him was yearning after. If you could tell him how those yearnings might be satisfied without losing a personal God and his own personal being, you might reach his ear; if not, you would leave him a pantheist as you found him, exercising a charm over the freshest and noblest among the

[20] "It is frightful to see the *Gelehrte Dummkopf* (what we here may translate 'Dryasdust') doing the function of History, and the Shakespeare and the Goethe neglecting it."—*History of Frederick the Great*, vol. i, p. 28.

Ante, pp. 21, 22 (speaking of a design of Schiller to write an Epic poem on Frederick):—"Happily Schiller did not do it.... It is not the untrue, imaginary picture of a man and his life that I want from my Schiller, but the actual, natural likeness, true as the face itself, nay, *truer* in a sense, which the Artist might help to give, and the Botcher (*Pfuscher*) never can."

youth of his land, a charm which is most commonly broken by their sinking into the service of Mammon, now and then by their claiming their heritage as redeemed sons of God.

There is a third reaction against this tyranny of notions which I believe is beginning to be felt with particular strength in Oxford. It is what I would call the scientific reaction. I have hinted already, in my second Letter, at the strife between Sir William Hamilton and the mathematicians,—at his strong and apparently well-grounded conviction that he must destroy them before he could establish his own position securely. But is there not a science of Morals as well as of Physics? Aristotle has certainly led Oxford men to seek after one, to feel that they cannot dispense with one, whether he has himself discovered it to them or not. I think we have all been forced to feel that he is not the practical philosopher he wished to be, that he has not at all events given us the help we want for our lives, if—as some pretend, with whom I do not the least agree—he has merely taught us to look for a mean between two extremes. Our age has had plentiful experience of this seeking for a middle in Politics and Morals as well as in Theology. Something may perhaps come out of it hereafter. What has come out of it already has been described with considerable life and accuracy by the poet Cowper.

"Some fretful tempers wince at every touch,
You always do too little or too much;
You speak with life, in hopes to entertain:
Your elevated voice goes through the brain.
You fall at once into a lower key:
That's worse, the drone-pipe of an humble-bee.
The southern sash admits too strong a light;
You rise and drop the curtain: now 'tis night.
He shakes with cold; you stir the fire and strive
To make a blaze: that's roasting him alive.

Your hope to please him vain on every plan,

Himself should work that wonder if he can.
Alas! his efforts double his distress;
He likes yours little, and his own still less.
Thus, always teasing others, always teazed,
His only pleasure is to be displeased."

A moderation of this kind is scarcely satisfactory for those who have actually to fight their way through the world,—to choose a path for themselves, not merely to find fault with the extreme paths of every one else.

Butler too, I have contended already, has awakened in us the search after a scientific Morality, *i.e.* a Morality which has some ground in reality and not in notions. And Butler has certainly not satisfied the desire which he has kindled if, as some would tell us, he has only taught us that probability is the ground of all human actions. We have specimens enough among our statesmen, as well, I am afraid, as among our divines, of persons who have taken in that maxim in its fullness,—who think that the art of steering their life's vessel consists in following all chance currents, or in merely resisting them,—who have no principles to determine when they should yield or when they should resist,—who have a set of opinions to which they swore to adhere when they entered upon the business of the world, and from which they were forced to drift away when they become *actually* conversant with the business of it. These are not examples to encourage us in the worship of probability, but beacons to warn us from it. I am sure that Butler would have been more shocked than we can be at the results to which the supposed following of his precept is leading us. I am sure he would have told us, 'All probabilities and appearances will drag you into perdition, if there are not some fixed and unchangeable lights by which you are directing your course.'

Where then are these fixed and unchangeable lights to be found? Where is that immutable Morality which all earnest men have sought after? When Kant had discovered that no notions could possibly contain it or represent it, "he built again," Mr. Mansel indignantly

exclaims, "the things which he destroyed, so making himself a transgressor;" or, as I have stated the case somewhat differently in my last letter, he confessed that there was a witness in man for truths which he could not comprehend in notions, and that this witness had the closest connection with his practical morality. *What* connection it has is a subject of earnest interest to Englishmen and Germans. Each has discussed it in their own way. Each has felt that a morality which is not tied by our limitations, is at the root of that which is. Mr. Mansel tramples them all down in this triumphant style:—

> "The Infinite, as contemplated by this philosophy, cannot be regarded as consisting of a limited number of attributes, each unlimited in its kind. It cannot be conceived, for example, after the analogy of a line, infinite in length, but not in breadth; or of a surface, infinite in two dimensions of space, but bounded in the third; or of an intelligent being, possessing some one or more modes of consciousness in an infinite degree, but devoid of others. Even if it be granted, which is not the case, that such a partial infinite may without contradiction be conceived, still it will have a relative infinity only, and be altogether incompatible with the idea of the Absolute. The line limited in breadth is thereby necessarily related to the space that limits it; the intelligence endowed with a limited number of attributes, coexists with others which are thereby related to it, as cognate or opposite modes of consciousness. The metaphysical representation of the Deity, as absolute and infinite, must necessarily, as the profoundest metaphysicians have acknowledged, amount to nothing less than the sum of all reality. 'What kind of an absolute Being is that,' says Hegel, 'which does not contain in itself all that is actual, even evil included?' We may repudiate the conclusion with indignation; but the reasoning is unassailable. If the Absolute and Infinite is an object of human conception at all, this, and none other, is the conception required. That which is conceived as absolute and infinite must be conceived as containing within itself the sum, not only of all actual, but of all possible modes of being. For if any actual mode can be denied of it, it is related to that mode, and limited by it; and if any possible mode can be denied of it, it is capable of

becoming more than it now is, and such a capability is a limitation. Indeed it is obvious that the entire distinction between the possible and the actual can have no existence as regards the absolutely infinite; for an unrealized possibility is necessarily a relation and a limit."—(*Bampton Lectures*, 2nd ed., pp. 45-47.)

Again:—

"Not only is the Absolute, as conceived, incapable of a necessary relation to anything else, but it is also incapable of containing, by the constitution of its own nature, an essential relation within itself; as a whole, for instance, composed of parts, or as a substance consisting of attributes, or as a conscious subject in antithesis to an object. For if there is in the absolute any principle of unity, distinct from the mere accumulation of parts or attributes, this principle alone is the true absolute. If, on the other hand, there is no such principle, then there is no absolute at all, but only a plurality of relatives. The almost unanimous voice of philosophy, in pronouncing that the absolute is both one and simple, must be accepted as the voice of reason also, so far as reason has any voice in the matter. But this absolute unity, as indifferent and containing no attributes, can neither be distinguished from the multiplicity of finite beings by any characteristic feature, nor be identified with them in their multiplicity. Thus we are landed in an inextricable dilemma. The Absolute cannot be conceived as conscious, neither can it be conceived as unconscious: it cannot be conceived as complex, neither can it be conceived as simple: it cannot be conceived by difference, neither can it be conceived by the absence of difference: it cannot be identified with the universe, neither can it be distinguished from it. The One and the Many, regarded as the beginning of existence, are thus alike incomprehensible."—(*Bampton Lectures*, 2nd ed., pp. 49, 50.)

Or this:—

"Again, how can the Relative be conceived as coming into being? If it is a distinct reality from the absolute, it must be conceived as passing from non-existence into existence. But to conceive an object as non-existent, is again a self-contradiction; for that which is

> conceived exists, as an object of thought, in and by that conception. We may abstain from thinking of an object at all; but, if we think of it, we cannot but think of it as existing. It is possible at one time not to think of an object at all, and at another to think of it as already in being; but to think of it in the act of becoming, in the progress from not being into being, is to think that which, in the very thought, annihilates itself. Here again the Pantheistic hypothesis seems forced upon us. We can think of creation only as a change in the condition of that which already exists; and thus the creature is conceivable only as a phenomenal mode of the being of the Creator."—(*Bampton Lectures*, 2nd ed., pp. 53, 54.)

What greater proof do we need than these passages furnish, that so long as we are busy with the terms of logic, so long we shall never arrive at the truth of things? The acknowledgment of these contradictions is common to Mr. Mansel with all the three classes of which I have spoken. Those who seek for the meaning of common facts, will joyfully refer to his Lecture as a proof that you cannot leave that ground and enter the logical ground without being involved in a series of hopeless quibbles which no human being ought to trouble himself with, unless he means to abandon the business of existence, and to give himself up to feats of jugglery. The Pantheist, in one mood of his mind, will be strengthened by Mr. Mansel's victorious analysis in his persuasion,

> That nothing is, but all things seem,
> And we the shadows of the dream;

in another, will exclaim triumphantly, 'Yes! now I know that I must fly to Nature and lose myself in the great Universe, and seek a God there, since you show me so clearly that He is not to be found in any of your notions and dogmas.' And what will he who is at the most opposite point to Pantheism, who longs to escape from vagueness, and to find some safe foundation for his own thoughts and acts—for his own self—say to these elaborate logical confutations of his right to engage in any such pursuit? What can he say but this?—'After working diligently

through Aldrich, reading Whately, studying Mill, I did not require to be told that the terms Finite and Infinite, Absolute and Relative, exclude each other,—that you cannot comprehend the Many under the One, or the One under the Many,—that the intellect unawares assumes a beginning for that which it calls First Cause. I thought these were nuts for children to crack, conundrums for breakfast-parties; if introduced into the solemn lecture-room, to be noticed there only for the purpose of explaining how dishonest men had turned them to vile services—how verbal contradictions had been used by Athenian rhetoricians as a plea for atrocious deeds—or for the purpose of illustrating the method by which Socrates cut these webs and brought his disciples back through converse with homely life and actual things into a perception of their deepest necessities, into a conviction that for them they must seek a real, not a nominal satisfaction. I never dreamed that these riddles were to be Church entertainments, that the Christian teacher inherited the functions of Protagoras and Prodicus. But if that is settled,—if Christianity does wrap herself in these conceits, and pronounce herself incapable of meeting those demands which remain just as deep, just as practical, after these demonstrations as before,—what have we to do? The term Finite, in the schools, does, we know, exclude the term Infinite. The actual finite in ourselves, the partial good we perceive in ourselves and in those about us, compels us to ask if there is not that which is good in itself, which is not partial. The term Relative excludes the term Absolute. But since my brother is a being in himself, and not only a brother, since every father is a being in himself, and not only a father,—the actual relation, the living relation, drives us to seek for an Absolute, which lies beyond and behind the Relation. Of course we entangle ourselves in contradictions every time we try to think of a Cause. It is that very entanglement which drives us to ask for some ground beneath our thoughts, not included in them, but the only explanation of them. I know that the One and the Many negative each other. But I know that amidst a world of pluralities, I must seek Unity. What then does your arguing reprove? What effect

has it but to force us beyond the confines of your Logic, and therefore, as it seems from your statement, beyond the confines of what you call your Revelation?'

Alas! alas! for those critics of human doubts and questionings who, like the critic in Sterne, never look at the living countenance of him on whom they are commenting, but only at their stop-watches! They never find out what the opponent means, what he wants; they only find out what he does not mean and does not want! What they suppose are green withs, fresh cut, that will be sure to bind Samson, especially when he is asleep—are in truth very dry withs, not green at all, which he has broken from off his limbs a hundred times, and which he will arouse himself in a moment to break again. But may you not be doing a worse thing? May you not have found the secret of his strength, the lock that has not yet been severed from the head? May you not be robbing him of that? May you not, with your fine logic, have been scattering that belief in an Eternal Goodness and Truth which has been the treasure, if as yet the unrealized treasure, of his life? May you not have been convincing him that what has come to him continually a thousand times as the dawn of a distant hope,—what has sometimes come very nigh to him as a word in his heart,—is a delusion after all? Oh, what have you done for his present life, for his future life, when you have done this?

There is an awful passage in Milton's letter to Mr. Hartlib, which I used to hope had scarcely any application to the Oxford of the present day. Read it,—I doubt not you know it already,—in connection with the passages I have quoted from the Bampton Lecturer, and judge.

> "And for the usual method of teaching Arts, I deem it to be an old error of Universities not yet well recovered from the Scholastic grossness of barbarous ages, that instead of beginning with Arts most easie, and those be such as are most obvious to the sense, they present their young unmatriculated Novices at first comming with the most intellective abstractions of Logick and Metaphysicks: So that they, having but newly left those grammatick flats and shallows

> where they stuck unreasonably to learn a few words with lamentable construction, and now on the sudden transported under another climate to be tost and turmoil'd with their unballasted wits in fathomless and unquiet deeps of controversie, do for the most part grow into hatred and contempt of Learning, mockt and deluded all this while with ragged Notions and Babblements, while they expected worthy and delightful knowledge; till poverty or youthful years call them importunately their several wayes, and hasten them with the sway of friends either to an ambitious and mercenary, or ignorantly zealous Divinity; Some allur'd to the trade of Law, grounding their purposes not on the prudent and heavenly contemplation of justice and equity, which was never taught them, but on the promising and pleasing thoughts of litigious terms, fat contentions, and flowing fees; others betake them to State affairs, with souls so unprincipl'd in vertue, and true generous breeding, that flattery, and Court shifts and tyrannous Aphorisms appear to them the highest points of wisdom; instilling their barren hearts with a conscientious slavery, if, as I rather think, it be not fein'd. Others, lastly, of a more delicious and airie spirit, retire themselves, knowing no better, to the enjoyments of ease and luxury, living out their daies in feast and jollity; which indeed is the wisest and the safest course of all these, unless they were with more integrity undertaken. And these are the errours, and these are the fruits of misspending our prime youth at the Schools and Universities as we do, either in learning meer words or such things chiefly, as were better unlearnt."

These are fearful considerations—all of them. But oh, I beseech you, dwell most upon that which concerns you most! Consider whether 'these intellective abstractions' can ever be the ground for your Gospel, ever the defence of your Bible? Is not your Gospel a message concerning the Infinite, the Absolute, the Eternal? Is not your Bible a book of Facts by which men are led gradually on to know what the ground is at their feet; to feel, through the actual finite, for the Infinite,—through the actual temporal, for the Eternal? If it is, as Mr. Mansel delights to tell us, *unsystematical*, is not that because it is in the highest sense

methodical? Does it not begin with the facts of family life, discovering a God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob at work in them? Does it not go on to the facts of National life, discovering an I Am, an unchangeable Lawgiver and King and Judge in the midst of them? Does it not explain at last the facts of Human or universal Life, the mystery of a Father, a Son, and a Spirit, being discovered through these? If you speak out of this Bible, will you not have something else to tell the student of Facts than that he cannot reconcile opposing Notions,—the seeker of a divine Morality, than that he cannot bring his finite notions into fellowship with the Infinite,—the yearner after the sympathy of the Universe, than that he cannot prove his right to it in the schools? May you not bid the first rejoice and give thanks that the Highest of All has explained His government over His creatures through facts, and not through notions? May we not say to the second, that the whole Law and Gospel is a discovery of that Absolute Goodness and Truth which lie at the foundation of all Goodness and Truth in us? May we not ask the Pantheist if the revelation of a God in Whom we are living and moving and having our being, the Life-giver to all creatures,—of One who is above all and through all and in us all,—will not satisfy the cravings of his spirit, without compelling him to forget the eternal boundaries of Right and Wrong?

Ever yours faithfully,

LETTER VII. PHILOSOPHY OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Mr. Mansel's Third and Fourth Lectures.— Philosophy of Consciousness.—the Scotch. — Schleiermacher.—Mr. Mansel's Own Treatment of the Subject.—Prayer.

My dear Sir,

At the close of Mr. Mansel's second Lecture, he states his reasons for using the philosophical terms Infinite, Absolute, Cause, in their dry formality, instead of introducing the awful name of God, and making that the theme of such tormenting subtleties. I appreciate the reverence which led him to adopt that course. Yet I cannot help thinking that if he reconsiders it, he may be led to detect a practical sophism in his argument. I grant it is a fearful thing to connect plays upon words with awful realities. But can he avoid the connection? Is he not answerable for bringing them together? At all events, the summary of his conclusions, with which he commences his third Lecture, must help to break down the distinction which he tried to establish in the previous one. Read, and consider it.

> "My last Lecture was chiefly occupied with an examination of the ideas of the Absolute and the Infinite,—ideas which are indispensable to the foundation of a Metaphysical Theology, and of which a clear and distinct consciousness must be acquired, if such a Theology is to exist at all. I attempted to show the inadequacy of these ideas for such a purpose, by reason of the contradictions which to our apprehension they necessarily involve from every point of view. The result of that attempt may be briefly summed up as follows. We are compelled, by the constitution of our minds, to believe in the existence of an Absolute and Infinite Being,—a belief which appears forced upon us, as the complement of our consciousness

> of the relative and the finite. But the instant we attempt to analyze the ideas thus suggested to us, in the hope of attaining to an intelligible conception of them, we are on every side involved in inextricable confusion and contradiction. It is no matter from what point of view we commence our examination;—whether, with the Theist, we admit the co-existence of the Infinite and the Finite, as distinct realities; or, with the Pantheist, deny the real existence of the Finite; or, with the Atheist, deny the real existence of the Infinite; —on each of these suppositions alike, our reason appears divided against itself, compelled to admit the truth of one hypothesis, and yet unable to overcome the apparent impossibilities of each. *The philosophy of Rationalism, thus traced upwards to its highest principles, finds no legitimate resting-place, from which to commence its deduction of religious consequences*."—(*Bampton Lectures*, 2nd ed., pp. 67, 68.)

I have put the last sentence in italics, that I may make a remark which is not more important for this passage than for the whole volume. You and I are very little concerned in ascertaining whether "the philosophy of Rationalism," or any other philosophy, religious or irreligious, has "a legitimate resting place." But if it is true that "*our* reason is divided against itself,"—if that division has reference to the question whether Theism, i.e. the doctrine that there is a God; Pantheism, i.e. the doctrine that everything is God; Atheism, i.e. the doctrine that there is no God, is the right doctrine,—this is a point of all importance to us, —this is a matter of life and death. That division must in some way be brought to an end; for what does it mean? That *we* have no legitimate resting-place; that there is no foundation for *our* being.

One more remark before I proceed to the business of the Lecture. Mr. Mansel hopes to deliver us from Hegel and the modern Germans. Have you considered to what point he takes us back, that he may effect that deliverance? Need I remind you that there was a Hume before there was a Hegel; that the utter incapacity of deciding between Theism, Pantheism, Atheism—of deciding any question whatever concerning the Nature of God—was precisely the point from which

he "commenced his deduction of religious consequences." I am far indeed from saying that Mr. Mansel's religious consequences are the same as Hume's. I know that they are not. But will you allow me to remark that he does not differ from Hume *in this respect*, that he recommends general acquiescence in the established religion of the day. Hume would have recommended the same acquiescence. He hated the Puritans as cordially as he could hate anything, because they were not acquiescent, but had wild dreams of knowing something of the Infinite and Eternal. He reverenced the Stuart policy as much as he could reverence anything, because he thought it the best check upon this extravagance. He cared for no institution more than for what he called a State Establishment of Religion, because he supposed that it restrained men from any excess of thinking respecting subjects upon which people will think, though their thinking can bring them to no result. I frankly tell you that in my judgment the latter opinion was not only the proper sequel of the first, but that it has produced immensely more mischief to English morality and English faith. According to a tradition which Sir James Mackintosh believed, Butler rather advised than discouraged the publication of one of the books on which Hume's infidel reputation rests; so confident was he that the truth would bear discussion, and would rise more strongly out of it. But the doctrine that the Church, of which he was a Bishop, existed to keep alive the kind of indifference which he longed to disturb, would, I think, have been extremely shocking to him. Hume's Scepticism was followed by an almost immediate reaction; the notion of him as a Defender of Ecclesiastical and Tory faith has not forsaken the minds of many clergymen, even after a century of revolutions.

This is no digression. It is the proper introduction to the subject of the coming Lecture, which is to develope the Philosophy of Consciousness as opposed to the Philosophy of Rationalism. Now I am bound to own—and I do it with great pleasure—that if we find ourselves shut in by Hume's contradictions, this may be the best process for escaping from them. Supposing it is needful—and perhaps it may be—to travel

again over that ground which our fathers in the last century travelled, that is, I conceive, the proper route. In England and in Scotland, even in France and Germany, men appear to have been led along it, if they were not able ultimately to find their 'resting-place' in it. I spoke of a great impatience and weariness of this 'Consciousness,' and, above all, of a 'Philosophy of Consciousness,' which has manifested itself in our time, and which I thought had much justification. I am therefore the more anxious to show what service those who spoke of Consciousness in the last age were rendering to mankind, and how much we may lose if we despise the lessons which they left us.

Hume's favourite word was *Experience*. How can we know anything to be true except by experience? What experience can we have about those facts and doctrines of which the believers in a Revelation talk to us? Do not they in their very nature and statement transcend Experience? Theological Apologists nibbled at this net, and tried to make or find holes in it. Actual sufferers, Christian men and women who had never heard Hume's name, cut through it. Those who are far less familiar than you are with the phraseology of the religious men of the last generation, cannot be ignorant that Hume's watchword was also theirs. He said there could be no experience save that which reached us through the senses, or was derived from impressions on the senses. They spoke of spiritual experiences which were not only most precious and sacred to them, but the absence of which left them bare of all motives to right and kindly actions. Were they self-deceivers, or bent upon deceiving others?—fanatics, or hypocrites? These solutions were evidently the easiest; the majority of their opponents, wits and doctors, resorted to one or the other. There were those who could not,—who had known enough of such feelings themselves, to believe that some which they had not known might be genuine. These mental operations, to whatever source they might be attributed, were surely worthy of investigation. If they could be fairly investigated according to some legitimate method already recognized, might not those which seemed 'abnormal' be reduced into order? might not enthusiasm be

checked? might not the limits of experience be stretched at least some way beyond the point which Hume had fixed for them?

Good and evil, I conceive, were mixed in this experiment as in most others. It was good to defend the worth and verity of experiences which concern the invisible as well as the visible world; it was good to show that all human experiences have some relation to each other, and, if possible, to trace out the relation. On the other hand, there was great danger that the investigator would 'murder to dissect;' that he would kill the experience, of whatever kind it was, in order to examine its nature; and would discourse about Experiences which, for him, were no Experiences at all. There was fear that the student would become a contemplator of actual mental operations till they ceased to be actual, or that he would merely conceive of them, and affix certain labels to them, as if they were lying outside of him, and were not in any sense his.

But these mischievous results might perhaps be avoided. The honey might be extracted from the hives without the destruction—without more, at most, than the temporary stupefaction—of the bees that had gathered it. And there was something to encourage hope—if there was also something to make the alarm look all too reasonable—in the proceedings of those who engaged in this branch of the philosophical business.

The phrase which they adopted,—in some degree superseding that of the sceptical philosopher and of the unphilosophical believers,—was, it seems to me, a specially happy one. All words like those into which the proposition *cum* enters,—Conviction, Conception, Conversion, Consciousness,—are worthy of the closest study and examination; hardly any are so suggestive; hardly any contain so much light respecting our processes of thought, respecting our human nature. No one of them has more of this value than the word Consciousness; that it should have been accepted in an age by no means philological, and

by men who were rather the reverse of philologers,[21] is one of those indications of a Providence that shapes our ends which ought not to be overlooked. The word 'Experience' might be limited to that which passed in the subject of the experience; the word 'Consciousness' at once hinted by its formation, showed by every one of its simplest applications, that there is a fellowship and participation between the conscious man and something else. '*To be conscious*,' says Mr. Mansel, '*we must be conscious of something*.' Or, as he says afterwards, in rather grander, but not better language:—'*There must be a Subject, or person conscious, and an Object or thing of which he is conscious. There can be no Consciousness without the union of these two factors*.' Exactly; and therefore my Consciousness must of necessity carry me beyond myself. If it is the lowest consciousness of mere physical pain or physical pleasure, it carries me to something which is the source of that pain or that pleasure. If it is the consciousness of regard or affection, it carries me to the person who awakens that regard or affection. If it is a consciousness of dependence, it carries me to that thing or that person on whom I am dependent; if it is a consciousness of wrong, it carries me to that which I have wronged, or to him I have wronged. What a deliverance then may this word be from those perils which I have hinted at as likely to beset those who philosophize on our mental operations! How it will remind them, at every step, of the direct relation between us and facts, between us and persons! How they will tremble if they discover that they are interposing any mere nominal or formal barriers between the conscious man and that whereof he is conscious! How anxious they will be to look at those other words to which I have alluded, in the spirit and according to the maxims which they have already brought to bear upon this one! The word 'Conception,' for instance, —how gladly they will avail themselves of the physical mystery which it denotes as an analogy to the mental mystery! How many confusions they will see might have been averted in the use of that word, how

[21] I allude to Reid and Dugald Stewart; not, of course, to Sir William Hamilton, who was a philologer.

many hard judgments respecting other men's use of it, if it had been recollected that every act of ours which seems most internal, most our own, implies co-operation, implies something which is not our own!

I do not complain of the Scotch philosophers for not dwelling as much as they might have done upon these truths which are latent in their own chosen phrase. They were too obvious; they lay too much on the common high-road of life to attract much of their attention. They were working out a great book-system; one ought to be thankful for every homage which they paid to ordinary facts whilst they were engaged in such a task; to have stooped too often to them would have destroyed their school reputation. We Englishmen can afford to join the late Professor Blunt in admiring Paley because he illustrated some part of his doctrine of adaptations by speaking of the great difficulty he experienced in procuring a wig which exactly fitted his head; but we cannot require other people to feel that admiration, seeing that it arises from our stupid attachment to the concrete and the practical.

There is, however, a country which is supposed to be as much addicted to abstractions as Scotland. The Philosophy of Consciousness, in Germany, as it presents itself in Schleiermacher, was a rebellion against the abstract tendency. Trained in Moravian habits of reverence and affection for the Person of Christ, feeling in his manhood the full attraction of that Pantheistic movement which is, as I said in my last Letter, a vehement effort to escape from formulas into sympathy with the living Universe,—taught by his country's sufferings the need it had of a ground for personal life and morality which neither formulas nor Pantheism could give,—instructed by his earnest study of the Socratic method in the Platonic Dialogues that the truest Philosophy does not consist in pursuing Notions, but in rising out of them—finding the orthodox defenders of Scripture, as well as the Naturalists who sought to reduce it according to their maxims, equally averse from this method, equally determined to bring the most earnest thoughts and questionings of his countrymen within their narrow rules, equally indifferent to the deepest necessities of the

human soul,—perceiving in the New Testament much which met his cravings, which presented itself to him as the divine satisfaction of his wants, much that for him lay in shadow,—and being almost entirely out of sympathy with the lessons of the Old Testament, he became the most thorough, devout, accomplished defender of Consciousness as the instrument and to some extent the measure of belief whom the world ever saw or is likely to see. Mr. Mansel has testified (Lecture IV., p. 113) that Schleiermacher's *writings have had, perhaps, more influence than those of any other man, in forming the modern religious Philosophy of his own country*. He adds, that his 'views, in *all their essential features, have been ably maintained, and widely diffused among ourselves*.' Those of Schleiermacher's countrymen whom I have known, and who have described to me the influence he has exerted over them, have not spoken so much of 'his forming their religious philosophy,' as of his leading them to think what Philosophy was, and what Religion was. He found his disciples, they said, eager for a set of conclusions well packed and ticketed as religious or philosophical. He withdrew them from that ambition; he led them to feel for themselves after that which was needful for their own being. His teaching or method, they said, encouraged the activity and earnestness of their minds; but it forbade, by its very nature, the acceptance of the decrees or dogmas of the teacher. If, therefore, it is true, as Mr. Mansel affirms, that some are wishing to establish a Schleiermacher school among us, the best way of defeating their purpose would be, not to display Schleiermacher's weakness, but to exhibit him in his full strength. If he was the man which his countrymen say that he was, which his Scotch or English admirers think that he was, he must be shrivelled, distorted, changed into the thing that he was not, when he becomes the representative of a certain bundle of opinions. Those who would maintain "his views in all their essential features," will commit a practical solecism, of which that slipslop phrase is a tolerably faithful exponent.

I should grieve much for the sake of Schleiermacher's own character, still more for the sake of our English faith and honesty, if there

was this attempt to copy, or rather to caricature, him in England. But Mr. Mansel certainly has done nothing to avert the danger by describing Schleiermacher "as the chief modern representative of Eclectical Christianity." Such language will at once be felt by those who know the facts to be coarse and unjust, merely adapted to the prejudices of English hearers. A man who seeks that which he needs for his moral life is the very reverse of an eclectic, who takes that which will fit into his system, and leaves out that which disturbs it. Nor will the far more sympathizing criticism on Schleiermacher, part of which Mr. Mansel quotes (Note, p. 419) from Mr. Vaughan's 'Remains,' have much effect on those who have felt his power. That accomplished writer made a clever point when he demanded that the man who built so much on religious consciousness, should have had a religious consciousness of the fidelity of all the statements in the Old and New Testament. But Mr. Vaughan, with his knowledge of the processes of German thought, must have felt that this statement was *only* a clever point, and must have lamented it as one of the *dulcia vitia* into which reviewers are apt to be betrayed. He was perfectly aware that Schleiermacher's effort to realize facts as his own was avowedly a protest against the opinion that they were to be received merely on the authority of the Scriptural documents. To ask him to receive that authority as part of his consciousness, was simply asking him to contemplate the subject from another point of view, to assume another ground. I do not think that a pious demand, any more than a consistent or a wise one. If there was in the German divines, when Schleiermacher appeared, an inclination to mere opinions about Scripture, either positive or negative, it is not too great an exercise of faith in God to suppose that He may have led a student into a course of inquiry which at least made portions of Scripture very dear to him. And if this is so, the study of his course of thought, as it was, must be more profitable to us than a remonstrance against the direction which was imparted to it. I believe that study may be very useful indeed. An ordinary English reader of Mr. Mansel's book might easily suppose that Schleiermacher and Hegel exhibited

the same habit of mind in different measures. He could scarcely conjecture that they were direct opponents; that Hegelism is fled to by numbers just because the Consciousness of Schleiermacher is felt to be unsatisfactory, because it is thought to make Truth dependent upon our feelings instead of being fixed and eternal; that Schleiermacher is fled to by numbers because Hegel's absolute teaching appears to be so hard and inhuman. A fair examination of *this* conflict might surely avail more to make us feel what is weak and wanting in each, and to prevent us from accepting the dogmas of either, than a denunciation of both. Such an examination would, I believe, prepare us for appreciating the deep worth and reality of those parts of our creed which Schleiermacher rejected, would prepare us also to feel the unspeakable worth of that Evangelical movement in favour of conscious faith to which we owe what is most vital in our English Christianity, to which we owe it that the notion of Christianity has not extinguished the belief in a personal Christ. Mr. Mansel, the common foe of Schleiermacher and Hegel, is also, it seems to me, the foe of all that conscious faith "in the finite and relative" which characterized our Evangelical teachers, of that Revelation of the Eternal which "complements it." I proceed to illustrate this assertion from the third and fourth Lectures.

I have pointed out already the valuable hints which Mr. Mansel has given us for the study of Consciousness, in the two propositions that we must be *conscious of something*, and that all consciousness *supposes relation between a subject and an object*. Equally promising is the assurance that he will speak of "human consciousness in general before he speaks of the religious consciousness in particular." No method could be so desirable. If those principles are adhered to,—if this method is followed,—we must receive the greatest help from the discussion. For before any attempt is made to tell us what consciousness is not, we shall of course be led, by a gradual inductive method, such as Reid and Stewart professed, to discover what it is; we shall hear nothing of the Infinite, with which Consciousness is said not to be concerned, till we have been shown how it is concerned with the Finite; the domain of

the relative will be thoroughly explored, if it be only in order that we may not presume to approach the Absolute. Hear how these obvious conditions of such an investigation are complied with. Thus it is that Mr. Mansel *commences* his whole argument.

> "To be conscious, we must be conscious of something; and that something can only be known, as that which it is, by being distinguished from that which it is not. But distinction is necessarily limitation; for, if one object is to be distinguished from another, it must possess some form of existence which the other has not, or it must not possess some form which the other has. But it is obvious that the Infinite cannot be distinguished, as such, from the Finite, by the absence of any quality which the Finite possesses; for such absence would be a limitation. Nor yet can it be distinguished by the presence of an attribute which the Finite has not; for, as no finite part can be a constituent of an infinite whole, this differential characteristic must itself be infinite; and must at the same time have nothing in common with the finite. We are thus thrown back upon our former impossibility; for this second infinite will be distinguished from the finite by the absence of qualities which the latter possesses. A consciousness of the Infinite as such thus necessarily involves a self-contradiction; for it implies the recognition, by limitation and difference, of that which can only be given as unlimited and indifferent.
>
> That man can be conscious of the Infinite, is thus a supposition which, in the very terms in which it is expressed, annihilates itself. Consciousness is essentially a limitation; for it is the determination of the mind to one actual out of many possible modifications. But the Infinite, if it is to be conceived at all, must be conceived as potentially everything and actually nothing; for if there is anything in general which it cannot become, it is thereby limited; and if there is anything in particular which it actually is, it is thereby excluded from being any other thing. But again, it must also be conceived as actually everything and potentially nothing; for an unrealized potentiality is likewise a limitation. If the infinite can be that which it is not, it is by that very possibility marked out as incomplete, and capable of a

higher perfection. If it is actually everything, it possesses no characteristic feature, by which it can be distinguished from anything else, and discerned as an object of consciousness.

This contradiction, which is utterly inexplicable on the supposition that the infinite is a positive object of human thought, is at once accounted for, when it is regarded as the mere negation of thought. If all thought is limitation;—if whatever we conceive is, by the very act of conception, regarded as finite,—*the infinite*, from a human point of view, is merely a name for the absence of those conditions under which thought is possible. To speak of a *Conception of the Infinite* is, therefore, at once to affirm those conditions and to deny them. The contradiction, which we discover in such a conception, is only that which we have ourselves placed there, by tacitly assuming the conceivability of the inconceivable. The condition of consciousness is distinction; and the condition of distinction is limitation. We can have no consciousness of Being in general which is not some Being in particular: a *thing*, in consciousness, is one thing out of many. In assuming the possibility of an infinite object of consciousness, I assume, therefore, that it is at the same time limited and unlimited; actually something, without which it could not be an object of consciousness, and actually nothing, without which it could not be infinite."—(*Bampton Lectures*, 2nd ed., pp. 70–73.)

What is this? An account of the facts of human Consciousness generally as distinguished from the facts of Religious Consciousness specially? I ask you to read over the passage which I have extracted, and the rest of the Lecture, down to the beginning of the ninety-sixth page, in which the author announces that he has concluded this first portion of the argument, and is ready to enter upon the second, and to say whether I am or am not justified in making these assertions. (1.) That instead of examining any single instance of Consciousness as applied to some finite thing which he admits to be a legitimate and possible object of it, he at once plunges into the question of the Infinite, and the impossibility of exercising consciousness upon that. (2.) That, so far from holding himself aloof from questions concerning

the religious Consciousness in this part of his inquiry, all the most awful subjects with which, rightly or wrongly, religious Consciousness has been assumed to have some connection—the Consciousness, Personality, Nature of God—come into the discussion, and the settlement of them is taken for granted. (3.) That this violation, not of some other method, but of that which Mr. Mansel has chosen for himself, enables him to introduce a number of topics for censure and condemnation, which serve admirably the purpose of a rhetorician who wishes to prepossess his hearers with a horror of any opinion but his own, but which either Sir William Hamilton, Bishop Butler, or any person whose judgment is entitled to respect, would have pronounced worthless for the purposes of the argument.[22]

But this is a small part of my complaint. I could have forgiven Mr. Mansel for anticipating what was to come hereafter, if he had done the very smallest justice to the subject which lay before him. But when he enters the region of Consciousness he is so far from forsaking the dry terminology with which we found him exclusively occupied in the last Lecture, that we have here a mere repetition of that terminology. His whole argument turns not on my consciousness of finite *things*, and my incapacity for being conscious of infinite *things*; but upon my consciousness of the *term* finite, and the *term* infinite. I could not convince myself for some time, that a man of Mr. Mansel's clearness of mind had fallen into so monstrous a confusion as this. I looked again and again at passages which proved that he knew as well as any one that terms are no objects of thought, nay, in which he denounced other philosophers for making them so. I gave all weight to these remarks and denunciations. I confessed that they were in the

[22]Thus, for instance, one may join with him in denouncing Fichte's conclusion respecting moral order (see the 74th page), but I solemnly protest against the introduction of it into a discourse to a mixed audience, who could know nothing of the writer's general purpose, or the real meaning of a doctrine which is embodied in a single sentence. Such a course may please religious critics, but it is immoral, and furnishes a precedent which might be applied with tremendous force to Mr. Mansel himself. So also I can have no objection to the exposure of "the dreams of a godless philosophy" (*e.g.* of that Hume philosophy which leaves us utterly in doubt whether Theism, Pantheism, Atheism, is most true or most false), but what has it to do with that division of the Lecture which excludes religious questions?

strictest accordance with his own primary maxim; and yet, when I considered the passage which I am about to quote, I could not but fall back upon the conviction that Terms and Realities are hopelessly mingled in his intellect, nay even in his conscience.

> This contradiction, again, admits of the same explanation as the former. Our whole notion of existence is necessarily relative; for it is existence as conceived by us. But *Existence*, as we conceive it, is but a name for the several ways in which objects are presented to our consciousness,—a general term, embracing a variety of relations. *The Absolute*, on the other hand, is a term expressing no object of thought, but only a denial of the relation by which thought is constituted. To assume absolute existence as an object of thought, is thus to suppose a relation existing when the related terms exist no longer. An object of thought exists, as such, in and through its relation to a thinker; while the Absolute, as such, is independent of all relation. *The Conception of the Absolute* thus implies at the same time the presence and the absence of the relation by which thought is constituted; and our various endeavours to represent it are only so many modified forms of the contradiction involved in our original assumption. Here, too, the contradiction is one which we ourselves have made. It does not imply that the Absolute cannot exist; but it implies, most certainly, that we cannot conceive it as existing.—(*Bampton Lectures*, 2nd ed., pp. 75, 76.)

What deep truth is contained in the last part of this extract! *Here is a contradiction which we ourselves have made*. Assuredly it is. I make the term Existence, and use that *term* to denote a variety of objects which are presented to my consciousness; I make the term Absolute, to denote something that is not relative. I make the term Infinite to denote that which is not finite. None of these terms can possibly have anything to do with my consciousness. For never let us forget 'I am conscious of *something*.' But the *term* finite is just as much nothing as the term infinite, the term relative as the term absolute.

If we are thus defeated of all the help and guidance we were promised respecting the ordinary human consciousness,—if we can

hear nothing of them except what they are not,—it is not to be expected that the special religious consciousness should be treated more satisfactorily. This beginning does not seem to me very hopeful.

> "Taking, then, as the basis of our inquiry, the admission that the whole consciousness of man, whether in thought, or in feeling, or in volition, is limited in the manner of its operation and in the objects to which it is related, let us endeavour, with regard to the religious consciousness in particular, to separate from each other the complicated threads which, in their united web, constitute the conviction of man's relation to a Supreme Being. In distinguishing, however, one portion of these as forming the origin of this conviction, and another portion as contributing rather to its further development and direction, I must not be understood to maintain or imply that the former could have existed and been recognized, prior to and independently of the co-operation of the latter. Consciousness, in its earliest discernible form, is only possible as the result of a union of the reflective with the intuitive faculties. A state of mind, to be known at all as existing, must be distinguished from other states; and, to make this distinction, we must think of it, as well experience it. Without thought as well as sensation, there could be no consciousness of the existence of an external world: without thought as well as emotion and volition, there could be no consciousness of the moral nature of man. Sensation without thought would at most amount to no more than an indefinite sense of uneasiness or momentary irritation, without any power of discerning in what manner we are affected, or of distinguishing our successive affections from each other. To distinguish, for example, in the visible world, any one object from any other, to know the house as a house, or the tree as a tree, we must be able to refer them to distinct notions; and such reference is an act of thought. The same condition holds good of the religious consciousness also. In whatever mental affection we become conscious of our relation to a Supreme Being, we can discern that consciousness, as such, only by reflecting upon it as conceived under its proper notion. Without this, we could not know our religious consciousness to be what it is: and, as the knowledge of

> a fact of consciousness is identical with its existence, without this, the religious consciousness, as such, could not exist."—(*Bampton Lectures*, 2nd edit., pp. 105-107.)

To ascertain, then, what Religious Consciousness *is*, we begin with laying down what the whole Consciousness of man is *not*. But have we even that starting-point? Have we found even the *Limits* to this general Consciousness? We have found that there are *terms* or limits which no doubt have their meaning and use. But apparently they are verbal limits merely; therefore limits which do not apply, and cannot apply, to that which is a vital act, or nothing. The effect of the confusion in the first stage of the inquiry becomes sadly evident in this. The Religious Consciousness, just like the general Consciousness, perishes in the statement of it. "*In whatever affection we become conscious of our relation to a Supreme Being, we can discern that Consciousness* as such only by reflecting on it under its proper notion." Read over these words four or five times. Examine them word by word. Weigh them in your mind. And then ask yourself whether you ever met with language which so entirely bewildered and extinguished (I can use no other word) the feeling which it professes to set forth. What becomes of the actual Consciousness thus "reflected upon as conceived under its proper notion"?

But let us hope for some path through this wilderness of words; for some heavenly manna to drop on us when we are quite faint with travelling through it. We now approach the positive part of the Lecture.

* Religious thought, if it is to exist at all, can only exist as representative of some fact of religious intuition,—of some individual state of mind, in which is presented, as an immediate fact, that relation of man to God, of which man, by reflection, may become distinctly and definitely conscious.

> "Two such states may be specified, as dividing between them the rude materials out of which Reflection builds up the edifice of Religious Consciousness. These are the *Feeling of Dependence* and the *Conviction of Moral Obligation*. To these two facts of the inner con-

sciousness may be traced, as to their sources, the two great outward acts by which religion in various forms has been manifested among men;—*Prayer*, by which they seek to win God's blessing upon the future, and *Expiation*, by which they strive to atone for the offences of the past. The Feeling of Dependence is the instinct which urges us to pray. It is the feeling that our existence and welfare are in the hands of a superior Power;—not of an inexorable Fate or immutable Law; but of a Being having at least so far the attributes of Personality, that He can show favour or severity to those dependent upon Him, and can be regarded by them with the feelings of hope, and fear, and reverence, and gratitude. It is a feeling similar in kind, though higher in degree, to that which is awakened in the mind of the child toward his parent, who is first manifested to him as the giver of such things as are needful, and to whom the first language he addresses is that of entreaty. It is the feeling so fully and intensely expressed in the language of the Psalmist: 'Thou art he that took me out of my mother's womb: thou wast my hope, when I hanged yet upon my mother's breasts. I have been left unto thee ever since I was born. Thou art my God even from my mother's womb. Be not thou far from me, O Lord: thou art my succour, haste thee to help me. I will declare thy Name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.' With the first development of consciousness, there grows up, as a part of it, the innate feeling that our life, natural and spiritual, is not in our power to sustain or to prolong; that there is One above us, on whom we are dependent, whose existence we learn, and whose presence we realize, by the sure instinct of Prayer. We have thus, in the Sense of Dependence, the foundation of one great element of Religion,—the Fear of God.

But the mere consciousness of dependence does not of itself exhibit the character of the Being on whom we depend. It is as consistent with superstition as with religion;—with the belief in a malevolent, as in a benevolent Deity: it is as much called into existence by the severities, as by the mercies of God; by the sufferings which we are unable to avert, as by the benefits which we did not ourselves procure. The Being on whom we depend is, in that single relation, manifested in the infliction of pain, as well as in the bestowal of

> happiness. But in order to make suffering, as well as enjoyment, contribute to the religious education of man, it is necessary that he should be conscious, not merely of *suffering*, but of *sin*;—that he should look upon pain not merely as *inflicted*, but as *deserved*; and should recognize in its Author the justice that punishes, not merely the anger that harms. In the feeling of dependence, we are conscious of the Power of God, but not necessarily of His Goodness. This deficiency, however, is supplied by the other element of religion, —the Consciousness of Moral Obligation, carrying with it, as it necessarily does, the Conviction of Sin."—(*Bampton Lectures*, 2nd ed., pp. 108-110.)

The reader will ask why I stop at these words, 'Conviction of Sin.' Do they not point to the most awful fact of human experience? Ought I not, in all justice, to let the writer show, by his interpretation of them, that he does mean Consciousness by Consciousness, Conviction by Conviction,—that he does not, after all, merely put them at a distance from himself, and range them under "their proper notion"? I would gladly have continued the quotation, if it had thrown any light—even the faintest—upon those fearful struggles in the human spirit which this scriptural phrase so wonderfully expresses. But the moment it has been uttered, Mr. Mansel proceeds to refute Kant's doctrine of an 'Autonomy of the Will;' as well as to attack "the fiction of an absolute law binding on all rational beings." I may venture to meet him again, some time or other, on that last question; but I will not be diverted by it from the one that is now in hand.

We are speaking of Religious Consciousness; let us confine ourselves to that. It is said to be "an edifice built up" "of the rude materials" formed out of "two states of mind." The first rude material is the feeling of Dependence. Surely a most deep and wonderful feeling or state of mind! But is it not itself a Consciousness? Am I not conscious of actual dependence on something or some Person? The Child is so, from whom Mr. Mansel draws the best, because the simplest, of all illustrations and proofs. David is so, in that Psalm which

he quotes. Neither the child nor the king builds up a Consciousness out of one or two states of mind. Each has a deep want and is drawn by it to a Person who meets the want, to a Person who has been the awakener of it. Is it not a grievous thing to put a multitude of phrases between this fact and ourselves? Do not David's words take us into the very heart of the Consciousness? If it is anything but a school phrase, is it not this? And what do we gain by reducing it into this school jargon, but the destruction of the thing which that jargon endeavours to explain? The words of the Psalmist tell us of an act of direct trust in a Person, in whom for some reason or other he *can* trust, whose character (or Name) is worthy of his trust, and worthy of other men's trust too, seeing that he says he will proclaim it to his brethren and to the Congregation. And am I the better for being told that this is the 'foundation of one great element of Religion.' It is impossible that an accomplished scholar could have spoken of the foundation of an element, if he had not been busy in leading us further and further from the real and the actual into vagueness and emptiness.

Mr. Mansel speaks next of another of these elements of Religion, —the Consciousness of Moral Obligation. Here, again, one is pained by finding how the near is explained by the distant, the known by the unknown, the undoubted fact by the logical term. That the Consciousness of Sin in us involves the Consciousness of God's Goodness, is a remark as practical as it is profound; if Mr. Mansel would have dwelt upon it, he would have seen, I fancy, the necessity of altering many of the moral statements which occur in the latter part of his book; he would have made this part of it far clearer and simpler. But to do so, he must have faced those actual experiences of sin which devout men have recorded. He must have asked himself whether they were deceived in supposing that Sin meant an alienation from a Being with whom they were meant to be united,—an opposition between their character and His who has made them to be like Him. No doubt, they would one and all have entirely acquiesced in his statement that this Consciousness of evil had been a part, a necessary and wonderful

part, of their "religious education." They would have testified, more strongly than he does, to the connection between the Consciousness of Suffering and of Sin in this Education. They would have said that they regarded all the bodily or outward sufferings they had undergone, as of unspeakable worth, because they had been instruments by which the Spirit of God had awakened in them the Conviction of Sin, that so He might lead them on to the Conviction of Righteousness. But if, after all, these Experiences were resolved into the 'Consciousness of Moral Obligation,' I think they would have exclaimed that a tame, respectable, presentable school-formula was substituted for living facts; that the facts were required to give the formula a meaning; that they had always recognized 'moral obligation,' without attaching a very distinct signification to either the adjective or the substantive; that they had learnt, by their Experience, who obliged them, and what was obliged; how a moral obligation differs from the force which acts upon the mere brute nature. Such persons would, unless I am greatly mistaken, read such a passage as the following with something more than a chill. They would feel that it carries them round in a weary circle of words and notions, each returning into the other, till all reality is lost, all practical guidance for life becomes hopeless, all personal consciousness is extinguished.

> We are thus compelled, by the consciousness of a moral obligation, to assume the existence of a moral Deity, and to regard the absolute standard of right and wrong as constituted by the nature of that Deity. The conception of this standard, in the human mind, may indeed be faint and fluctuating, and must be imperfect: it may vary with the intellectual and moral culture of the nation or the individual: and in its highest human representation, it must fall far short of the reality. But it is present to all mankind, as a basis of moral obligation and an inducement to moral progress: it is present in the universal consciousness of sin; in the conviction that we are offenders against God; in the expiatory rites by which, whether inspired by some natural instinct, or inherited from some primeval tradition,

> divers nations have, in their various modes, striven to atone for their transgressions, and to satisfy the wrath of their righteous Judge. However erroneously the particular acts of religious service may have been understood by men; yet, in the universal consciousness of innocence and guilt, of duty and disobedience, of an appeased and offended God, there is exhibited the instinctive confession of all mankind, that the moral nature of man, as subject to a law of obligation, reflects and represents, in some degree, the moral nature of a Deity by whom that obligation is imposed.—(*Bampton Lectures*, 2nd ed., pp. 112, 113.)

"*We are compelled*"—by what? "*by the consciousness of moral obligation*,"—i.e. of moral compulsion, "*to assume the existence of a moral Deity*." But what is moral? Do I derive my knowledge of its meaning from this compulsion which has not been explained, or from something else? I am further compelled to regard "*the absolute standard of right and wrong as constituted by the Nature of that Deity*." Now we begin to see light. Now we can know what morality is; now we can know what a moral compulsion is. Ah, no! Read the next passage. In place of the standard itself, we have a "*conception of this standard in the human mind*," which may "*vary with the intellectual and moral culture of the individual and the nation*;" which in fact therefore is no standard at all. But there is this consolation. This varying conception is "*present to all mankind as a basis of moral obligation and an inducement to moral progress*." We started from the consciousness of moral obligation. We have had the glimpse of a standard which would tell us what that is. We have lost that glimpse, and now we have the conception of this standard, i.e. (if it is anything) the consciousness of moral obligation, as a basis of moral obligation! And all we can find out about this basis of moral obligation is, that "*there are expiatory rites by which divers nations have in their various modes striven to atone for their transgressions and to satisfy the wrath of their righteous Judge*;" e.g. the offerings to Moloch and to the Queen of Heaven, which the God of Abraham pronounced to be abomination in His sight. 'Moral obligation' has

certainly a very firm 'basis'! And this is the lore which our sons are to hear from a University pulpit!

A portion of the Lecture is devoted to the subject of Prayer. One might have hoped that while speaking of it, Mr. Mansel would have cared more to express his own convictions, than to prove how absurd are the convictions of other men. But it would seem that to confute is the one "moral obligation" of a Preacher. When he refers to Communion with God, it is that he may denounce a theory of Schleiermacher, which has been adopted, he says, by Mr. Morell. This theory is described in the following language.

> "According to Schleiermacher, the essence of Religion is to be found in a feeling of absolute and entire dependence, in which the mutual action and reaction of subject and object upon each other, which constitutes the ordinary consciousness of mankind, gives way to a sense of utter, passive helplessness,—to a consciousness that our entire personal agency is annihilated in the presence of the infinite energy of the Godhead. In our intercourse with the world, he tells us, whether in relation to nature or to human society, the feeling of freedom and that of dependence are always present in mutual operation upon each other; sometimes in equilibrium; sometimes with a vast preponderance of the one or the other feeling; but never to the entire exclusion of either. But in our communion with God, there is always an accompanying consciousness that the whole activity is absolutely and entirely dependent upon Him; that, whatever amount of freedom may be apparent in the individual moments of life, these are but detached and isolated portions of a passively dependent whole."—(*Bampton Lectures*, 2nd ed., p. 114.)

Now I think any one who will be at the pains to refer to the 'Christliche Glaube,' of Schleiermacher, will discover that he certainly was not putting forth a theory on the subject of Religion[23] or of Prayer.

[23] *Frömmigkeit* is his word, which I submit ought not to be translated Religion. My edition is probably not the same as Mr. Mansel's; but the ninth Proposition of the Introduction may be taken as a specimen. "Das Gemeinsame aller frommen Erregungen, also das Wesen der *Frömmigkeit*, ist dieses, das wir uns selbst als schlechthin abhängig bewusst sind, das heisse, das wir uns abhängig fühlen von Gott."

Rightly or wrongly, he had evidently a dread of theories in this region. He was disposed, his opponents always say, to exaggerate the feeling above the intellect. "Piety in itself," he says, in one of his fundamental axioms, "is neither a knowing nor a doing (*weder ein Wissen noch ein Thun*), but an inclination and determination of the Feeling (*eine Neigung und Bestimmtheit des Gefühls*)." Evidently he desired to describe what he regarded as a fact, or rather as the central fact of his own being, that in which he could not be singular or different from other men, but in which he most realized what was common to him with them all. There was a consciousness, it seemed, which lay beneath all others: it expressed the deepest necessity of the creatures in whom the other Consciousnesses dwelt,—it was the want of his own very self. He confessed a Being not imperfect and limited, like himself, apart from whom he could not be, in whom he could lose himself and find rest. Such a statement as this has surely nothing in it of the arrogance and self-sufficiency of the Philosopher. It may be inadequate; no one probably would have felt the inadequacy of words to represent the profoundest reality more than its author. But something like it, I think, all persons who have ever prayed, or tried to pray, have coveted and adopted as the expression of their own impotency, of their surrender to the Almighty and the All-good.

Mr. Mansel makes the following comments upon it:—

> "Of this theory it may be observed, in the first place, that it contemplates God chiefly in the character of an *object of infinite magnitude*. The relations of the object to the subject, in our consciousness of the world, and in that of God, differ from each other in degree rather than in kind. The Deity is manifested with no attribute of personality; He is merely the world magnified to infinity: and the feeling of absolute dependence is in fact that of the annihilation of our personal existence in the Infinite Being of the Universe. Of this feeling, the intellectual exponent is pure Pantheism; and the infinite object is but the indefinite abstraction of Being in general, with no distinguishing characteristic to constitute a Deity. For the

> distinctness of an object of consciousness is in the inverse ratio to the intensity of the passive affection. As the feeling of dependence becomes more powerful, the knowledge of the character of the object on which we depend, must necessarily become less and less; for the discernment of any object as such, is a state of mental energy and reaction of thought upon that object. Hence the feeling of absolute dependence, supposing it possible, could convey no consciousness of God as God, but merely an indefinite impression of dependence upon something. Towards an object so vague and meaningless, no real religious relation is possible.
>
> In the second place, the consciousness of an absolute dependence in which our activity is annihilated, is a contradiction in terms; for consciousness itself is an activity. We can be conscious of a state of mind as such, only by attending to it; and attention is in all cases a mode of our active energy. Thus the state of absolute dependence, supposing it to exist at all, could not be distinguished from other states; and, as all consciousness is distinction, it could not, by any mode of consciousness, be known to exist." (*Bampton Lectures*, 2nd ed., pp. 115-117.)

The remark that one who prays thus must contemplate God "as an infinite magnitude," is the most astounding I ever met with. How can any human being feel that an infinite magnitude overpowers his will, subjects his restlessness, leads him captive? And what a strange fancy that this is the meaning and attraction of Pantheism! Doubtless, Schleiermacher had heard, as most earnest men, at some time or other, have heard, the singing of the Mermaid who would draw down the fisherman into the deep; doubtless the charm of sinking all personal existence in the vast whole had once seemed to him irresistible. But never, we may be sure, for a single moment did the hope of being crushed under an infinite magnitude dawn upon him as a vision of delight. He must have known even then too much of the nature of self, and of the burden of self, to think of bulk as having anything to do with the power that extinguished it. As he grew better to understand what that Self is which is identical with Sin,—what that independence

is which is only another name for slavery,—he will have known that no infinite world could receive the sacrifice, that nothing can claim the subjection of the spirit, but an infinite Love.

The second objection is curiously in accordance with Mr. Mansel's treatment of the whole subject. "*An absolute dependence in which our activity is annihilated, is a contradiction in terms*." Of course it is; but is it a contradiction in fact? It is a *paradox* certainly. All Consciousness is a paradox on this very ground, that it is an activity in us, and yet that it is always passing out of us into that of which we are conscious. Every feeling of child, friend, lover, is tending towards this consummation. When the activity is highest, it becomes self-forgetfulness. And what is "*putting our trust in the Lord, believing in Him, casting our burden upon Him*," but the full realization of this self-oblivion? Can Prayer, if it be communion with God, be anything but that? And if we believe, as the Scripture teaches us, that all Prayer is but our response to God's voice in us—if it is the Spirit who maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered—is not Schleiermacher's language something more in accordance with the Spirit of Psalmists, Prophets, Evangelists, and Apostles, than the following passage, though it appeals so confidently to their authority?

> "In the third place, the theory is inconsistent with the duty of Prayer. Prayer is essentially a state in which man is in active relation towards God; in which he is intensely conscious of his personal existence and its wants; in which he endeavours, by entreaty, to prevail with God. Let any one consider for a moment the strong energy of the language of the Apostle; 'Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me:' or the consciousness of a personal need, which pervades that Psalm in which David so emphatically declares his dependence upon God. 'My God, my God, look upon me; why hast thou forsaken me, and art so far from my health, and from the words of my complaint? O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season also I take no rest:'—let him ponder the words of our Lord himself,—'Shall

not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him?'—and then let him say if such language is compatible with the theory which asserts that man's personality is annihilated in his communion with God.

But, lastly, there is another fatal objection to the above theory. It makes our moral and religious consciousness subversive of each other, and reduces us to the dilemma, that either our faith or our practice must be founded on a delusion. The actual relation of man to God is the same, in whatever degree man may be conscious of it. If man's dependence on God is not really destructive of his personal freedom, the religious consciousness, in denying that freedom, is a false consciousness. If, on the contrary, man is in reality passively dependent upon God, the consciousness of moral responsibility, which bears witness to his free agency, is a lying witness. Actually, in the sight of God, we are either totally dependent, or, partially at least, free. And as this condition must be always the same, whether we are conscious of it or not, it follows, that, in proportion as one of these modes of consciousness reveals to us the truth, the other must be regarded as testifying to a falsehood."—(*Bampton Lectures*, 2nd ed., pp. 117, 118.)

To the argument from the Psalms I have replied already. That they express the utmost energy of the human spirit is admitted at once. But is not that energy put forth in acts of dependence and trust? Is not its regular expression: "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven"? Does it not reach its highest power and agony in the words of the only-begotten Son: "Not my will, but thine be done"?

A note, which is subjoined to this passage, is necessary for the full illustration of it.

Schleiermacher himself admits ('Christliche Glaube,' § 38) that the theory of absolute dependence is incompatible with the belief that God can be moved by any human action. He endeavours, however, to reconcile this admission with the duty of prayer by maintaining (§ 147) that the true Christian will pray for nothing but that which it comes within God's absolute purpose to grant. *This implies something*

like omniscience in the true Christian, and something like hypocrisy in every act of prayer.[24]—(*Bampton Lectures*, 2nd ed., Note 16, p. 360.)

Is not this a direct answer—not to Schleiermacher, but—to the Apostle John? 'If omniscience in the act of prayer,'—if 'something like hypocrisy in every act of prayer,' is chargeable on the writer of the 'Christliche Glaube,' is not the writer of an Epistle which contains these wonderful words still more open to that blame?—"*And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His Will, He heareth us. And if we know that He heareth us, we know that we have the petition that we desired of Him*." Another deep paradox, surely! Infidels have again and again applied to it the very language which Mr. Mansel applies to the German author. To me it seems that the whole paradox of our Consciousness, as well as all the paradox of Christ's Gospel, is hidden here. To me it seems, that for the prayer which is not this—for that prayer which answers to Mr. Mansel's idea of conscious activity in beseeching a Being of whose will we know nothing—we must seek our precedent, not in the New Testament, not in the Book of Psalms, but in that memorable passage of the Book of Kings: "*And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us! but there was no voice nor any that regarded*."

Surely it is not to such prayers as these that an Oxford Teacher in the nineteenth century of the Christian era would bring us back. It is clear, from the concluding passage of his Lecture, that a very different idea of Prayer is present to his inner mind, than that which his religious

[24]The proposition which I find in § 33, in my edition of the 'Christliche Glaube,' is this. I do not quote it because I suppose it is that to which Mr. Mansel refers, but because it illustrates the purpose of the author, and removes, I think, some of the charges which Mr. Mansel brings against him. "Da die christliche Frömmigkeit beruht auf den gefühlten Gegensatz zwischen der eignen Unfähigkeit und der durch die Erlösung mitgetheilten Fähigkeit das fromme Bewusstsein zu verwirklichen, dieser Gegensatz aber nur ein relativer ist; so werden wir den Umfang der christlichen Lehre erschöpfen, wenn wir das fromme Gefühl betrachten sowohl in den Äusserungen, worin der Gegensatz am stärksten, als in denen worin er am schwachsten ist; und wir theilen daher die gesammte christliche Lehre in die Betrachtung des frommen Gefühl abgesehen von dem Gegensatz und in der Betrachtung desselben unter dem Gegensatz." I do not pretend that this method of treating 'Christian Doctrine' would be satisfactory to me; but it shows, at least, the importance which Schleiermacher attached to Redemption, and it exhibits very strikingly his sense of the impotency of the will when left to itself.

Philosophy builds up by Reflection out of Consciousness. He speaks of our drawing nigh to God as sinners, and as sharers in a common Redemption. If we will but ask ourselves how our sin has separated us from God, what He is from whom it has separated us, out of what slavery He has redeemed us, to what freedom He has brought us;—if we will but consider what answers the Bible gives us to these questions, what answers we receive to them as we kneel,—our ardour to refute 'opposing theories' will be less, our desire to receive any light which comes from any one who has himself prayed and suffered greater; we shall feel that dependence on an *Unknown* Being who is very near us, and in whom we are living, becomes impossible through the restless eagerness of our intellect to conceive and create objects for itself out of the things which we see; that utter dependence upon that Being when He has made Himself known,—when He has revealed Himself to us in His Son as the Absolute, Infinite, Eternal Good, who has called us to be His children, —*is* possible,—is the highest realization of all that the spirit within us craves for,—since it craves to be lost in itself, to be found in Him.

Faithfully yours,

LETTER VIII. APPEARANCES AND REALITIES

Mr. Mansel's Fifth Lecture.—Notions and Principles.—Appearances and Realities.— Knowing and Being.—Germans and English. —Summary.

My dear Sir,

Mr. Mansel commences his fifth Lecture with an allusion to the well-known chapter on Necessity, in Butler's 'Analogy.' He could not have referred to a passage in that book which illustrates better the assertion I made in my Third Letter, that Butler is pre-eminently a student of facts, and is indifferent, even to a fault, about the notions with which Sir William Hamilton and his Oxford disciple are chiefly conversant. The whole of that chapter might be summed up in some such language as this:—'Establish your Notion of Necessity as satisfactorily as you please. I shall not dispute with you about it. That is no business of mine. I want to know what the facts of life are. This is one. *I am treated and dealt with as if I were free*. By that I stand.'

But though Butler was so heedless of *notions*, he was profoundly solicitous about *principles*. For these he was always seeking. These he found lying in the facts and under the facts. The carelessness of men in inquiring after these principles—their readiness to substitute for them merely fancies and speculations as to what might be—provoked him far more than any contradiction of his own conclusions. So little did he desire any one to take them for granted, that he would have liked people to write books without even enunciating their conclusions, leaving their readers to work them out for themselves.

It is Mr. Mansel's misfortune that he cannot distinguish between a Principle and a Notion. He is therefore obliged to misrepresent—actually to invert—Butler's lessons, whenever he comes in contact with

them. So it is in this instance. He remarks, with self-evident truth, that Butler's "observation has not settled the speculative difficulties involved in the problem of Liberty and Necessity." He might have gone much further. He might have said, that it does not *by itself* settle the *practical* difficulties which are involved in that problem. It merely puts us in a method by which those practical difficulties may be removed, viz. by facing them, and not evading them; by meeting them, on whatever side they present themselves to us in action, and by believing that we may find a principle which will enable us to act rightly, be the notional perplexity ever so great. More than two centuries before Butler, Martin Luther had seen these difficulties from the other side. He had as deep a conviction that his will was enslaved, and that he was 'treated and dealt with' on that supposition, as Butler had that he was treated and dealt with on what seems to be the contrary supposition. He manfully cut through all scholastical webs which set at nought this great experience of his life; he proclaimed that he was a bondsman till God made him free. He would not have understood Butler; Butler would have utterly misunderstood him. But we cannot dispense with either; the facts of Luther are as much facts for us as the facts of Butler. We cannot seesaw between them, or complain of the vehemence with which either maintained his own position as one which it was life to hold, death to abandon. They might have been—at least we may be—less of deniers. God forbid that they should have been less of asserters! God forbid that any one should have persuaded them that what they asserted might not be true because there was so much to say on the other side! That they resisted all such arguments, was the sign that they were God's heroes,—that they had renounced the world and the devil. And I am sure that we shall not do any work for Him, that we shall not maintain the vow of our baptism, if we listen to such language as the following, which is put forth under Butler's authority,—which no one would more indignantly have repudiated than Butler.

"*In Religion, in Morals, in our daily business, in the care of our lives, in the exercise of our senses, the rules which guide our practice cannot be reduced*

to principles which satisfy our reason." (Page 135.) To which proposition I would oppose another. In Religion, in Morals, in our daily business, in the care of our lives, in the exercise of our senses, all rules will be unpractical, insincere, deceitful, promising much, performing nothing, unless they can be referred to some principle which our conscience, heart, reason, confess as fixed, unchangeable, eternal.

You will remember, surely, the opening chapter of the Analogy, concerning the imperishable I, who uses all senses, exerts all energies, puts forth all thoughts. See how Mr. Mansel introduces the same awful subject into his Lecture:—

> "The very first Law of Thought, and through Thought, of all Consciousness, by which alone we are able to discern objects as such, or to distinguish them from one another, involves in its constitution a mystery and a doubt, which no effort of Philosophy has been able to penetrate:—How can the One be many, or the Many one? We are compelled to regard ourselves and our fellow-men as *persons*, and the visible world around us as made up of *things*: but what is *personality*, and what is *reality*, are questions which the wisest have tried to answer, and have tried in vain. Man, as a Person, is one, yet composed of many elements;—not identical with any one of them, nor yet with the aggregate of them all; and yet not separable from them by any effort of abstraction. Man is one in his thoughts, in his actions, and in the responsibilities which these involve. It is I who think, I who act, I who feel; yet I am not thought, nor action, nor feeling, nor a combination of thoughts and actions and feelings heaped together. Extension, and resistance, and shape, and the various sensible qualities, make up my conception of each individual body as such; yet *the body* is not its extension, nor its shape, nor its hardness, nor its colour, nor its smell, nor its taste; nor yet is it a mere aggregate of all these with no principle of unity among them. If these several parts constitute a single whole, the unity, as well as the plurality, must depend upon some principle which that whole contains: if they do not constitute a whole, the difficulty is removed but a single step; for the same question,—what constitutes

> individuality?—must be asked in relation to each separate part. The actual conception of every object, as such, involves the combination of the One and the Many; and that combination is practically made every time we think at all. But at the same time, no effort of reason is able to explain how such a relation is possible; or to satisfy the intellectual doubt which necessarily arises on the contemplation of it."— (*Bampton Lectures*, 2nd ed., pp. 135, 136.)

The former part of this passage contains that marvellous sentence about Reality to which I referred in a former letter. *What is reality, is a question which the wisest have tried to answer, and tried in vain*. So one would imagine! They have tried to reduce that which is, into a name, and they have not succeeded! With Reality, *Personality* is joined,—a melancholy fact, because all that is most powerful and effective in these Lectures has turned upon a denunciation of the Germans for losing sight of Personality either in themselves or in the Divine Being. And now we hear that what it is the wisest have tried in vain to ascertain. But the sentence I especially wish to notice is that concerning the I. Mr. Mansel perceives that it is I who think, I who act, and then proceeds to remark "that I am not thought, nor action, nor feelings, nor a combination of thoughts and actions and feelings heaped together." Oh, if he had paused there one instant!—if he had allowed Butler to lead him into a solemn consideration of what is involved in that personality of mine, whether the wise can define it or not!—if he had not rushed into a wilderness of words about the combination of the One and the Many! —if he could have held fast to the One when he had found it!

For what is all this leading to? Is he trying to awaken in his Undergraduate hearers some sense of the mystery of that *I* which each one of them is and must be through ages upon ages? Is he bidding him ask himself, *What* am I? *what* shall I be? whence have I come? with whom have I to do? Is he thus cultivating the spirit of Butler, and teaching them how to profit by the study of him in their lecturerooms and in their chambers? Is he thus leading them to a Book which teaches us

more of divine analogies, more of the way in which God awakens and meets these questionings, than Butler's book ever can?

No! it is precisely to *prevent* all inquiries of this kind; precisely to show these young men that they must not trouble themselves about that which is; that they can have no acquaintance except with phenomena or appearances;—it is for this end that the Bampton Lectures were delivered; this is the moral which has been unfolding itself through all that have preceded, and which is now to burst upon us in its full magnificence. In the following passage we may be said to have reached the kernel of these discourses:—

> "The conclusion which this condition of human consciousness almost irresistibly forces upon us, is one which equally exhibits the strength and the weakness of the human intellect. We are compelled to admit that the mind, in its contemplation of objects, is not the mere passive recipient of the things presented to it; but has an activity and a law of its own, by virtue of which it reacts upon the materials existing without, and moulds them into that form in which consciousness is capable of apprehending them. The existence of modes of thought, which we are compelled to accept as at the same time relatively ultimate and absolutely derived,—as limits beyond which we cannot penetrate, yet which themselves proclaim that there is a farther truth behind and above them,—suggests, as its obvious explanation, the hypothesis of a mind cramped by its own laws, and bewildered in the contemplation of its own forms. If the mind, in the act of consciousness, were merely blank and inert;—if the entire object of its contemplation came from without, and nothing from within;—no fact of consciousness would be inexplicable; for everything would present itself as it is. No reality would be suggested, beyond what is actually given: no question would be asked which is not already answered. For how can doubt arise, where there is no innate power in the mind to think beyond what is placed before it,—to react upon that which acts upon it? But upon the contrary supposition, all is regular, and the result such as might naturally be expected. If thought has laws of its own, it cannot by its own act

> go beyond them; yet the recognition of law, as a restraint, implies the existence of a sphere of liberty beyond. If the mind contributes its own element to the objects of consciousness, it must, in its first recognition of those objects, necessarily regard them as something complex, something generated partly from without and partly from within. Yet in that very recognition of the complex, as such, is implied an impossibility of attaining to the simple; for to resolve the composition is to destroy the very act of knowledge, and the relation by which consciousness is constituted. The object of which we are conscious is thus, to adopt the well-known language of the Kantian philosophy, a *phenomenon*, not a *thing in itself*;—a product, resulting from the twofold action of the thing apprehended, on the one side, and the faculties apprehending it, on the other. The perceiving subject alone, and the perceived object alone, are two unmeaning elements, which first acquire a significance in and by the act of their conjunction.
>
> It is thus strictly in analogy with the method of God's Providence in the constitution of man's mental faculties, if we believe that, in Religion also, He has given us truths which are designed to be regulative, rather than speculative; intended, not to satisfy our reason, but to guide our practice; not to tell us what God is in His absolute nature, but how He wills that we should think of Him in our present finite state."—(*Bampton Lectures*, 2nd ed., pp. 141-143.)

I do not know why Mr. Mansel attributes the distinction between a *phenomenon* and a *thing in itself* to the Kantian philosophy. It has been a recognized distinction in every philosophy of the East or West for at least two thousand years; it has been felt to be the critical distinction in most. That we can *only* know Phenomena, was a dogma among the Greeks before the time of Socrates; that we *cannot* know Phenomena,—that only Being is the object of knowledge,—was the assertion of the most eminent thinkers of the opposing school. To ascertain what there is in us which takes account of Phenomena, what there is which demands the truth which is behind them and which they misrepresent, was the great enterprise of Plato, who cheerfully

confessed that his practical master had preceded him in the inquiry, and that the best hope for any scientific result was to follow in his steps. Kant's connection with the distinction, I have spoken of already. He had asserted, with more emphasis than all his predecessors, that the mere understanding in man converses only with phenomena; he felt himself compelled to assert also, with equal emphasis, that there must be an organ in man which converses with the thing itself, and that without this organ moral principle would be impossible for man. I am sorry to repeat myself so often upon this point, but I only do so when Mr. Mansel obliges me by repeating himself, or when, as in this case, he unintentionally misleads his readers by imputing to Kant specially what he has in common with half the world.

I use that last phrase deliberately, intending you to understand that this is a question which concerns the world just as much as the schools. The doctrine which Mr. Mansel has enunciated, that we must in all cases be contented with rules of conduct and must dispense with 'any principles that satisfy the intellect, is merely, as he confesses, the doctrine, in another form, that we have nothing to do except with reason, phenomena. He has himself given us an admirable series of tests for trying that doctrine by. I proceed to apply them one by one, in his own order. What I propose to show is—(1.) That all the experience of the most earnestly religious men in this country, those who have had the least to do with German Philosophy, who have hated it most, is against him. (2.) That the experience of all who are forming the minds of their children and pupils to practical morality is against him. (3.) That the experience of men occupied in common business is against him. (4.) That the experience respecting the care of our lives is against him. (5.) That the experience respecting the exercise of the senses is against him.

1. I begin, since Mr. Mansel begins, with the highest subject of all. I have spoken of the strong tendency, in the last age, among those in whose minds any thought had been awakened respecting the unseen world, to dwell upon their experiences and consciousnesses. That

tendency was a protest and reaction against the prevalent habits of the eighteenth century; habits which were characteristic of its divines, and which found their full justification in a part of its philosophy. The evangelical teachers bore a clear and strong witness that the man must have that within him which the doctors only presented to him in formal lessons. Those who bore this witness spoke of themselves as asserters of 'experimental' or 'vital' religion.

But there was again a protest and reaction against *this* tendency. I mean, one proceeding not from those who undervalued it, but from those who had felt in themselves the full force of it. I mean one which did not merely aim at the hypocritical affectation of it, but which pointed out the dangers into which those were likely to fall who had passed through the spiritual processes which they recorded. For instance, the ablest of all the religious philosophers of the Calvinistical school, Jonathan Edwards, the writer who had attempted to expound most accurately the nature of the religious affections, was the man who most strongly asserted that consciousness never can be an ultimate end to the religious thinker. Nothing will satisfy him but *being*. He must rest in One who is; in One who is deeper than his consciousness; if he does not, that will only deceive him.

I refer to Edwards lest I should seem to be selecting a writer with whom I have any special sympathy. If he is too much of a formal philosopher for the illustration of my position, I could refer to a class of divines who had no pretensions of that kind, and yet who were continually warning their disciples not to trust 'in their frames and feelings,'—to rest only in that which was fixed, settled, eternal, dependent on nothing in them, the only ground of all that they found in themselves. Any one the least conversant with religious literature will be familiar with such admonitions as these. I allude to them in those from whom they might least be expected, to show how impossible it has been for any serious man who has known most of *phenomena*, of the phenomena of his own mind, to be content with them; how all demands for action and suffering have driven him beyond these,—

to seek a permanent rock and basis for his own being, even if he has not been forced by the feelings and convulsions of society to seek for one which should sustain all human beings. And this—not because he has sought any help from a 'godless philosophy'—but because he has meditated on the Bible day and night. He has read in Psalm after Psalm how men in a horrible pit, or with the waterfloods going over them, found at last a ground beneath all their feelings, thoughts, consciousnesses. He has heard the voice which cried once in a poor sinful mortal, which sounded again from the Cross of the sinless One, "*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me*?" still able to say, "*Thou continuest holy, O thou worship of Israel*." He has read in the New Testament of a peace which we do not keep in our Consciousness, but which keeps us in the knowledge and love of God and of His Son Jesus Christ; he has found the beloved Disciple describing this as the privilege of the adult Christians, *the fathers—that they knew Him who was from the beginning*. And these are not only the discoveries of individuals. The whole course of religious thought for many years has been setting in this direction. Mr. Mansel may persuade some, that by the laws which God has imposed upon them, they cannot pass beyond the limits of their own consciousness,—they cannot know anything but phenomena. Those who understand what he means—who do not receive his decrees merely as an abracadabra which they may interpret as they like—will abandon their deepest consciousness, that they may not transcend it; will give up the faith which has sustained their souls, that they may not become infidels.

2. Some of the lessons which I have got from this religious history bear very clearly upon the next subject; but I will keep them apart so far as I can, that I may do justice to Mr. Mansel's division. What has been the most practical teaching of morals in our time? What efforts have been made to deliver it from the formal, unpractical teaching of the last century? I should not scruple to draw my examples from any school. Take the writings of the most accomplished women of this age, who have given us the most valuable hints respecting the

moral training of their own sex or of ours. Take the prudential lessons of Miss Edgeworth, the lessons on individual piety by Miss Hannah More, the lessons of Christian wisdom in social life by Miss Sewell or Miss Young.

In this quality they are alike. Their practical sense, their experience of actual men and women, leads them all to neglect mere rules of conduct, for the sake of discovering principles which mould and govern the character. They are always disobeying Mr. Mansel. Each, according to her own light, is seeking for that which is beneath appearances; each sees no way of delivering our sons and daughters from mere conventions that fail in every hour of trial, but by showing them that they must *be* in order to *do*.

3. Our daily business. Let us be as literal as possible in construing all these expressions. Can I be more so than if I take our daily business to be our *trade*? Then I say, that from Adam Smith downwards thoughtful men have been trying to cast off rules—most plausible rules, deduced from obvious phenomena—which had been wont to govern the operations of trade, and the conduct of statesmen respecting it, and to seek for principles deduced from the nature of things, 'satisfying to the Reason.'

4. *The care of our lives*. This is a very general phrase. It means, I suppose, the health of our bodies. If that is so, it may point either to the care of our individual health, so suggesting the functions of the domestic physician, or the sanitary discipline of the country at large. Every step, I affirm, from barber-surgery to the period of Sir Benjamin Brodie and Mr. Lawrence, has been a step out of rules deduced from the phenomena of diseases into anatomical and physiological principles; these being discovered by the study of the actual human body, first in its healthy normal state, then under its morbid conditions. In like manner, every movement towards the improvement of dwellings, the removal of nuisances that have caused disease, the prevention of accidents, has been a step from rules grounded on the observation of phenomena into principles satisfactory to the reason. So much is

this fact acknowledged by those who have the practical administration of affairs, that in case of any explosion in a mine, some scientific chemist, or geologist, is always sent down to examine and expound what principles have been neglected through the adherence to rules generalized from experience.

5. *The exercise of the senses*. Such exercises, I presume, as the observation of forms, which leads to the art of drawing, painting, sculpture; the observation of sounds, which leads to the art of music. Other exercises of the senses may be intended, but I choose these because they do not involve us in a cross division; we are less in danger of mixing this head with the second, which concerned morals. Then I affirm here also, that just as these exercises have become more orderly, more beneficial, more general, just in proportion as they have been taken more out of the dominion of artificial rules, and have been more connected with principles. I am not speaking of Germans who have elaborated a doctrine of Aesthetics, and have sought to discover the laws which our senses follow in their workings; I am not speaking of Winckelmann, or Lessing, or Goethe. Our own Burke,—who knew nothing of them, who was the great enemy of mere speculation, the laborious student of facts,—set the example, in his 'Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful,' of a search for grounds that would satisfy the reason in a subject which had been given up to the caprices of taste, or to traditional maxims.

Englishmen and Englishwomen have thus, in every department of thought to which Mr. Mansel has referred, been transgressing his canons, and moving in the line in which he would forbid them to move. And this, precisely because they have been sternly practical, because they could not be hindered from doing the thing that was to be done by any precepts of Philosophy.

The inhabitants of other lands have felt the same impulse, the same necessity. But as they have not our enviable faculty of speaking prose for a whole life without being aware of it, they have tried to investigate the seeming contradiction that while our direct consciousness is of that

which presents itself to us, *i.e.* of appearances, all Science is and must be conversant with things in themselves, or (generally) with that which is. They have not indeed sought "to solve the mystery of knowing and being;" they have been at least as well aware as Mr. Mansel that it is a mystery. But they have said to themselves, 'Since *truth* is involved in this question; since, if we are the victims of appearances, there can be no truth, or we are not to be hunters after it as Plato, Lessing, and Sir William Hamilton say we are, it is worthy of all investigation what this connection of Science and Being involves; what those eternal necessary laws and principles are which we must confess, though we cannot arrive at them through our consciousness, and though that cannot be the criterion of them.' Out of this examination numerous results have followed. It led Schelling, in his later days, to a recognition of the Christian revelation and the Christian mysteries. Hegel is represented by his opponents and by one class of his followers, as having been led by it into pure Negation. Some of his disciples, on the other hand, maintain that they can accept just those assertions of our creed which Schleiermacher cast aside because they did not meet his consciousness; these commending themselves to the Reason which asks for that which is in itself, not merely for that which is relative to us.

Whether Hegel's Logic must stop at the discovery of a void of Nothingness,—whether it only leaves a blank, which a Revelation of God would fill, whether it offers excuses for rejecting the actual appearance of the Son of God in the likeness of sinful flesh, or only declares that that likeness cannot be an adaptation to certain notions and conceptions of ours,—must have been a manifestation of the Eternal and Infinite Being as He is,—are questions which I am quite incompetent to settle, and which I do not think concern us greatly. I am quite sure that Mr. Mansel has not settled them in his Lectures. I am quite sure that he has done nothing to assist his hearers in settling them. He has taken a course which combines, it seems to me, the greatest possible amount of injustice to the persons he was attacking, with the greatest possible mischief to those who were hearing him. He

has extracted passages from Hegel; from an orthodox representative of his school, Marheinecke; from that disciple of his who is notorious for his negative criticisms on the Gospels, Strauss. He knew that no one of these passages would convey any meaning to ninety-nine out of a hundred of the assembly which was gathered around him. He knew that some would be exceedingly pleased with themselves at their own freedom from such incomprehensible wickedness; that a great number would only be restrained by the decorum of a church from bursting into laughter. And this appeal to the very vulgarest feelings of young men is the Lecturer's method of leading them to think with reverence of our Lord's Incarnation—for that is the subject to which these extracts refer! If a similar experiment was made before a German audience,—I do not say upon any nonsense of mine, which would be at once dismissed as ignorant John-Bullism, but upon Mr. Mansel himself, with his great metaphysical acumen and undoubted knowledge,—if a body of students at Berlin or Heidelberg were entertained with *excerpta* from the Bampton Lectures, the Professor interspersing them with witticisms of his own about 'profound riddles,' 'grandiloquent obscurity,' 'a literal translation being too ludicrous for the occasion'—might the result have been altogether different? And would not Mr. Mansel anticipate, as some compensation for the ill-bred contempt of the class generally, that a few of the more earnest might be driven, by the manifest injustice of that mode of exhibiting him, to an actual study of his work? I may doubt whether the addiction of a German student to Mr. Mansel would profit him much more than an addiction of English students to Hegel, Marheinecke, or Strauss. But I hint at the probable consequences of an unfair mode of treating one or the other.

I have said, however, and I repeat it, I do not feel myself in the least competent to pronounce between the Christian and the Atheistic Hegelians. For those who have leisure to investigate the subject it may have much interest. Our business is to take care that we are not cheated of what is necessary to our English faith and English practice, either by

Germans or by the impugners of Germans. If what I have said in this Letter is true, Mr. Mansel is striking through them at us. He is robbing us of principles which we have found necessary for honest action, that he may throw us back upon rules which we have found utterly ineffectual. He wishes to shut us up in Consciousnesses, in which those who have had most of them have discovered that they cannot be shut up. In the following sentence we reach the climax of his doctrine.

> Action, and not knowledge, is man's destiny and duty in this life; and his highest principles, both in philosophy and in religion, have reference to this end. But it does not follow, on that account, that our representations are untrue, because they are imperfect. To assert that a representation is *untrue*, because it is relative to the mind of the receiver, is to overlook the fact that truth itself is nothing more than a relation. *Truth and falsehood are not properties of things in themselves, but of our conceptions, and are tested, not by the comparison of conceptions with things in themselves, but with things as they are given in some other relation*. My conception of an object of sense is *true*, when it corresponds to the characteristics of the object as I perceive it; but the perception itself is equally a relation, and equally implies the co-operation of human faculties. Truth in relation to no intelligence is a contradiction in terms: our highest conception of absolute truth is that of truth in relation to all intelligences. But of the consciousness of intelligences different from our own we have no knowledge, and can make no application. (*Bampton Lectures*, 2nd ed., p. 149.)

What does this mean? 'Action is man's duty and destiny in this life.' Granted at once, 'in this life,' and, if Scripture is to be believed, in the life to come. 'And his highest principles have reference to this end.' Certainly; he must act: therefore he wants principles to determine how he shall act; true principles, that his actions may not be false. "But it does not follow on that account, that our representations are untrue because they are imperfect." Who could have imagined that it followed, from action being our duty and destiny, 'that our representations were untrue'? What has been said about representations? Of

what are they representations? But they must be imperfect because action is our duty and destiny? Why must they be imperfect, and *what* must be imperfect? Here is a labyrinth of words leading apparently to no issue. Alas! it is leading to an issue. What is to be solved no one may be able to tell. But the solution is a solemn and tremendous one. '*Truth itself is nothing more than a Relation. Truth and Falsehood are properties of our Conceptions*.' These are axioms; they do not require to be demonstrated; we are simply to receive them. May we at least consider them? Truth is a relation. To what? Between what or whom? Or is a Relation an ultimate Fact? Is a relation that which is? For this is what Englishmen have been wont to understand by Truth. They have supposed Truth to be the thing that is; Falsehood to be the thing that is not. They have believed that each one of us stands in a relation to the thing that is; that to break that relation is to speak or act a lie; that to break this relation is the sin of all sins, the misery of all miseries. This may be what Mr. Mansel intends, when he says, Truth and Falsehood are properties of our conceptions. I do not say that it is not. I am utterly in the dark. But I do say, with all emphasis, that if this is *not* what he intends; if he takes Truth to be *not* the end for which all other ends are to be sacrificed, and for which we are to live and die,—Falsehood *not* to be the curse and horror from which we are to fly at any risk to body or soul,—he is not in sympathy with whatever is sound in the heart of Englishmen; he is not teaching the lessons which the best English fathers demand that their children should be taught; he is not teaching them how they are to overcome the temptations of jobbers and gamblers; he is not teaching them how they may save their country from sinking into the most insincere and false of all countries on God's earth, because the one which has most sense of the wickedness of insincerity and falsehood. A flatterer has said that an Englishman cannot frame his lips to a falsehood. If we believed the compliment, we should instantly prove its emptiness. The security for speaking truth or acting truth is the knowledge that the Spirit of Lies is at every moment seeking to make us forswear it; though what we forswear, or what we

adhere to, if Truth and Falsehood are properties of our conceptions, I leave those who hold that opinion to explain.

This at least I am sure of; the most simple and earnest believers among our countrymen, while they will easily admit, on Mr. Mansel's authority, that Hegel and the Germans are in some terrible manner undermining it, will say that *this* language respecting Truth at once lays the axe to the Gospel which they have received from our Lord's Apostles, and which has been confirmed to them by their own experience. They have been used to take our Lord's words literally, "*I am the Truth*;" and they have not learnt to consider Him a relation, or a property of their conceptions. They have believed that when He described the Comforter whom He would send from the Father, as the Spirit of Truth, He was not speaking of a relation, or of a property of their conceptions, but of a living and personal Teacher and Guide. They have believed that when He promised that that Spirit should guide them into all Truth, and when He afterwards interpreted those words by saying, "He shall take of mine, and show it to you, because all that the Father hath is mine," He did not wish them to contemplate the Father and the Son as properties of their conceptions.

Nor can this be the faith which Mr. Mansel cherishes in his inmost heart. He has condemned other men for worshipping Abstractions. He has exclaimed with passion and vehemence, 'These are thy gods, O Philosophy; these are the Metaphysics of Salvation.' He set forth the personal life of Christ as opposed to these gods and these metaphysics in a passage of great rhetorical power.

> It is for this that we are to obliterate from our faith that touching picture of the pure and holy Jesus, to which mankind for eighteen centuries has ever turned, with the devotion of man to God rendered only more heartfelt by the sympathy of love between man and man: which from generation to generation has nurtured the first seeds of religion in the opening mind of childhood, by the image of that Divine Child who was cradled in the manger of Bethlehem, and was subject to His parents at Nazareth: which has checked the fiery

> temptations of youth, by the thought of Him who was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin; which has consoled the man struggling with poverty and sorrow, by the pathetic remembrance of Him who on earth had not where to lay His head: which has blended into one brotherhood the rich and the poor, the mighty and the mean among mankind, by the example of Him who, though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor; though He was equal with God, yet took upon Him the form of a servant: which has given to the highest and purest precepts of morality an additional weight and sanction, by the records of that life in which the marvellous and the familiar are so strangely yet so perfectly united;—that life so natural in its human virtue, so supernatural in its divine power: which has robbed death of its sting, and the grave of its victory, by faith in Him who 'was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification:' which has ennobled and sanctified even the wants and weaknesses of our mortal nature, by the memory of Him who was an hungered in the wilderness and athirst upon the cross; who mourned over the destruction of Jerusalem, and wept at the grave of Lazarus.

Yes, the personal life of Jesus has, no doubt, been this to Christendom; is this, and far more than this, to hundreds of thousands who would not be able to speak of it in such words, or perhaps in any words at all. But what interpretation has Christendom given of the exceeding worth and preciousness of this life to us? It has said that He of whom we read in the Gospels is the Head of a body, of which we are members; that this Life is that from which our life is derived. It has said that this is the life which was with the Father, and has been manifested to us. The humble Christian who has accepted the doctrine of the God-Manhood of Christ, as our creeds set it forth, has not been careful to prove how many men were not blessed by that Life, how many men were not within the scope of that divine fullness. He has been sure that he was not worthy to partake of it. He has been sure only that to know the God in whom this Life dwells is to have Eternal Life. He has said in his weakness and nothingness, when the wickedness of his

heels was compassing him about,— 'When I wake up, I shall find that this is the God I have waited for; I shall behold Him, and not another. I believe that He who is Truth and no Lie, has revealed Himself to me in the Person of His only-begotten Son,—not some poor imperfect representation of Himself, such as He pleases I should think to be like Him. Therefore I can trust Him, knowing what He is; therefore I can keep myself from idols, and can learn to hate all false ways as He hates them.'

Let us consider then what we have been learning from this Lecture.

(1.) It has been a great point with Mr. Mansel to maintain that the laws which regulate religious thought, must be the same with those which regulate our thoughts on all other subjects. The point is established. In all other subjects the most serious and practical people have discovered a necessity for transgressing the limits which he would impose upon thought. From no ambition of being sublime; from no admiration of foreigners; from the obligation to act; from the determination not to let theory interfere with action, the necessity has arisen. (2) He has taken great pains to show us that our finite intellects can never be the measure of the Infinite. The maxim is established; it is one to start from. And because the finite cannot be the measure of the infinite,—because our conceptions can never be the measure of that which is,—because those conceptions will lead us only to the apparent, therefore we need that which shall be the measure of our finite thought, which shall lift us above our conceptions, which shall bring us into contact with that which our conceptions are feeling after, but cannot reach. (3) He has shown us that a mere negation, such as is expressed by the word Infinite, can never content a creature who needs what is positive, living, personal, to rest upon. We heartily sympathize with the observation. For Infinite, let us substitute the word which is so dear to St. Paul and St. John. Let us speak of the Eternal. Let us distinguish, with St. Paul, between the things that are seen, which are temporal, and the things that are not seen, which are eternal. Let us speak not of knowing the Infinite, but of knowing Him who is from

the beginning, Him who was and is and is to come. So we shall be in exact harmony with the teaching of Scripture; so shall we avoid mere speculations about that which is at a distance from us; so we shall be brought to ask for that which is the ground of our own being; for that Rock on which we and the Universe are resting. (4) Mr. Mansel quotes a beautiful passage from Hooker in this Lecture, one from Augustine in the next, both of which indicate what deep awe they had of the Being in whom they were living and moving and having their being; how, as one worthy to stand beside them, our holy and admirable Leighton, expresses it, 'The posts of the door of the spiritual temple moved at the voice of Him that cried.' Such passages might have been multiplied indefinitely; none would have been more to the purpose than the well-known soliloquy in the fifth book of Hooker respecting the Eucharist. They should be read and reread, that we may feel how true the saying is, that 'those who know most of God, and trust most in His love, will fear Him most;' how impossible it is to cultivate the fear of God in any sense in which the Scriptures speak of it, if we regard Him as a distant, unknown Being whose Nature and Character we cannot enter into, or partake of; how certainly, if we entertain that opinion, our fear will be taught us by the precepts of men; how certainly it will alternate between the sentiment of slaves towards a cruel Taskmaster, and that of idolaters who have made their own Gods, and therefore feel—as the Greeks did about their heroes, as the Italians do about their saints—that they have a right to scold them and scoff at them; how truly the words of Job express the whole difference between the mere traditional homage, and that which comes from actual discovery. "*I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes*." (5) Mr. Mansel offers many admonitions to his youthful auditors, concerning the dangers to which they are exposed from the assaults of false Philosophy. The warnings are worthy of all heed. You and I have need to lay them deeply to heart. Leighton, in more than one passage of his lectures to the Edinburgh students, warns them that the philosophers, though they occasionally

use phrases which point to something higher, would, in general, make them content with their own narrow and limited thoughts, would hinder them from thirsting for the Eternal Good which alone can satisfy them. I am convinced that this is the danger of which young men most need to be warned. While they are seeking for *the* good, —for the Eternal Truth,—they may commit thousands of mistakes; their mistakes will become part of their discipline. When they suppose it is impossible for man to rise above himself, they inevitably become poor and grovelling in their aims, self-conceited, contemptuous. (6) In one passage, Mr. Mansel speaks of young students parting 'with their wedding-garment of Faith.' Of course he does not use such language lightly, or merely as a phrase of rhetoric. The wedding-garment in Scripture describes what is most deep and real—our union to Christ, our adoption to be members of His body. Surely a young man who has been told when he was a child, that this is his state, cannot be too earnestly exhorted not to deem lightly of it. To preserve his wedding-garment, he need not shut himself out from the world, or any of its thoughts, experiences, temptations; it will preserve him amidst them. But if he forgets that he is united to Christ in order that he may seek the things that are above, where Christ sitteth at the right-hand of God —the 'eternal things,' 'the knowledge of Him who has called him to glory and virtue,'—is not the garment cast off? is not the marriage-vow broken?

Faithfully yours, F. D. M.

P.S. One of the passages in Leighton to which I referred occurs in Prelection xvii., p. 121 (Scholefield): "Eatenus quidem probandi sunt (philosophi), quod ab externis animum ad se revocant; sed in hoc deficiunt, quod intro ad se reversum altius non dirigunt nec *ut supra se ascendat*, docent."

LETTER IX. CHRISTIAN MYSTERIES AND MIRACLES

The Sixth Lecture.—Christian Mysteries.—the Trinity.—Nature of the Apology.—Effects of It.—the Approaching Crisis.—the Two Natures.—Miracles.

My dear Sir,

The sixth Lecture of Mr. Mansel is occupied (1) with a discussion of the Christian Mysteries, the Trinity, and the Union of two Natures in Christ; (2) with the questions of a Special Providence and of Miracles. The following passage will explain to you the method of the whole Lecture.

> "The Principle of Causality, the father, as it has been called, of metaphysical science, is to the philosopher what the belief in the existence of God is to the theologian. Both are principles inherent in our nature, exhibiting, whatever may be their origin, those characteristics of universality and certainty which mark them as part of the inalienable inheritance of the human mind. Neither can be reduced to a mere logical inference from the facts of a limited and contingent experience. Both are equally indispensable to their respective sciences: without Causation, there can be no Philosophy; as without God there can be no Theology. Yet to this day, while enunciating now, as ever, the fundamental axiom, that for every event there must be a *Cause*, Philosophy has never been able to determine what Causation is; to analyze the elements which the causal nexus involves; or to show by what law she is justified in assuming the universal postulate upon which all her reasonings depend. The Principle of Causality has ever been, and probably ever will be, the battle-ground on which, from generation to generation, Philosophy has struggled for her very existence in the death-gripe of Scepticism; and at every pause in the contest, the answer has been

> still the same: 'We *cannot* explain it, but we *must* believe it.' Causation is not the mere invariable association of antecedent and consequent: we feel that it implies something more than this. Yet, beyond the little sphere of our own volitions, what more can we discover? and within that sphere, what do we discover that we can explain? The unknown something, call it by what name you will, power, effort, tendency,—still remains absolutely concealed, yet is still conceived as absolutely indispensable. Of Causality, as of Deity, we may almost say, in the emphatic language of Augustine, 'Cujus nulla scientia est in anima, nisi scire quomodo eum nesciat.'"—(*Bampton Lectures*, 2nd ed., pp. 172, 173.)

Thus, you see, these awful subjects are to be treated as questions between the Philosopher on the one side, and the Christian Theologian on the other. Mr. Mansel holds a brief for the latter. If any objection is alleged by the Philosopher against any doctrine of our Creeds, it is to be answered by saying, "There is a similar objection which applies just as strongly against you." Mr. Mansel does not shrink from the most startling statement of his design. "The belief in the existence of God is to the Theologian what the belief in the existence of Causality is to the Philosopher." Each demands the respective belief for his respective science; each—this is the inference—is equally baffled when he pretends to know anything of that which he demands. It is well to understand and remember that the question of the Being of God is thus treated, because we shall be better prepared for that which follows.

The controversy respecting the Many and the One, I need not tell you, has been a wearisome enough controversy in the Schools. But need I tell you also that these words express a profound difficulty to the wayfarer? Every man who finds himself the member of a family must grapple with it. He must speak of his family as One; he must feel it to be One; you contradict his conscience and his reason if you tell him that it is not one; you make him do unloving and lying acts if you persuade him to act as if it were not one. Yet he knows and feels

continually that he is a distinct man, that he has a life of his own, a responsibility of his own; you contradict his reason and conscience if you tell him that his personal existence is swallowed up in the existence of his family, or that his brother's is, or his sister's, or his father's, or his mother's. You lead him into vile acts if you tempt him to act upon this maxim, or if you sanction him in requiring the other members of his family to act upon it. Here is the problem of the One and the Many thrust upon every man, woman, and child. The more we know of families, the more we know of ourselves, the more we know what a problem it is; what the effort of solving it is; how it springs up afresh at every turn and corner of our history; how little it has to do with distinctions of wealth and poverty, of learning or ignorance. Moral evils mingle with this problem, and add fresh complications to it. But no mere denunciation of those evils in others can settle this question; the triumph over them in ourselves only contributes to that result by making us less rash and impatient in assuming our first conclusions to be right, more willing to await the discoveries that may scatter them and satisfy us.

This problem of the Many and the One, which is thus forced upon us by our earliest domestic experience, becomes again the problem of our life as citizens of a State. Mr. Mansel and the Logicians have a short and easy way of settling it in this form, by assuring us *ex cathedra* that the State or the Nation is merely a conception of ours; it is not a reality at all. When they have settled what reality is—when they have put it "under its proper notion,"—we may be glad of their help. At present we must be content to believe, as our fathers believed before us, as those men who are called patriots believed, that a Country, or Nation, or State, is something, which it is worth while to live for and suffer for. And if that is so, if the Unity of the Nation is not a fiction, but the very reverse of a fiction,—then to know how that Unity may co-exist with the distinctions of the different persons of whom the Nation consists,—rather, to find how it comes to pass that one is essential to the other, that without a set of distinct persons, there is not and cannot

be a living united Nation, while yet that distinctness, that personality, seems always threatening to break up the Unity,—this must be the great practical problem, not only for the Statesman, not only for the Historian, but for the inhabitant of every land such as ours professes to be.

Most especially does the problem of the One and the Many appear in all its fearful significance, in all its fullness of promise and hope, to the Churchman, to him who has to deal with the Unity of Human Society, as composed of different tribes, and tongues, and nations. The problem meets us in the upper room of the Temple on the day of Pentecost; it pursues us through the Apostolical History and the Apostolical Epistles; it starts forth full-armed in the Apocalypse; it is the problem which the Roman Eagle and the Cross discussed in words and at stakes in the first ages; it is that which the armies of the Cross and the Crescent debated through the medieval period; it has been the question of Imperial and Papal rulers; of both with the Protestant nations. Papists, Imperialists, dogmatic Protestants, are wrestling about it now with those who speak of a Humanity that is to supersede Families, Nations, Churches, and to create a God out of itself; and with those who say that the Union of the Father and the Son, in One Spirit, is the foundation of Families, Nations, Churches.

There having been in all ages, there being pre-eminently in our own, this profound meaning in that question of the Many and the One for human creatures, any indication on the part of Philosophers, that they are occupied with it, that they cannot evade it, should be welcomed as a proof that they are coming into contact with our actual necessities, and that they cannot merely think and speak as Schoolmen. And if they not only give this promising sign, but confess that they cannot find the solution which they want of the human problem, without venturing into the region of the divine,—that there must be a passage from one to the other,—surely this should be hailed as one of the proofs that the occupation of the Theologian is not gone; that those who have affirmed such a connection, have not followed a

cunningly devised fable. And might not the Theologian himself gain something from the discovery that he is not engaged with phrases and formulas; that he also stands in a direct relation with the life and needs of man? If he perceives that the Philosopher is trying again to find a mere formal explanation of a real perplexity, he will be right to point out the vanity of that experiment; that so he may explain more clearly how the divine principle which he is maintaining, is the substitute for that explanation.

Read over and consider the following passage:—

> "From the fundamental doctrine of Religion in general, let us pass on to that of Christianity in particular. 'The Catholic Faith is this: that we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity.' How, asks the objector, can the One be Many, or the Many one? or how is a distinction of Persons compatible with their perfect equality? It is not a contradiction to say, that we are compelled by the Christian Verity to acknowledge every Person by Himself to be God and Lord; and yet are forbidden by the Catholic Religion to say, There be three Gods, or three Lords.
>
> To exhibit the philosophical value of this objection, we need only make a slight change in the language of the doctrine criticized. Instead of a Plurality of Persons in the Divine Unity, we have only to speak of a Plurality of Attributes in the Divine Essence. How can there be a variety of Attributes, each infinite in its kind, and yet altogether constituting but one Infinite? or how, on the other hand, can the Infinite be conceived as existing without diversity at all? We know, indeed, that various attributes exist in man, constituting in their plurality one and the same conscious self. Even here, there is a mystery which we cannot explain; but the fact is one which we are compelled, by the direct testimony of consciousness, to accept without explanation. But in admitting, as we are compelled to do, the coexistence of many attributes in one person, we can conceive those attributes only as distinct from each other, and as limiting each other. Each mental attribute is manifested as a separate and determinate mode of consciousness, marked off and limited, by the very fact of its manifestation as such. Each is developed in activities

and operations from which the others are excluded. But this type of conscious existence fails us altogether, when we attempt to transfer it to the region of the Infinite. That there can be but one Infinite, appears to be a necessary conclusion of reason; for diversity is itself a limitation: yet here we have many Infinites, each distinct from the other, yet all constituting one Infinite, which is neither identical with them nor distinguishable from them. If Reason, thus baffled, falls back on the conception of a simple Infinite Nature, composed of no attributes, her case is still more hopeless. That which has no attributes is nothing conceivable; for things are conceived by their attributes. Strip the Infinite of the Attributes by which it is distinguished as infinite, and the Finite of those by which it is distinguished as finite; and the residue is neither the Infinite as such, nor the Finite as such, nor any one being as distinguished from any other being. It is the vague and empty conception of Being in general, which is no being in particular:—a shape,

"If Shape it might be called, that shape had none
Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb,
Or Substance might be called, that Shadow seemed,
For each seemed either."

The objection, 'How can the One be many, or the Many One?' is thus so far from telling with peculiar force against the Catholic doctrine of the Holy Trinity, that it has precisely the same power, or want of power, and may be urged with precisely the same effect, or want of effect, against any conception, theological or philosophical, in which we may attempt to represent the Divine Nature and Attributes as infinite, or, indeed, to exhibit the Infinite at all. The same argument applies with equal force to the conception of the Absolute. If the Divine Nature is conceived as being nothing more than the sum of the Divine Attributes, it is not Absolute; for the existence of the whole will be dependent on the existence of its several parts. If, on the other hand, it is something distinct from the Attributes, and capable of existing without them, it becomes, in its absolute essence, an absolute void,—an existence manifested by no characteristic features,—a conception constituted by nothing conceivable.

> The same principle may also be applied to another portion of this great fundamental truth. The doctrine of the Son of God, begotten of the Father, and yet coeternal with the Father, is in no wise more or less comprehensible by human reason, than the relation between the Divine Essence and its Attributes. In the order of Thought, or of Nature, the substance to which attributes belong has a logical priority to the attributes which exist in relation to it. The Attributes are attributes *of a Substance*. The former are conceived as the dependent and derived; the latter as the independent and original existence. Yet in the order of Time, (and to the order of Time all human thought is limited,) it is as impossible to conceive the Substance existing before its Attributes, as the Attributes before the Substance. We cannot conceive a being originally simple, developing itself in the course of time into a complexity of attributes; for absolute simplicity cannot be conceived as containing within itself a principle of development, nor as differently related to different periods of time, so as to commence its development at any particular moment. Nor yet can we conceive the attributes as existing prior to the substance; for the very conception of an attribute implies relation to a substance. Yet the third hypothesis, that of their coexistence in all time, is equally incomprehensible; for this is to merge the Absolute and Infinite in an eternal relation and difference. We cannot conceive God as first existing, and then as creating His own attributes; for the creative power must then itself be created. Nor yet can we conceive the Divine Essence as constituted by the eternal coexistence of attributes; for then we have many Infinities, with no bond of unity between them. The Mystery of the Many and the One, which has baffled philosophy ever since philosophy began, meets it here, as everywhere, with its eternal riddle. Reason gains nothing by repudiating Revelation; for the mystery of Revelation is the mystery of Reason also." —(*Bampton Lectures*, 2nd ed., pp. 174-178.)

I have not curtailed this extract, long as it is, because I would not have you, or any reader, derive your notion of the course of argument from my statement. The remarks I have to make upon it are very obvious; after what has been said on the former Lectures, they will occur to you

at once. But I must set them forth fully, that you may not accuse me of being merely an objector.

Consider then that the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, is the Name into which an immense majority of all the children in Christendom, for at least fourteen centuries, have been baptized. Consider how it has entered into all the thought, the speech, the laws, of the most civilized nations. Consider how it was debated for centuries, and how the debates about it affected the condition of the whole Roman Empire, in the West and in the East. Consider the facts which illustrate this conflict, as they are set forth to us, not by some ecclesiastical historian, but by Gibbon. Consider how the belief in the Trinity affected and determined the whole life and thought of the centuries which compose what we call the Middle Ages. Consider how it became the subject of debate after the Reformation as it had been before, in Geneva as it was at Rome. Consider what questions it has engendered in our own land; how, in spite of the forms of our Church—which are constructed upon the acknowledgment of it, which connect it with every old psalm and modern prayer,—it almost ceased to be believed in the last century, both among Churchmen and Dissenters. Consider how that great revival of conscious faith to which I have alluded before, brought back this belief with it, and changed the character of religious feeling in England. Consider how that conscious faith nevertheless was always apt to regard this theological principle chiefly in relation to its own movements, so that it seemed as if the Divine Being were living to accomplish certain blessings for certain of His creatures. Consider what a reaction there has been against this antitheological temper, not in Germany more than in England, not among Rationalists more than among ecclesiastical Dogmatists. Consider how, after all this conflict for sixteen or seventeen centuries, the most accomplished advocate for orthodoxy in Oxford stands forth to plead that this doctrine has not left the problem of the Many and the One in greater perplexity than former ages have left it; that if the theologian compels us to receive it, the philosopher may compel us to

receive something quite as strange and monstrous! Is it really come to this? Is this the best hope that is left for those who have to fight their way through the world,—for those who had believed that there was an everlasting Name in which they could rest when they could fight no longer?

Surely the disbelievers in the doctrine of the Trinity never can have felt as much satisfaction in any of their own arguments as in this elaborate refutation of them! When they have spoken scornfully of battles about an iota,—when they have affirmed that we have substituted an unintelligible formula for great moral principles, and have forced men's assent to it, by the sacrifice of them,—when they have appealed to all the bitter persecutions that in different ages have been waged by Athanasians against Arians, by Arians against Athanasians, as evidence that the Gospel of Peace and Goodwill has suffered from our Creed, and that mankind would have been better without it,—they have had a secret misgiving that there was something behind of which they had not taken account, some other facts besides these which are quite as pregnant of meaning. They have been forced to say to themselves, 'Yes! but how has the faith stood *in spite of* the formalism of doctors, the fury of persecutors, the apparent interest of nations, the obvious inclination of many Protestant Churches,—for a long time of the English,—to throw it overboard as a troublesome badge which might be exchanged for some other much less perplexing? Why have experiments for this purpose not been successful? Why was Unitarianism more popular and triumphant in the last century than in this? Why has it been shaken not merely by a more fervid belief, but by the great political and philosophical movements which seemed likely to establish its ascendency? Why are we less satisfied with our own traditions now, when the general dislike of dogmatism might seem to promise them a reception,—more uncertain about the solidity of our own negative reasonings when they can be propounded without peril, and when there are so many discontented hearts ripe for shaking? May there not be some moral principle, may there not be some social

principle involved in what has seemed to us a mere logical contradiction? Is there not a region above logic,—a region not of shadows but of realities,—a region where all these relations which exist among us in imperfect forms have their archetypes; where the full meaning of them is satisfied? Might not Revelation of God be the discovery of them to us? May not that which we have deemed an exclusive opinion reconcile actual beliefs that have been possessing men in all ages? May it not point to a Unity deeper than the one which we have made our watchword?'

Such questions do present themselves to serious men whose education and habits of mind put them most out of sympathy with our confessions. Amidst the hot and cold fits which alternate in the experience of every man who is occupied by them, how certainly will these Bampton Lectures be received by him as a great witness in favour of his early conclusions, as a peremptory check upon all the doubts that had been awakened in him as to their possible soundness! 'Here is *the* orthodox authority, the latest Apologist—charged with a weight of Oxford and Edinburgh learning,—bringing us the last result of both. He has put forth a defence of the Trinity, which satisfies equally the doctors of the English Sorbonne and the representatives of public opinion in the religious newspapers and magazines. And how does he contemplate the doctrine? Not the least as involving any great moral principles; principles that satisfy the reason, he says we must dispense with. Not the least as connected with the life or history of Mankind. Simply as an opinion; very startling and puzzling, no doubt, but not more startling and puzzling than certain opinions of philosophers. Our fathers at least taught us to believe in a God, and to call him Father. This Oxford schoolman appears to cut the ground even for that faith from under our feet; but he urges us to accept a certain theological tenet respecting the Being we worship, because we really can know nothing of Him; because as He is infinite, and we finite, it is impossible for us to say that this representation of Him may not be as near the truth as any other. Certainly there was need

of persecution or bribes to persuade people of the duty of accepting a doctrine which by the showing of its defender could attach itself to no deep or inward conviction! If bribes and persecution should both fail, what will become of it?'

Perhaps this is a result which Mr. Mansel may contemplate with more philosophical indifference than I can. Is he prepared also for another? Has he reflected on the kind of feelings with which the young Churchmen he was addressing would henceforth be tempted to regard the Name with which they were sealed in their infancy, in which they have declared their belief day after day? Can one imagine anything sadder than the dreariness of heart which will come to some devout student, who has thought that the Creed must be everything or nothing, that it must declare what are the pillars of his own being and of the Universe, or else be a mere school quibble, when he finds that it is to be maintained and held fast precisely because by the constitution of our minds we are incapable of refuting it? Yes, I can imagine something sadder still. Jeremy Taylor says, after his wonderful catalogue of the ills that flesh is heir to, "But a careless, merry sinner is worse than all that." I believe that among Mr. Mansel's auditors there will have been not a few on whom his words will have acted as a most soothing lullaby; who will have wrapped themselves in comfortable thankfulness that they were not Rationalists, Spiritualists, or even as that German; who will have rejoiced to think that they did not trouble themselves about eternal things which are out of men's reach, like Puritans and Methodists; who will proclaim that they accept Christianity in the lump, and so are not impeded by any of its little details in thinking and doing what they list. Such men, I believe, do more to lower the moral tone and moral practice of England than all sceptics and infidels together. As far as they themselves are concerned, I should think their self-contentment was worse than all that pain and restlessness which some of their companions will have experienced as they listened to these logical demonstrations.

But the more gloomy these consequences appear to me, the more certain I feel that they will only be temporary, and that good, even the highest good, is to come out of a course of reasoning which in itself I regard as pernicious. If there has been, as nearly all of us feel that there has been, a fearful amount of hardness and cruelty in the methods by which Churchmen in all ages have pleaded for their Creeds; if this hardness and cruelty seem to have been always closely connected with the feeling that they were *their* Creeds, the utterance of *their* opinions, which were therefore to be defended by such weapons as they could call into play, swords when they could be had, the bitterness of words when these were wanting; if one finds—mixed with this belief that no schemes for vindicating the doctrines of the Creed were too savage—a belief that the Name which the Creed uttered was the expression of the Perfect All-embracing Charity; if with that zeal for *our* opinion has been combined a rooted conviction that it was not an opinion at all for which we are fighting, but for Him before whom the angels veil their faces, for Him who knoweth our thoughts long before, for Him whom we are permitted to know because He has Himself removed the veil which conceals Himself from us, and has met us in that Son, by whom He created the world, in whom all things consist, who is the Light of every man; if there have been these anomalies, practical not logical anomalies, in the life of Christendom, in the life of each one of us,—must there not come a time of sifting and separation, a time when God will burn up our chaff with unquenchable fire, that he may gather His wheat into the garner? Mr. Mansel is the last, the ablest, the most ultra defender of the Trinitarian dogma simply as a dogma. No one before him has so completely exhausted the air about it; no one has so completely reduced it to a formula. Unless some one had appeared to do that, some one to startle us with the question, '*Is that what you mean? Is that what you believe in*?' we might have gone on for some time longer halting between the most opposite feelings and convictions. Now—thanks be to God!—we shall be obliged to speak. I say for one, 'I am certain Athanasius did not fight against the world for

a Dogma; I am certain I was not baptized into a Dogma. I am certain that Christ did not send forth His disciples to baptize all nations into a Dogma. Athanasius said that he wrestled for the Name of the Living God, which the Logicians would contract into a notion, robbing the poor and needy of that which had been revealed to them. The minister said that he baptized me into that Name. Our Lord bade His Apostles baptize all Nations into that Name. I believe it to be the Name on which I stand as a Member of the Universal Family in Heaven and Earth. I believe it is the Name which sustains that Universal Family. I thank Him in whom I believe that He has given different ages such a sense of the sacredness and importance of that Name. I thank Him that He has allowed it to be a subject of such infinite controversies, since so it has seemed good in His sight. I am sure they have all contributed to the discovery of His truth and the exposure of our falsehood and ignorance. I confess to Him that as the Israelites sinned against that name of the God of Abraham, and that name of the I Am, which was revealed to *them*, not owning Him to be the ground and ruler of their Family and their Nation, not obeying His laws and being the instruments of His purposes, but setting up gods of their own, gods after their own likeness, and making them their lords—afterwards, when this sin had been grievously punished, using his own Holy Name and the covenant that they were to be a blessing to all the families of the earth as an excuse for self-exaltation, and for contempt of all families of the earth but their own,—so have we, the members of the Universal Church, sinned more grievously, first, in setting up creatures of our own race and visible things as objects of the reverence and honour which are owing to Him in whom we live and move and are; then turning His all-uniting, all-loving Name, which we were to proclaim to all people, into an excuse for the glorification of our own opinion. Which evil if He winked at in the ages that are past, I am sure He is now calling us all everywhere to repent of, because He is giving clear tokens that He will judge us by that Son of Man whom He has set over us; that He will call us to account for the knowledge we have

possessed and the privileges we have abused; and that if we have been found unfaithful stewards of His mysteries, He will discover them to other tribes of the earth, who cry for that revelation of the Unseen and Eternal which we have made light of, and at last have denied that we possess.'

To this issue, I believe, Mr. Mansel's apologies are helping to bring us, and therefore I cannot but trust they will do an important service for the Church, though not, perhaps, exactly what their author or his admirers have looked for. I am less anxious to follow him into the second topic of the sixth Lecture, the Union of the two Natures in Christ,—because I have spoken so much on the subject already, directly in my fourth Letter, incidentally in every other. But I have a special reason for quoting the following passage, which I am sure is a favourite one with Mr. Mansel's disciples.

> "Let Religion begin where it will, it must begin with that which is above Reason. What then do we gain by that parsimony of belief, which strives to deal out the Infinite in infinitesimal fragments, and to erect the largest possible superstructure of deduction upon the smallest possible foundation of faith? We gain just this; that we forsake an incomprehensible doctrine, which rests upon the word of God, for one equally incomprehensible, which rests upon the word of a man. Religion, to be a relation between God and man at all, must rest on a belief in the Infinite, and also on a belief in the Finite; for if we deny the first, there is no God; and if we deny the second, there is no Man. But the coexistence of the Infinite and the Finite, in any manner whatever, is inconceivable by reason; and the only ground that can be taken for accepting one representation of it, rather than another, is that one is revealed, and another is not revealed. We may seek as we will for a 'Religion within the limits of the bare Reason;' and we shall not find it; simply because no such thing exists; and if we dream for a moment that it does exist, it is only because we are unable or unwilling to pursue reason to its final consequences. But if we do not, others will; and the system which we have raised on the shifting basis of our arbitrary resting-

> place, waits only till the wind of controversy blows against it, and the flood of unbelief descends upon it, to manifest itself as the work of the 'foolish man which built his house upon the sand.'"— (*Bampton Lectures*, 2nd ed., pp. 182, 183.)

This passage is a reply to a treatise of Kant, or rather to the title of a treatise of Kant, '*Religion, within the bounds of mere Reason*.' I need hardly say, that the ordinary Englishman would attach very little sense to this title. He would not know what Kant intended by the pure reason. He would only have a vague, hazy impression of what Kant intended by Religion, possibly of what he intends by it himself. But he would have little doubt that he understood Mr. Mansel's first sentence perfectly. If he were an earnest, devout man, a man with a strong "religious consciousness," he would probably exclaim, 'I am sure the Lecturer is right. I am sure that when I believe in Christ, I rise above my reason, my thoughts, myself. I leave the appearances and fantasies which have deluded me in the world; I enter into converse with divine realities; my faith brings me directly into contact with them. Does the German philosopher deny this? How little he can have known of the Scriptures, or of the powers of the unseen world!' Such a person, you see, this religious Englishman, will admire Mr. Mansel's language, and sympathize with it, because he gives it that sense which the Bampton Lectures are written to prove is an untenable and impossible sense. Our old English poet says,—

> Except he can Above himself erect himself, how poor a thing is man!

The moral of the Bampton Lectures is, 'If he tries by one means or another above himself to erect himself, what a fool is man!' I am not now arguing the point, Which is right? I am merely showing that Daniel expressed what is the ordinary conviction among pious people who are not philosophers; I am showing how much Mr. Mansel will owe the character which he obtains among English believers, as a defender of the Faith against Germans, to an entire misapprehension

of his object; how far more they would disagree with him than with Kant, if they understood the purpose of either.

So the same Englishman would respond as eagerly to the second sentence in this extract, even if he could not construe satisfactorily every phrase in it. "*What do we gain by that parsimony of faith which strives to deal out the Infinite in infinitesimal fragments, and to erect the largest possible superstructure of deductions, upon the smallest possible foundation of faith*?" 'That sounds very grand language,' the reader will exclaim. 'And surely it is miserable parsimony not to trust a Being who has made known His Name to us, who has shown himself to be our Protector and Deliverer, righteous in all His ways, holy in all His works. If we do not trust Him, we shall be thrown back upon a trust in what is not true, not trustworthy,—in enchanters and miracle-workers, in notions of our own minds, in finite and feeble creatures like ourselves.'

How painful to Mr. Mansel must be such approbation as this! He is aware that the faith for which he is contending, is not to be parsimonious, simply because it is beyond the region of all knowledge, because "the coexistence of the Infinite and the Finite in any manner whatsoever, is inconceivable by the reason," and because, since "Religion" demands their coexistence, faith is to admit it ungrudgingly, in any manner whatsoever.

This principle is affirmed in the next clause of the sentence. "*The only ground that can be taken for accepting one representation of it rather than another, is that one is revealed, and the other not revealed*." This statement also, taken by itself, would at once receive the applause of those who feel as English Christians generally feel. They would say, 'Unless God had revealed Himself to us in His only-begotten Son, how could we have discovered the relation which exists between us and Him? We might have dreamt that we had a Father; we could never have known that we had access to that Father, that He felt to us as children, if there had not been the revelation of the Son of God and the Son of Man, in whom He knows us, and in whom we may know Him. Yes, as Mr. Mansel says, it must be all revelation.' But the agreement here is

even more hollow than in the other cases; the difference between those who use the common phrases is wider. The ordinary British Christian accepts the Bible with unbounded thankfulness, as discovering to him the ground upon which he actually stands, the relation between the eternal Father and His family on earth, which existed in the Person of the only-begotten Son before the worlds were, and which was manifested in the fullness of time, when that Son, who was the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His Person, took flesh and dwelt among men, and when having by Himself purged our sins He sat down at the right-hand of the Majesty on high. Am I wrong in saying that this is the inmost, deepest faith of those who grow up under the influence of our prayers and sacraments, and who find in the Scriptures their daily food? Am I wrong in saying that they would feel the most utter revolting if they were told that any representation of the union between the Infinite and the Finite is just as suitable to the human constitution, is in itself just as reasonable, as that which they have believed to be the ground of all things in earth and heaven?

Mr. Mansel will say, however, 'I am not writing for simple Christians, but for those whose minds have been perplexed by philosophical doubts and speculations.' I apprehend that what is truth for the one is truth for the other. The union of the two natures in our Lord is either a mere notion or dogma contained in a book, or it is the deepest reality. It is either a mere representation of the union of the Finite and Infinite, to be accepted because we can know nothing about that union; or it is the actual discovery of what the Eternal Being is in the Person of a Man. Again and again I must repeat this proposition; again and again I must affirm that for every common wayfarer it is a question of life and death. But I am quite willing to start from the other ground. These statements are expressly intended for those who are perplexed with doubts about the Christian faith, with doubts even about the Being whom they are to worship, or whether there is any such Being. Shall I trace the rise of some of these doubts? For Mr. Mansel has not stated them; he is apparently ignorant of them. He has attributed

a number of expressions which he has quoted from English writers of our day to a craving for the license of German Rationalism, to an impatience of faith, when I am well persuaded that they have sprung from the impatience of a very hard Rationalism in which they have felt themselves pent up, from a desire for something which they can believe.

I endeavoured to show you in my last Letter how some of those who had felt their own personal reliance in Christ most strongly, who had owned Him as their Deliverer and Reconciler, had perceived the need of a foundation for that consciousness which was liable to many fluctuations, and which could never be its own foundation. The most vigorous of these men became stern Calvinists. That which remained the same amidst all their changes of feeling was the absolute will and purpose of God; to rely upon that was to be at rest. They did rely upon it. They did find rest in it. Yes; and they derived from it the power to act bravely and nobly. How did they find out what this Will or purpose was? That which made them righteous they were sure must be righteous. That which raised them out of their sin must be the foe of sin. So long as they were only accounting for what they found in themselves, here was, it seems to me, a grand and a safe theology. But when they passed beyond themselves, the theology had to undergo terrible alterations. That Will which chose men in Christ before the worlds were, to be holy and unblamable in love, became emphatically a Self-will. Its absolute right to choose some and reject others was more and more regarded as its fundamental characteristic. When the first generation of those excellent men to whom this theology was really an interpretation of what they had experienced had passed away,—when it was transmitted as a formal bequest to men who cared for it chiefly as an interpretation of the condition of the world,—it assumed a horror which must be felt before it can be described. And yet the attempts to mitigate it by feeble Arminian or semi-Calvinistical statements, were equally offensive to the logical intellect and the practical conscience. They were felt to be poor compromises that could never clear away

any actual difficulty, or be any source of action. Men might acquiesce in them just because they did not care for them; because they found a real principle upon which they could stand, and which had the smallest possible connection with the notion that pretended to represent it.

Those who could not acquiesce in these middle ways, these nothings of popular or scholastic dogmatism, began to ask whether there was not some basis to be found somewhere that was not merely arbitrary, or, as Mr. Mansel expresses it more diffusely, "*not raised on the shifting base of an arbitrary resting-place*." Possibly that basis might be found in a religion within the bounds of the pure reason. It was surely worth while to inquire. I believe, as far as I understand what that religion is, that they will not find what they seek there, that they will never be satisfied with any religion at all, or aught save a living God; that they will find the pure reason to be the purified eye of the spirit which sees Him, and that they will not desire to enclose Him within its limits more than they would enclose the sun within the limits of the bodily eye. Nevertheless I rejoice that they should make a trial which I believe will lead to this result; I rejoice that they should ask whether there is not a Will and Purpose to all Right and Good. I am sure that when they perceive there is, they will be more in harmony with their old and revered fathers than ever they were. I dare not doubt that those fathers are themselves, in various ways unknown to us, aiding them in the search. I rejoice also that they should feel that this Will to all good must stand in the closest and most intimate connection to the good will that is in them, in most direct opposition to the evil will that is in them. And seeing that I find this perfect manifestation of the Will to all Good, of the Light in which is no darkness at all, of the eternal, unchangeable, perfect Being, of the Father of our spirits, in Him who was made of a woman and died upon the cross, seeing in the union in Him of the divine nature with the human, I perceive the full relation which must exist between the Infinite and the Finite, the good in God and the good in man,—seeing that I find here a ground for each man's goodness and salvation from evil to rest upon, and at the

same time a ground for all humanity to rest upon—I do believe that through all perplexities and confusions, after all attempts to eliminate the idea from the fact or to take the fact without the idea, God will bring these questioners back to the old, childlike faith in the divine humanity of Christ, and will show them and will show us that that is a rock which will not be shaken, which will prove its strength by every '*wind of controversy that blows against it and every flood of unbelief that descends upon it*.'

How much comfort these inquirers will derive from Mr. Mansel's assurance that they can find out nothing about the Infinite and the Eternal, that the Ruler of all may be the mere sovereign they have been told He is, that the Incarnation of Christ affords no clue to His inmost Nature, I leave you to judge. He will answer, perhaps, that he never dreamed of giving them comfort, he wished to teach them their absurdity. No doubt; but what I contend is that it is our absurdity as well as theirs. It is the absurdity of our English faith, of our English education. It is the absurdity of our Prayers and our Creeds; it is the absurdity not of the German national character,—of that which is said to be 'savage in reason' and to 'feed on chimeras,'—but of that character which is the most indifferent to theories, the most contemptuous of chimeras, under the sun. This is a point upon which I must dwell a little longer, because it connects this subject with the one which comes next under Mr. Mansel's review.

While I was tracing the steps by which men whose minds are especially *Christian* have been led to seek for a Divine and Eternal Will, as the root of their faith and hope, I could not help suspecting that some would say, 'There are such persons, assuredly; we have met with them; they form a remarkable element in modern English society. But we cannot say that they are *characteristic* of England; their faith and experience, though most real, and touching at certain points on what we all are or would wish to be, we suspect are alien from our national habits. John Bull did not look kindly upon them formerly. Even now he welcomes them rather surlily; he accepts them as the antagonists

of another class of feelings which he dislikes more. He is willing to encourage the Methodist or the Calvinist against the Romanist; that is all that can be said.'

Such statements as these have a meaning, though it is one which is liable to great perversion. The purely Christian movement of the last century—I mean that which led to the sense of the individual relation of men to Christ—unquestionably encountered a tremendous opposition, not only from the unbelief but from the faith which had been existing in the land previously. I use the words advisedly. There was a faith in God as a Creator, a faith in Him as the God of Righteousness and Order, which if not always deep, was real. It was shaken by a collision with the new thoughts which seemed to start from a different ground, to begin from the sense of personal evil and the need of personal forgiveness. Those old convictions easily passed into a mere Physico-Theology, or into a thin modification of Unitarianism. They took no hold of actual sinners; of human beings who wanted to find out a Father of themselves, not a Creator of the Planets. But they *were* convictions. They eagerly welcomed those arguments from Design and Adaptation which came in to confirm their own weakness. Those who held them were glad to acknowledge the Gospels as setting forth the character of a Man who must have been sent from a divine Being, must have been His chief messenger, because He was so good. They were glad to think that He had brought adequate attestation of His mission by doing very good and wonderful works. The further proofs that those persons who spoke of Him were not likely to deceive or be deceived, harmonized all with their previous dispositions. A people used to discriminate by practical tests rogues from honest men, valued such proofs when they were skilfully drawn out. The direction of the thoughts of Englishmen towards physical and mechanical studies favoured what I may call the less human side of this Theology; their domestic habits redeemed it from mere coldness, and led them gladly to think of God as a Parent, even when their arguments pointed to little more than an *Opifex mundi*.

Before I speak of the way in which this faith in a God of Truth and Order which our fathers cherished may be reconciled with that which appeared to strive with it and contradict it, and how each may contribute to our moral strength, I must show you that Mr. Mansel is as effectually undermining the one as the other. If the man of individual conscious faith, when he seeks for some foundation for that faith in a Righteous Will which is the eternal ground of things, is met by the announcement that he has no faculties wherewith to take cognizance of such a Being, the man who starts from the assumption of such a Being and thinks that he discovers corroborative evidence of His existence in Nature, is equally thrown aback by being told that his thoughts have taken an unlawful spring; that for his finite mind to pretend even to make plausible guesses about the Infinite is monstrous. And no discourses respecting 'the personal life of Jesus' can in the very least degree fill up the void which you have created in this man's soul. It is the belief of an Unseen God that he has clung to amidst all difficulty; a God exhibited to him, in some degree, in the Order of the Universe, in some degree in the Order of human Life. His knowledge of Him may be imperfect, but such as it is, he clings to it as the best thing he has, and he hopes for more. Mr. Mansel, coming fresh with Kant's evidence that the arguments from Nature prove nothing but only confirm a conviction already existing, casts away with scorn and indignation Kant's assurance that the conviction itself is of infinite value, that that is worth all the arguments in the world. He strips the man bare of that upon which he might ground a faith in the God-Man, in Him who reveals the God of Order and Righteousness. He refuses him the opportunity of considering whether that God of Order and Righteousness could have made Himself known to a creation intended to exhibit the image of His Order and Righteousness in another way than this. He will not let him ask himself whether, if this Perfect Man is the standard of good to man, he has not erred and strayed from that standard, and whether he does not want a Spiritual Restorer and Renovator. He cuts the ground from under the feet of the Naturalist

as well as of the Humanist. If each is in some way confessing a God and feeling after Him, the orthodox believer prays him with the most vehement urgency to desist; he is wasting his time; his business is to acquiesce in everything that is told him, and to take it for granted that he can know nothing. I must say the words with all solemnity: the confirmed, self-satisfied atheist is the one person who can receive such tidings without a protest, with perfect complacency.

Surely those cannot, who have been taught in their infancy that the Absolute and Eternal God has taken them to be His own children, the members of Christ, the inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven. Surely that old English education is based not upon notions, but upon the assumption that we are actually united to the Father of all in His Son; that He is actually guiding us by His Spirit to a consciousness of our own wants: at last, to a knowledge of Him who is the satisfier of them. Such education assumes an actual relation to be the ground of all consciousness of it; an Actual and Living Being to be the ground of the relation. That assumption brings our common human life into harmony with our life as connected with the Kingdom of Heaven; each illustrates the other. The relation to the father and the mother precedes all consciousness of it; the father and the mother have a life of their own, besides their relation to us. Their feelings to us are discovered first; then we seek to be acquainted with themselves, to know their minds, characters, purposes. That relation to a Heavenly Father, which is the ground of our relation to them, is unfolded to us, in like manner, amidst the consciousness of disobedience, distrust, wilfulness, forgiveness. As the common education is pursued, we rise to the awful perception of a personal self—of a personal existence which is not merged in our existence as brothers and sisters. The sense of a law binding our acts is awakened; the sense of laws also which bind our speech, and which bind the things about us,—laws that we and they did not create. With that information, comes the discovery of social bonds, of ties to our fellows which our self-will is always ready to break. The higher spiritual lessons interpret these. We have ties to

other men, because there is a Son of Man who unites us all together; we begin to perceive that the Lord of us and of our family must be the Lord of Nature. Then comes the rite of Confirmation, the witness of a Spirit guiding our spirit. When we are no more under the guidance of apparent, visible teachers, we are assured of the Presence of a Spirit, who will awaken our human sympathies, show us the root of them in the Will and Mind of God, who will bring us into awful communion with that Loving, Just, Self-sacrificing Will, the ground of all Love and Justice and Self-sacrifice among us.

I am not speaking of this education to those who despise it, but to those who wish us to preserve our English institutions, and to withstand all foreign innovations. To those, I would say, 'See whether it does not contain the greatest and most serious protest that can be borne against Mr. Mansel's teaching. See whether it does not lead us at every step from the notional to the actual, from phenomena to things, from rules to principles. See whether it does not lead us to seek our interpretation of the difficulties of the finite and the human, in the Infinite and Divine. See whether it does not treat the union of the infinite and the finite, the divine and human in Christ, as the foundation of our practical life.'[25]

The last subject discussed in this last Lecture, is the relation of special *Interpositions to general Laws*. The text of Mr. Mansel's observation, is a passage from Mr. Greg's 'Creed of Christendom,' in which he speaks of a belief in the efficacy of Prayer as incompatible with a deeply grounded belief in a God of Order. It would not be easy to express how much I differ from Mr. Greg's conclusion. It would not be easy to express how important I feel his premiss to be. The blank in an

[25]A number of causes have tended to make Englishmen less attached to this education than they were. The chief I believe are, that it has been made notional by our comments when it is so essentially personal, (*What is thy Name*? Who gave *thee thy Name*?) and that it has been supposed to have some connection with what are called "High Church doctrines." That these doctrines put the Church before God, and suppose the Church to be our teacher respecting God, not God respecting the Church, is the real, earnest English objection to them. But they do so by turning the Creed upside down, and therefore, *by* changing the whole character of the Catechism. I know no greater witness against that abuse, to be found in them when faithfully used.

Englishman's mind when the sense of Order is taken from it, when he ceases to associate Order with the Being he worships, is greater than we can dream of. Atheism must enter in and take possession of that empty house. But I will speak especially in reference to the particular topic under discussion. I should have no hopes of ever leading a man who had been robbed of this anchor of his soul, to feel what Prayer is, or why we are permitted and commanded to pray. For prayer is surely a cry to the Judge of the earth against the disorders of the earth,—to the Father of our spirits, against the disorders of our spirits. Because we believe that God is the enemy of such disorders, and that it is His purpose to remove them,—because we believe that man is both the cause of them, and is intended to be God's instrument in removing them,—because we believe that the Son of Man has come into the world to redress disorders, and that in His name we have access to Him who upholds order, therefore we have a warrant and encouragement to pray without ceasing. And secondly, I could never hope to convince any one whom I had robbed of this faith in a God of Order, of the end and intent of the acts revealed in Scripture, which we call miraculous, especially those which are attributed to our Lord, or of the difference between them and any miracle spoken of in any Pagan, or medieval, or modern legend. For, as I have endeavoured to show in a sermon which accompanies these Letters, the characteristic of our Lord's acts appears to be especially this, that they are acts for the restoration of order, not for the disturbance of it,—precisely such acts as would show Him to be the King of Men, the source of Life and Health to Men.

Not starting from this idea of Christ's Incarnation,—viewing it simply as a strange dogma to be received as any other representation of the relation between the finite and infinite might be received,—Mr. Mansel naturally cannot regard the miracles of our Lord in this light. And therefore it is very consistent in him to think that the more difficulties and perplexities he can throw in the way of a believer in divine Order, the more he is promoting the interests of Christianity. It is that unhappy opinion which gives his arguments all their danger.

Stripped of their attraction as apologies,—exhibited as mere pleas for scepticism,—any man, with a hundredth part of Mr. Mansel's ability, would be able to expose their fallacy; the study of Butler would beget a love of Order, a belief in a Source of Order, which would make them powerless. But men whose minds are trembling in a balance, may be determined by them either to reject the Gospel as false, or to accept it as coming from some other God than Him of whom it testifies. And those who are only wanting excuses for an acquiescence that will demand of them no exercise of faith, disturb them in no evil course, rouse them to no duty, may be cast by such pleas for Christianity as these, into a deep mesmeric trance from which nothing will rouse them but the thunders of the Last Day.

Truly yours,

LETTER X. MORALITY AND EVIL

Morality.—Kant.—the Human Representation of Absolute Morality.—Mr. Mansel's Method of Dealing (1) with the Atonement; (2) with the Doctrine of Forgiveness; (3) with Eternal Punishment; (4) with the Existence and Immortality of Evil.

My dear Sir,

We have come to the Lecture which is to test the soundness of all that have gone before. Mr. Mansel cares nothing for speculation. He wishes only for Rules to guide action. Now we are to know whether he has found them. Our subject is Christian Morals.

The Lecture begins with the old topic of Kant's delinquency. That "inconsistency scarcely to be paralleled in the history of philosophy," of which we have heard so often, is here held up again to still stronger reprobation. It is a topic which causes so much sensitiveness in Mr. Mansel that I desire to pass it by as quickly as I can. I have said already that I regard our interest in it as being merely this, that Kant accorded to us vulgar men, in the name of Philosophy, rights which we had always claimed for ourselves, without being able to make good our title to them by any formal proofs.

Three remarks I must make respecting the criticism on Kant in this Lecture, but they shall be brief, and they will be for the sake of Englishmen, not of Germans. (1.) Mr. Mansel appears to regard it as an especial inconsistency in the German, that the moral sense is "elevated above the conditions of human intelligence… in that Philosophy which resolves Time and Space into forms of human consciousness, and limits their operation to the field of the phenomenal and the relative." Now I apprehend that it was just because Kant had convinced himself that Time and Space are merely forms of human consciousness,—and because he was convinced that Moral Principles are *not*

forms of human Consciousness,—because he had convinced himself that the understanding has only to do with the field of the phenomenal and relative, and because he was assured that Moral Principles must have to do with that which is,—that he supposed the moral sense to be above the conditions of the intellect. So doing, he maintained that identity of the Eternal with the Substantial which Theologians had always assumed; the temporal he connected, as they are wont to do, with the changeable and the apparent. Whether he was right or wrong, I cannot see the inconsistency. (2.) Mr. Mansel imputes to all who agree with Kant in affirming the existence of a practical Reason or moral sense which deals with things as they are and not with phenomena, with the eternal and not the changeable, a determination to make our morality the measure of the Absolute Morality. A more unjust assertion, or one more directly refuted by his own statements in this and his other Lectures, it is scarcely possible to conceive. Evidently, if we take merely his representations—coloured and caricatured as they always are—of his opponents, the aim of them, one and all, is to find some absolute morality which is *not* measured by human morality. Evidently their strong conviction is, that if the conditions of our intellect, the conditions of time and space, are applied to morality, it must cease to be absolute, it must be brought to our level. Every one may have his own opinion whether they have succeeded or failed in their attempt to discover something more stable and permanent than their own finite judgments and conclusions; but to deny that this is their object, is to take away the point from at least one-half of Mr. Mansel's arguments and scoffs.

(3.) He discovers however in Kant a fiction "which is so manifest as hardly to need exposure." Perceiving that there must be a standard which is the measure of our morality and which cannot be twisted and distorted by our individual feelings and apprehensions,—perceiving also that if it is the standard for mankind, there must be the closest and most intimate relation between it and that which is human,—Kant hinted at a "Universal Consciousness," a Consciousness belonging

to humanity itself. Such a notion strikes Mr. Mansel as supremely ridiculous.

> "The fiction of a moral law binding in a particular form upon all possible intelligences, acquires this seeming universality, only because human intelligence is made the representative of all. I can conceive moral attributes only as I know them in consciousness: I can imagine other minds only by first assuming their likeness to my own. To construct a theory, whether of practical or of speculative reason, which shall be valid for other than human intelligences, it is necessary that the author should himself be emancipated from the conditions of human thought. Till this is done, the so-called Absolute is but the Relative under another name: the universal consciousness is but the human mind striving to transcend itself."—(*Bampton Lectures*, 2nd ed., p. 203.)

I spoke of my comments being for "Englishmen, not for Germans." That remark I meant to apply especially to this last passage. I think you will see at once how it applies. And yet you will have a right to find some fault with it. The principle is true for all human beings or for none, that we must *either make God in our image, or admit that we are made in His image*. That, I take it, is the doctrine of the Bible; that is the meaning of idolatry, and the explanation of the steps by which men have been led out of idolatry. But since we boast more of receiving the Bible and the whole Bible than the Germans, we ought to be more possessed and penetrated with this principle than they are. And since we take credit to ourselves for admitting the union of the two Natures in Christ more fully, as a fundamental article of faith, than some of them do, we ought more distinctly to allow, first, that there is a divine standard for human morality; secondly, that this standard is in such direct affinity with humanity in its highest form, that the one is the exact reflex of the other; thirdly, that it is not a fiction, but the most pregnant of all facts, that there is a universal human morality, transcending the particular morality of each man, and yet capable of

being brought to bear upon that morality in all the circumstances and details of our lives.

This is our old English faith, the faith, as I tried to show you in my last Letter, which is the foundation of our old English education, not merely of that which we call technically our religious education, but of the whole education of the man. What I desire is, that before we accuse any of departing from this faith, or produce ingenious arguments to show why they are foolish or wicked for doing so, we should seriously consider what is involved in it for ourselves, what notions of ours it must scatter, to what results it must lead us.

To this test I would in the first place bring such statements as I find in the following passage:—

> That there is an Absolute Morality, based upon, or rather identical with, the Eternal Nature of God, is indeed a conviction forced upon us by the same evidence as that on which we believe that God exists at all. But *what* that Absolute Morality is, we are as unable to fix in any human conception, as we are to define the other attributes of the same Divine Nature. To human conception it seems impossible that absolute morality should be manifested in the form of a *law of obligation*; for such a law implies relation and subjection to the authority of a lawgiver. And, as all human morality is manifested in this form, the conclusion seems unavoidable, that human morality, even in its highest elevation, is not identical with, nor adequate to measure, the Absolute Morality of God.
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> "A like conclusion is forced upon us by a closer examination of human morality itself. To maintain the immutability of moral principles in the abstract is a very different thing from maintaining the immutability of the particular acts by which those principles are manifested in practice. The parallel between the mathematical and the moral sciences, as systems of necessary truth, holds good in this respect also. As principles in the abstract, the laws of morality are as unchangeable as the axioms of geometry. That duty ought in all cases to be followed in preference to inclination, is as certain a truth as that two straight lines cannot enclose a space. In their concrete

application both principles are equally liable to error:—we may err in supposing a particular visible line to be perfectly straight; as we may err in supposing a particular act to be one of duty. But the two errors, though equally possible, are by no means equally important. For mathematical science, as such, is complete in its merely theoretical aspect; while moral science is valuable chiefly in its application to practice. It is in their concrete form that moral principles are adopted as guides of conduct and canons of judgment; and in this form they admit of various degrees of uncertainty or of positive error. But the difference between the highest and the lowest conception of moral duty is one of degree, not of kind; the interval between them is occupied by intermediate stages, separated from each other by minute and scarcely appreciable differences; and the very conception of a gradual progress in moral enlightenment implies the possibility of a further advance, of a more exalted intellect, and a more enlightened conscience. While we repudiate, as subversive of all morality, the theory which maintains that each man is the measure of his own moral acts; we must repudiate also, as subversive of all religion, the opposite theory, which virtually maintains that man may become the measure of the absolute Nature of God."—(*Bampton Lectures*, 2nd ed., pp. 206-208.)

"*There is an Absolute Morality, but what it is we are unable to fix in any human conception*." I feel myself as utterly unable to fix relative morality in any human conception as absolute morality. If a man's duty to wife and child is caged in a human conception, I believe it will never come out of that cage into any living action. What we have been taught in our Creed is, that because Absolute Morality could not be fixed in a human conception, or in any letters that express human conceptions, it came forth in the life of a Person, in His acts, His sufferings. The unbounded Righteousness and Truth and Goodness—so our fathers told us—showed themselves forth in Him. In Him we might see what that Being was who had made the worlds and all that dwell in them.

We have always been instructed also that this manifestation of the Absolute Goodness in a man was the removal of that perplexity

respecting a *Law of Obligation*, which Mr. Mansel appears to treat as hopeless. A Son who perfectly delighted to do his Father's will,—who obeyed Him because His law was in His heart,—would seem to set forth the very meaning and nature of obligation, the sense in which it is the submission of a Will and the power of a Will.

The readiness of that Son to fulfil all righteousness, to submit to all ordinary precepts, would seem to show how the inward obligation determined the outward conduct. And, if this is so, "the conclusion seems unavoidable that human morality"—because "in its highest elevation…it is manifested in this form" of filial obedience—"is one which is adequate to set forth" (I believe this language to be less equivocal than "identical with, and adequate to measure," though I do not object to that) "the Absolute Morality of God."

But it is to the second paragraph in this extract that I would especially invite the reader's attention. "*To maintain the immutability of moral principles in the abstract, is a very different thing from maintaining the immutability of the particular acts by which those principles are manifested in practice*." Assuredly, very different indeed. The Gospel of St. Luke supplies us with a remarkable instance and illustration of the difference. "*And behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted Him, saying, 'Master, what shall I do to inherit Eternal Life?' He said unto him, 'What is written in the Law? how readest thou?' And he answering, said, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.' And he said unto him, 'Thou hast answered right; this do, and thou shalt live.' But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, 'And who is my neighbour*?'" Here the 'immutability of the moral principle' asserted in the book of Deuteronomy, is maintained 'in the abstract,' by the lawyer, with the greatest vigour. It is just as applicable to his own time as to the time of Moses. He would have confounded any member of an opposing school who said otherwise. But 'the particular act by which that principle is manifested' here was the difficulty. He could find no letter about that, or none which might not be explained to be applicable to other times, and not to his own. He was 'unable to

fix' the Neighbour 'in any human conception.' 'Who is he? Of course I am to love him as myself, if I meet with him; but where shall I meet with him?' The parable which we all know, was (so we have been used to suppose) an answer to this question. The priest, the representative of the Jewish nation before God, appointed to bless the people in His Name,—the Levite, the authorized interpreter and defender of the Law which was given to Jews,—see a stripped and wounded Jew lying on the road, and never discover that he comes within the scope of the rule, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' A Samaritan, with little of this legal knowledge, a suspected heretic, sees that same Jew, the member of a race with which he has no dealings, and at once acts as if he were his neighbour. The law is within his heart; he is obeying a principle, and not a rule; it is not an individual principle; it is not one which he has learnt from his fathers. It is human; the Son of Man owns it as His. He bids the ruler"*Go and do likewise*."

Compare this divine record with Mr. Mansel's next position, which is only the former differently worded. "*As principles in the Abstract, the laws of morality are as unchangeable as the axioms of geometry. That duty ought in all cases to be followed in preference to inclination, is as certain a truth as that two straight lines cannot enclose a space. In their concrete application both principles are equally liable to error; we may err in supposing a particular visible line to be perfectly straight; we may err in supposing a particular act to be one of duty*." The dogma that duty ought to be followed in preference to inclination, is as unlike as possible to the divine maxim which the ruler quoted so readily respecting the love of the neighbour. 'That duty ought to be followed,' means that 'we ought to do what we ought to do.' So very harmless a proposition is not likely to beget a very energetic course of action. The questions, 'What is duty?' 'What is inclination?' start up even more quickly than the question, 'Who is my neighbour?' Let us go all lengths with Mr. Mansel. Let us confess that this morality in the abstract is the poorest, most miserable, most helpless of all unrealities. We have heard much of the great evil of Slavery in the abstract. What man of sense listens to such stuff? Who cares for an abstract slavery, a slavery

which has nothing to do with the concrete driver, the concrete drivee, the concrete lash? Who would not endure such a slavery himself? Who can feel the least concern that those who are dearest to him should endure it? Or again, who is better for the abstract benevolence which crosses abstract seas, to visit abstract soldiers, in abstract Scutari, to place abstract plasters on abstract wounds?

But must not this abstract morality be the very opposite thing to that law of life, that royal law, that law of liberty, of which Apostles and Evangelists speak? Must not that mean something which actually governs human beings, which they are created to obey? Is it analogous to certain axioms, or propositions in books of ours, or to the law which the planets obey in their courses, which every tree and flower obeys in its budding and bearing fruit? If there is to be a morality which bears upon action, 'the duty and destiny of man,'—a morality which cannot be explained away 'as liable in its concrete form to various degrees of uncertainty, or of positive error,'—must it not be of this kind? Can there be a greater proof of the radical feebleness of a mere regulative morality, than that which Mr. Mansel himself has given us? The abstract proposition from which we start,—the logical generalization,—is a truism admitted at once, and cast aside as soon as admitted. The special application of this truism, that which is to bring it into contact with the actual doings and sufferings of men, is liable, as it must needs be, to endless debatings, before its propriety or impropriety can be settled. 'Who is my neighbour,' must be argued with profound skill between opposing casuists, the man who has been left half dead, dying altogether during the discussion. But let us hear the Lecturer again.

> "God did not *create* Absolute Morality; it is co-eternal with Himself; and it were blasphemy to say that there ever was a time when God was and Goodness was not. But God did create the human manifestation of morality, when He created the moral constitution of man, and placed him in those circumstances by which the eternal principles of right and wrong are modified in relation to this

present life. For it is manifest, to take the simplest instances, that the sixth Commandment of the Decalogue, in its literal obligation, is relative to that state of things in which men are subject to death; and the seventh, to that in which there is marrying and giving in marriage; and the eighth, to that in which men possess temporal goods. It is manifest, to take a more general ground, that the very conception of moral obligation implies a superior authority, and an ability to transgress what that authority commands; that it implies a complex, and therefore a limited nature in the moral agent; the intellect, which apprehends the duty, being distinct from the will, which obeys or disobeys. That there is a higher and unchangeable principle embodied in these forms, we have abundant reason to believe; and yet we cannot, from our present point of view, examine the same duties apart from their human element, and separate that which is relative and peculiar to man in this life from that which is absolute and common to all moral beings. In this respect, again, our moral conceptions offer a remarkable analogy to the cognate phenomena on which other systems of necessary truth are based. Take, for example, the idea of Time, the foundation of the science of Number. We find no difficulty in conceiving that this present world was created at some definite point of time; but we are unable to conceive the same moment as the creation of Time itself. On the contrary, we are compelled to believe that there was a time before as well as after the creation of the world: that the being of God reaches back in boundless duration beyond the moment when He said, Let there be light, and there was light. But when we attempt to unite this conviction with another, necessary to the completion of the thought;—when we try to conceive God as an Infinite Being existing in continuous duration,—the contradictions, which beset us on every side, admonish us that we have transcended the boundary within which alone human thought is possible. And so too, while we are compelled to believe that the creation of man's moral nature was not identical with the creation of morality itself;—that the great principles of all that is holy and righteous existed in God, before they assumed their finite form in the heart of man;—we still find ourselves baffled in every attempt to conceive an infinite moral

> nature, or its condition, an infinite personality; we find ourselves compelled to walk by faith, and not by sight;—to admit that we have knowledge enough to guide us in our moral training here; but not enough to unveil the hidden things of God."—(*Bampton Lectures*, 2nd ed., pp. 208-210.)

Now here we have the most distinct assertion I can imagine, that the Gospel does *not* explain what was left unexplained by the law,—that the manifestation of Christ in the fullness of time, does *not* remove the veil which was over the minds of men in the old dispensation. 'God could not create Absolute Morality,' that is admitted. I rejoice that it is, —the Absolute Morality must be in Him, His own Nature. 'But God did create the human manifestation of Morality.' What, is not Christ the human manifestation of Morality? Or does Mr. Mansel mean to set aside the words of the Creed, 'Not created, but begotten?' He need not be afraid that I should impeach him of heresy. Happily, I should be very little listened to if I did. And I prize those words of the Creed too much, for their positive worth, to degrade them by turning them into excuses for discovering flaws in the faith of other men. But the loss we suffer from treating the unity of the Son with the Father as a formal tenet, not as an Eternal principle, becomes very evident in the next passage.

The commandments in the Decalogue are quoted to prove that they refer to a condition of things in which there is Marriage, Property, Death. Who ever thought otherwise? Moreover they belong to a condition of things in which there are transgressions against Marriage, against Property, against Life. The law, St. Paul says, is added because of *transgressions*. This law then, by the author's own showing, presumes a certain order anterior to its own existence. And the order demands an interpretation which the law cannot give. What is this wonderful union of man and woman, which is said in Scripture to have been involved in the Constitution of the Universe as it came from the Creator? What is this Life which He has given us, and which He watches over so jealously? What is this property of man in things? whence

comes it? The Law does not answer these questions, does not attempt an answer to them. It simply says, "Thou shalt not murder, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not steal." But, because the *Thou* is a real man capable of entering into the command, of obeying it or disobeying it,—because he recognizes the command as coming from some one who has a right to utter it, and who is right Himself,—he craves from Him the answer which the Law refuses. He asks after the source of that mysterious life which is in him and in all men. He asks after the ground of Marriage, the foundation of Property. If history speaks truly, these have been questions which have been awakened in men's hearts wherever they have not been brutal, wherever there have been impulses of family affection, desires for national union, an impatience of anarchy, a perception of Law and Government. The Jewish people were reminded by the solemnest precepts of their law that precepts were not the ground of their morality. They were told in the Fourth Commandment that they were to work because God worked, to rest because God rested. 'Be ye holy, because I am holy,' was repeated to them as the sanction of the prohibition of the most outrageous crimes. Their Prophets admonished them that their indifference to Life, Marriage, the boundaries of thine and mine, were all traceable to their idolatry, to their indifference about Him—the God of Righteousness—whom the eye cannot see. We have been used to suppose that the Sermon on the Mount unfolded those principles which lay beneath the precepts of the old time; that 'Be ye perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect' fulfilled the words 'Be ye holy, for I am holy;' that the Son of God translated these words into Life; that His Spirit was promised to write them in the hearts and minds of those whom he was not ashamed to call His brethren. All this old teaching may be set aside; but if Mr. Mansel means to set it aside, should he not say so? Should he stand forth as the condemner of those who pronounce it unsatisfactory and obsolete, when his own philosophy appears utterly to ignore it?

The observations respecting Creation with which this passage closes, seem to show that Mr. Mansel had a sense of this earlier order; otherwise they would be out of place. They are bewildering; will prove more and more bewildering to the consciences of his readers; will darken all practical principles to them; will make action as impossible as belief; so long as we revile other persons for rejecting the plain words of Scripture, and refuse to accept those words as the guides of our own thoughts. Mr. Mansel tells us, "*When we try to conceive of God as an Infinite Being, existing in continuous duration, the contradictions which beset us on every side admonish us that we have transcended the boundary within which human thought is possible*." Certainly, when we try to conceive of the Eternal Life of God as an existence in continuous duration, we transcend the bounds of thought by uttering words that mean nothing. But do those words of St. John mean nothing? Do they lead to nothing? "*That which was From the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of Life. For the Life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that Eternal Life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us. That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ*." I, for myself, accept this as the most perfect wisdom, as the deepest philosophy. And so accepting it, I am bound to say 'that we have not knowledge enough to guide our moral training here,' if the 'hidden things of God' have not been unveiled to us.

Mr. Mansel having shown to his satisfaction that we have no means of knowing the hidden things of God, no discovery of an Absolute Morality, proceeds to answer the objections which have been raised in different books against the Atoning Sacrifice of Christ. To some of these objections he introduced us in the First Lecture; I said then what I thought of them and of his treatment of the whole subject. But I am thankful to be recalled to it again.

> The Atoning Sacrifice of Christ has been the mark assailed by various attacks of this kind; some of them not very consistent with

> each other; but all founded on some supposed incongruity between this doctrine and the moral attributes of the Divine Nature. By one critic, the doctrine is rejected because it is more consistent with the infinite mercy of God to pardon sin freely, without any atonement whatsoever. By another, because, from the unchangeable nature of God's laws, it is impossible that sin can be pardoned at all. A third maintains that it is unjust that the innocent should suffer for the sins of the guilty. A fourth is indignant at the supposition that God can be angry; while a fifth cannot see by what moral fitness the shedding of blood can do away with sin or its punishment. The principle which governs these and similar objections is, that we have a right to assume that there is, if not a perfect identity, at least an exact resemblance between the moral nature of man and that of God; that the laws and principles of infinite justice and mercy are but magnified images of those which are manifested on a finite scale;—that nothing can be compatible with the boundless goodness of God, which is incompatible with the little goodness of which man may be conscious in himself.—(*Bampton Lectures*, 2nd ed., pp. 211, 212.)

Is it not strange to hear these different objections quoted, as if they were the special imaginations of some particular writers, German or English? Have they never presented themselves to Mr. Mansel's own mind? Has he not had to fight his way through them? Because, if so, he is unlike any other earnest religious man that I ever read of or met with. All that it has been my lot to encounter in biographies, or in the world, have spoken of these questions as having once been torments to them. Nor have they concealed the fact that the doubts rose up before them again and again, or that it was God who answered them to their minds, and not man. And what was the answer? So far as I could gather from their statements,—which met all the deepest convictions and experiences of my own soul,—they found the belief of an Atoning Sacrifice growing more dear and sacred to them in proportion as they took the words that express it more literally. They believed that God in Christ had actually removed the obstacles which separated them from Him; that in the Sacrifice He was declaring Himself to be at one with

them, and inviting them to be at one with Him. As St. Paul puts it, '*God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself*,' therefore '*we, as ambassadors of Christ, beseech you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God*.' Or as the Church expresses it in the consecration prayer at the Eucharist,—"A full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction has been made for the sins of the whole world." On which ground she invites her sons to draw nigh and enter into real and actual communion with their Father in Heaven. Believing that Gospel,—partaking of that Communion,—Christian men declare that they feel God's mercy to be infinite in the putting away of sin; that sin is the separation from God; that Christ is union with God. They can rejoice, they say, in contemplating that Unchangeable Nature which never can be satisfied with any Perfection less than its own, with any Love less than its own. They can hail the sacrifice of the Innocent, as the highest and most practical exhibition of that love—as revealing to them the perfect fellowship of the Will of the Father with the Will of the Son,—as showing them why God's Spirit is awakening them to offer themselves as sacrifices to God,—sacrifices to do His work for the guiltiest of His creatures. Such persons learn, they tell us, that the anger of God against Sin is not a detraction from His love, but the proof of it; they are sure the anger could not be less without the love being less; they wish to feel more and more how hotly it is burning against the evil which is in them and in the world. They say further, that the more they think of this Atonement, the more it connects itself with an actual participation of the nature of Him who died for them; that what once seemed to them the greatest of all puzzles, how the shedding of blood should be the doing away of sin, seems to them now—while they recognize an actual union with Christ as the secret of their peace—the most living and practical of truths. I am not going to defend these statements; I leave them to defend themselves. I merely ask which seem most in accordance with the belief that the Atonement is the fundamental principle of the Gospel, the key-stone of the Christian arch,—these statements, or the apologies which are grounded upon the assumption

that it is presumptuous to connect our thoughts and acts and life with His thoughts and acts and life; which, in fact, excuse (!) the finished Sacrifice of Christ, by maxims which might have afforded some explanation of the Heathen dreams of a sacrifice, if the Son of Man had never offered His. I wrong those dreams in saying that the maxims would have afforded this explanation. The very worst of them presumed that there was some union between the worshiper and the object of his worship, some relation between the human morality and the divine, some correspondence between the sin of which the creature was conscious, and the nature of the Being against whom he had sinned. All foretold that this union would be revealed, that the contradictions which interfered with it would be put away. It is the last achievement of Christian orthodoxy in the nineteenth century, to prove that the separation is hopeless, the contradiction irremovable. This is the way of refuting Rationalism! This is the way of bringing young men to accept the Gospel of the atoning Sacrifice of Christ! This is the way of preparing them to preach it to the world!

If you think that my language is strong, and that there is not really that opposition between the morality of the Gospel and Mr. Mansel's statements which I have supposed, consider seriously the following passage:—

> "It is obvious indeed, on a moment's reflection, that the duty of man to forgive the trespasses of his neighbour, rests precisely upon those features of human nature which cannot by any analogy be regarded as representing an image of God. Man is not the author of the moral law: he is not, as man, the moral governor of his fellows: he has no authority, merely as man, to punish moral transgressions as such. It is not as sin, but as injury, that vice is a transgression against man: it is not that his holiness is outraged, but that his rights or his interests are impaired. The duty of forgiveness is imposed as a check, not upon the justice, but upon the selfishness of man: it is not designed to extinguish his indignation against vice, but to restrain his tendency to exaggerate his own personal injuries. The reasoner

> who maintains, 'it is a duty in man to forgive sins, therefore it must be morally fitting for God to forgive them also,' overlooks the fact that this duty is binding upon man on account of the weakness and ignorance and sinfulness of his nature; that he is bound to forgive, as one who himself needs forgiveness; as one whose weakness renders him liable to suffering; as one whose self-love is ever ready to arouse his passions and pervert his judgment."— (*Bampton Lectures, 2nd ed.*, pp. 214, 215.)

"*Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us*." "*Forgiving if ye have a quarrel against any, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you*." "*O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt because thou desiredst me; shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant*, even as I had pity on thee?"—"It is obvious, on a moment's consideration, that the duty of a man to forgive the trespasses of his neighbour, rests precisely upon those features of human nature which cannot, by any analogy, be regarded as representing an image of God." Can you conceive a more direct and literal opposition than you find here? But penetrate below the letter—connect our Lord's words with the whole Evangelical history, with the doctrine of the Apostles, with His own words on the Cross, and see whether the contrast becomes less or greater. Is it not evident that we have here a war, if ever such were, of principles, of the most practical principles, of those which most determine the whole life and conduct of human beings? These maxims cannot coexist. Each of us must say by which he will hold.

I admit at once the 'obviousness' of Mr. Mansel's conclusion. It is just as 'obvious' as that the sun is moving about the earth. It is the first impulse of every one to respond to his proposition, as to the Ptolemaic proposition, 'Of course; a man must be a fool to think otherwise.' But there were perplexities about the 'obvious' theory of the heavens practical difficulties—which suggested doubts about it, even before the 'unobvious' law had been demonstrated to be the actual one. And there are moral perplexities—practical perplexities—in the 'obvious' theory about the features in human nature that are the foundation of

our forgiveness, which make it most embarrassing even to those who do not hold, as I do, that our Lord's acts and words and sufferings if they are what we say they are—*demonstrated* the doctrine which Mr. Mansel rejects to be the only tenable, the only possible, one.

"The duty of forgiveness is binding upon man on account of the weakness and ignorance and sinfulness of his nature." But what if the weakness, ignorance, and sinfulness of my nature dispose me *not* to forgive? What if one principal sign of the weakness, ignorance, sinfulness of my nature is that I am unforgiving? What if the more weak, ignorant, and sinful my nature is, the more impossible forgiveness becomes to me, the more disposed I am to resent every injury and to take the most violent means for avenging it? It is my duty to forgive, because I am "one whose self-will is ever ready to arouse his passions and pervert his judgment." To arouse my passions; to what? To anything so much as to acts of revenge? To pervert my judgment; how? In any way so much as by making me think that I am right and other men wrong, and that I may vindicate my right against their wrong? And this is the basis of the duty of forgiveness!—The temper which inclines me at every moment to trample upon that duty, to do what it forbids!

The obvious conclusion then has some obvious difficulties. Obvious indeed! They meet us at every step of our way; they are *the* difficulties in our moral progress. Forgiveness is 'to be a check on the selfishness of man.' Where does he get the check? From his selfishness. It is the old, miserable, hopeless circle. I am to persuade myself by certain arguments not to do the thing which I am inclined to do. But the inclination remains as strong as ever; bursts down all the mud fortifications that are built to confine it; or else remains within the heart, a worm destroying it, a fire consuming it. Whence, oh whence is this forgiveness from the heart to come, which I cry for? Is it impossible? Am I to check my selfishness by certain rules about the propriety of abstaining from *acts* of unforgiving ferocity? God have mercy upon

those who have only such rules, in a siege or a shipwreck, when social bonds are dissolved, when they are left to themselves!

All men have declared that forgiveness, real forgiveness, is *not* impossible. And all have felt that it is not impossible, because it dwells somewhere in beings above man, and is shown by them and comes down as the highest gift from them upon man. I say, in every nation there has been a sense of the duty of forgiveness, and there has been also the sense of its being a divine quality, of its being imparted to man in spite of the weakness, ignorance, selfishness of his nature. If it comes along with a feeling of weakness, ignorance, selfishness,—along with a feeling that we are not to judge lest we should be judged, that feeling is itself owned as a gift, a light proceeding from the forgiveness which is manifested towards us. But these common feelings have been worked into the heart of *Christendom* Morality; they have expressed themselves in every form of its Society; they have impressed themselves on its Literature. How could it be otherwise, if the Lord's Prayer was anything but an idle form of words, if it was really a prayer to a Forgiving Father that His will might be done in earth as it is in heaven?

> 'Why all the souls that are were forfeit once;
> And He that might have best the advantage took
> Found out the remedy,'—

this has been the maxim, the habit of thought which breaks forth unawares into words, because it is so deeply imbedded in the very existence of Society; because Society is recognized as standing on the principle which it embodies. And whenever the idea of Forgiveness has been severed from this root,—whenever the strong conviction that we are warring against the nature of God and assuming the nature of the Devil by an unforgiving temper, has given place to a sentimental feeling that we are all sinners, and so should be tolerant of each other,—there has come that weakness and effeminacy over Christian Society, that dread of punishing, that unwillingness to exercise the

severe functions of the Ruler and the King, which has driven the wise back upon older and sterner lessons, has made them think the vigour of the Jew in putting down abominations, the self-assertion of the Greek in behalf of freedom, was manlier than the endurance and compassion of the Christian. Which I should think too, if, referring the endurance and compassion to a divine standard, I did not find in that standard a justification of all which was brave and noble in the Jewish protest against evil, in the Greek protest against tyranny. Submission or Compassion turned into mere qualities which we are to exalt and boast of as characteristic of our religion, become little else than the negations of Courage and Justice. Contemplated as the reflections of that Eternal Goodness and Truth which were manifested in Christ, as energies proceeding from Him and called forth by His Spirit,—submission to personal slights and injuries, the compassion for every one who is out of the way, become instruments in the vindication of Justice and Right, and of that Love in the fires of which all selfishness is to be consumed.

For this is what I meant by the demonstration which the Cross and Sacrifice of Christ have made of the nature and ground of Forgiveness. It is, I hold, impossible to maintain what our Christian Creeds have maintained respecting the Union of the two Natures in Christ,—impossible to think that His human Forgiveness was the perfect image of the divine Forgiveness,—without adopting that belief which has pervaded all the thought and dialects of modern Europe, and which involves, Mr. Mansel tell us, a *prima facie* absurdity.

Either (1) Christ's forgiveness was the highest manifestation of the Divine character, and, being such, becomes effective through the gift of His Spirit for working the like forgiveness in us; or (2) He has not set us an example that we should follow in His steps; or (3) His forgiveness, like ours, was—I dare not quote the words in this connection; you have heard them already. If we think that Christ has died and risen again, we think He has demonstrated that Forgiveness is mightier than Unforgiveness, Good than Evil, Life than Death; if we think He has

not died and risen again, we ought not to invent plausible arguments for keeping up a profession the meaning of which we have renounced.

Mr. Mansel proceeds to treat the question of Predestination and Freewill as he has treated all other questions which have agitated the human heart and conscience. "The controversy, whether viewed in its speculative or moral aspect, is but another example of the hardihood of human ignorance. The question, as I have observed before, has its philosophical as well as its theological aspect; it has no special difficulties peculiar to itself; it is but a special form of the mystery of the coexistence of the Infinite and the Finite." Many such things have we heard; miserable comforters are ye all! This question, in its moral or practical 'aspect,' does present itself to every man and woman; does connect itself with action and suffering, with life and death. My dear friend, what does it signify? "It is but a special form of the co-existence of the Finite and the Infinite." What I said before, I must repeat. Butler's experience that man is dealt with as free, Luther's experience that man is dealt with as a slave, are both veritable experiences which cannot be ignored: neither of which is less sure or less important to life than the other. Where do we find the resolution of the problem? I find it in the revelation of that Eternal Nature of which Mr. Mansel tells me I can know nothing. When I am poring over my own mind, the contradiction faces me at every turn, darkens all my course to me. When I acknowledge God as a Deliverer,—a deliverer of the Will out of that bondage into which it has cast itself by denying Him,—a Restorer of the Will to its true, reasonable, human state of subjection to Him,—I confess that I am meant for a Service which is perfect Freedom, I confess also what that bondage and prison-house of Self is, in which I must stay till that is dead wherein I am held.

These last words, which I use with the deepest certainty of their truth, with the most entire conviction that a man shut up in self must be miserable,—must be eternally miserable,—introduce the next topic in Mr. Mansel's Lecture. Let him have all the advantage which can be

derived from being allowed to state his own case and his opponent's case also.

> "And is not the same conviction of the ignorance of man, and of his rashness in the midst of ignorance, forced upon us by the spectacle of the arbitrary and summary decisions of human reason on the most mysterious as well as the most awful of God's revealed judgments against sin,—the sentence of Eternal Punishment? We know not what is the relation of Sin to Infinite Justice. We know not under what conditions, consistently with the freedom of man, the final spiritual restoration of the impenitent sinner is possible; nor how, without such a restoration, guilt and misery can ever cease. We know not whether the future punishment of sin will be inflicted by way of natural consequence or of supernatural visitation; whether it will be produced from within or inflicted from without. We know not how man can be rescued from sin and suffering without the co-operation of his own will; nor what means can co-operate with that will, beyond those which are offered to all of us during our state of trial. It becomes us to speak cautiously and reverently on a matter of which God has revealed so little, and that little of such awful moment; but if we may be permitted to criticize the arguments of the opponents of this doctrine with the same freedom with which they have criticized the ways of God, we may remark that the whole apparent force of the moral objection rests upon two purely gratuitous assumptions. It is assumed, in the first place, that God's punishment of sin in the world to come is so far analogous to man's administration of punishment in this world, that it will take place as a special infliction, not as a natural consequence. And it is assumed, in the second place, that punishment will be inflicted solely with reference to the sins committed during the earthly life;—that guilt will continue finite, while the misery is prolonged to infinity. Are we then so sure, it may be asked, that there can be no sin beyond the grave? Can an immortal soul incur God's wrath and condemnation, only so long as it is united to a mortal body? With as much reason might we assert that the angels are incapable of disobedience to God, that the devils are incapable of rebellion. What if the sin

perpetuates itself,—if the prolonged misery be the offspring of the prolonged guilt?" —(*Bampton Lectures*, 2nd ed., pp. 220-222.)

I quite agree with Mr. Mansel, that it is extreme ignorance and presumption to use the word Eternal in connection with one subject or another,—with life or death, with reward or punishment,—if by the conditions of our mind we can attach no signification to that word. To join it with solemn duties and responsibilities, with the hopes and fears of man,—if this is the case,—must be the most egregious trifling. My reason for adhering to the expressions Eternal Life, Eternal Death, Eternal Punishment—for desiring that we should meditate on them far more earnestly than we have ever done, and that we should introduce them into our discourses, not for oratorical purposes, not to move the nerves of our hearers, but to raise and deepen all their thoughts of their own destiny, and of human destiny,—is that I believe these phrases have been rescued from vagueness, have been translated into life, by the words and acts of our Lord Jesus Christ. Believing, as our fathers did, that He came to reveal the Eternal God, Him who is, and was, and is to come,—believing that He did manifest that life of Righteousness, Love, Truth, which is not and cannot be limited by Time,—believing that these are the invisible things which St. Paul opposes to the visible things that are temporal,—believing that the Gospel means the admission of men in Christ, into the possession and enjoyment of these Eternal Treasures, which men in the ages before His coming were feeling after, and in which they were sure that they had an interest,—believing that to be without these Eternal treasures, is to be in the state which the Apostles describe as Death, Eternal Death, that to possess them in any measure is to have a taste of Eternal Life, that to possess them altogether, to live and dwell in them, to go no more out of them, to sink no more back into our own evil nature, is the reward which God has prepared for those that love Him, the fullness of joy which is at His right-hand,—believing that this is the teaching of the Bible, and that the more we read it, the more that teaching

explains to us all the capacities of good as well as of evil in ourselves,—I am not afraid of Christ's own language. I desire to look more into it, I desire to take it more literally, more and more in the length and breadth of its spiritual significance. I cannot take it literally if I change the force of it at my pleasure, if I assume the adjective to have one sense when it is applied to God, and another when it is applied to Life or Death or Punishment. I take it as having the same force wherever it occurs; its highest application being the only measure of all the others.

To speak of God as 'without beginning or end,' and to say that punishment or death only means 'without end,' is to play with Scripture, to bring Christ's awful revelations down to our sense because we will not permit Him to raise our sense to His revelations. If He comes to unveil God to us, if He comes to make us partakers of the life of God, the absence of that life must be eternal death. A lost soul must be, as all Evangelical teachers have said, in a state of death,—not in a state of temporal death, of bodily death, but of eternal because of spiritual death. To say that a soul in this world cannot be raised out of this death is to say that there is no gospel nor salvation for human beings at all. There is a deliverance from eternal death, in the strict Scriptural sense of eternal death. Whether that deliverance is *only* in this world, whether the threescore years are barrier beyond which Christ's Gospel does not reach, is a question which cannot be determined by the use of *that* word. By all means let the question be discussed with the utmost earnestness whether the Scripture has settled it by the use of any *other* language. I long that all you who are preparing for orders,—that we who are in orders,—should enter upon that inquiry in the most serious temper, invoking the help of God's Spirit to guide us in it, utterly distrusting the conclusions of our minds, ready to receive, and believing that we shall have His Light. How important it is I have long felt. I see clergymen turned away from it by the notion that morality must suffer if the check comes from the despair of the future is taken away. And I see them spending their strength for nought,—utterly failing to penetrate the mass of evil which is around them while they

are using that check. Men seem to think that there is nothing better for them than to eat, drink, and be merry here, seeing that they have so little chance of not perishing with the immense majority of their race hereafter. I see some of more serious minds trembling lest they should strip such awful words of any of their force for themselves as well as for their hearers. And it seems to me that they *do* strip them of the awe which they ought to have for each one of us. When we look down into our own spirits we discover a pit of lovelessness, of atheism, there, which tells us, I think, more of what eternal death is—more of our own nearness to it—than all the rhetoric in the world. It is not well to speak much of such revelations; no serious man would care to do it. But are they not given us that we may not use rhetorical phrases for the frightening of others; that we may not trifle with God's Word; that we may turn ourselves, that we may turn others, to His infinite Love as the only deliverance, for us or for them, from an infinite despair. Oh, my friend, you may be compelled to ask some day, What is this eternal horror of which I have been preaching to my people? Is it in some distant, unknown world? Is it not here? God grant that then you may be able to say, 'Thou who hast revealed, in the Cross of Thy Son, a Love which is stronger than Death, the Grave, and Hell, art not Thou, too, here? Is there not an Eternal Life which I may claim that is mightier than the Eternal Death?' When a man has been driven—not once, but again and again—to find that this is the only refuge for himself, he learns that he must not confine the message he brings from the Cross and Sepulchre and the Resurrection morn, by any terms or forms of his understanding. If St. Paul's words about the length and breadth and depth of the Love of Christ are too vast for him, as he knows they are, he must yet proclaim them to beggars and outcasts. If it sounds dangerous to say that God willeth all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth, and that His Will shall one day be done, we must leave Him to justify the language; since we cannot, at least let us not contradict it.

But if I held the conviction before, that this question must be faced boldly in God's strength, whatever shrinking there may be in our minds from it, I cannot tell you how this conviction has been deepened in me by the passage of Mr. Mansel's Lecture which I have just quoted. I need scarcely point out to you how utterly he has mistaken the whole difficulty which has startled the consciences of those who have listened to the popular statements on this subject. He says, "We know not how man can be rescued from sin and suffering without the co-operation of his own will, nor what means can co-operate with that will beyond those which are offered to us all during our state of trial." Why I *do* know most certainly, if I believe the Scripture and the warrant of my own conscience, that no man can be rescued out of the state of sin and suffering without the cooperation of his own will; because Sin is the very revolt of man's will from the true will, and because to speak of being delivered from a disease in the will without the will itself being set right, is more monstrous than to speak of being cured of a disease in the liver without the liver being set right.

What is the whole Gospel but a message to the Will? What is Redemption but a redemption of the Will? But if this is so,—if we may at once concede to Mr. Mansel all that he asks with so much timidity, what becomes of the next inquiry? Do we ask any more means to co-operate with the Will besides those which God has provided? What we say is, that the revelation of that deliverance which God has wrought out, of that power by which He acts upon the Will of men, has nothing in its nature which fixes death as the limit of it, but everything which defies and breaks through that limit. What we say further is, that it is a cruel fiction to speak of the knowledge of that power by which God acts upon men's Wills to raise them, as being offered to us all during this state of trial. To say that the prostitutes in our streets, that the Hindoos, that the Australian Bushmen, have had the same means of learning what power there is to reform and regenerate the Will, as Mr. Mansel and I have had, is to outrage all sense. To insist that the Scripture obliges us to utter so monstrous a contradiction of fact, is

to blaspheme it as no German Rationalist ever did. The fear—I must repeat it—is for ourselves. Those who have seen and known most of the love of God, must feel most what there is in their wills which resists it, how they have fought and do fight against it. If we think God's grace can overcome *us*, I am certain there is no obstinacy or rebellion in others which we can conclude must prove too mighty for it.

Mr. Mansel apologizes very humbly for venturing "to criticize the arguments of the opponents of the doctrine with the same freedom with which they have criticized the ways of God." The last clause would be highly commendable in an Old-Bailey advocate; whether it is equally admirable as coming from a Clergyman and a Gentleman, I leave to the author's conscience. I will say nothing of myself, but I declare that I have never met with *any* objector to the popular statements respecting Eternal Punishment (and I have met with many from whose opinions and arguments I entirely dissented), who did not desire to vindicate the ways of God from what seemed to him unlawful and injurious criticism. But waiving that point, the tenderness of Mr. Mansel towards us—his dread lest he should entirely crush us with the severity of his criticisms—was quite uncalled for. He may pour on; we can endure many more such as these; for there is not one of the points upon which he insists, which I, at least, have not always taken for granted. That punishment is not a special infliction for Sin, but the necessary consequence of it—following upon it, as Butler points out, because the world is subject to a righteous moral Governor; that Sin is not dependent upon the existence of a body,—supposing the body did cease to exist in a future state;—that sin perpetuates itself;—that prolonged misery must be the offspring of prolonged guilt;—these are data of the Conscience, which, so far from wishing to suppress, I complain of our popular teaching about punishment for suppressing; which I desire should be brought out into far greater prominence than they have been. For then the belief of a Lamb of God who taketh away the Sin of the World, will not be frittered and explained away into the belief of a Lamb of God who taketh away the punishment of a

certain portion of the world; then it will be confessed in our theological theories, as every Christian confesses in his practical experience, that Punishment is one of God's blessed instruments for making us aware of sin, and for making us feel that it is from *that* we need to be delivered; then we shall understand something of the battle which God has been waging against Evil, something of His triumph over it when He gave His Son to die for our sins, and raised Him again for our Justification.

But no! we are not to believe in that triumph. The following paragraph is nearly the most tremendous I ever read in a Christian writer.

> "Against this it is urged that sin cannot for ever be triumphant against God. As if the whole mystery of iniquity were contained in the words *for ever*! The real riddle of existence,—the problem which confounds all philosophy,—ay, and all religion too, so far as religion is a thing of man's reason,—is the fact that evil exists *at all*; not that it exists for a longer or a shorter duration. Is not God infinitely wise and holy and powerful *now*? and does not sin exist along with that infinite holiness and wisdom and power? Is God to become more holy, more wise, more powerful hereafter; and must evil be annihilated to make room for His perfections to expand? Does the infinity of His eternal nature ebb and flow with every increase or diminution in the sum of human guilt and misery? Against this immovable barrier of the existence of evil, the waves of philosophy have dashed themselves unceasingly since the birthday of human thought, and have retired broken and powerless, without displacing the minutest fragment of the stubborn rock, without softening one feature of its dark and rugged surface."—(*Bampton Lectures*, 2nd ed., pp. 222, 223.)

I was beginning to comment on these words. I was trying to tell you what impression they made on me. I cannot. I can only say, 'If they are true, let us burn our Bibles; let us tell our countrymen, that the Agony and Bloody Sweat of Christ, His Cross and Passion, His Death and Burial, His Resurrection and Ascension mean nothing.' But oh, friend! do not let us lose the lesson which this language is to teach us. What I was, in my haste, about to condemn in Mr. Mansel, is in

you and me. *We* have been tolerating evil; *we* have been believing that because it exists, it may just as well be immortal. This is the unbelief which has paralyzed all our arms and all our hearts. This it is which makes us patient of baseness and cowardice in ourselves, which makes us indifferent how much of moral corruption there is in the world. We have said to ourselves, What is there in that little word 'for ever'? Is not God good now? Yet He suffers evil. We who are pledged by the vows of our Ordination, as well as by the vows of our Baptism, to resist evil to the death,—we have been actually propagating this accursed denial, we have been investing it with sacred names, we have been making it a part of our orthodoxy. Do you think that this can go on? Is not this habit of mind destroying the vitals of the Nation, the vitals of the Church?

After speaking with so much complacency of the possibility that evil may last for ever and ever,—after showing that if we admit its existence at all, there is no further difficulty in entertaining the cheering faith that nothing can overcome it,—Mr. Mansel alludes "to the great and terrible mystery of Divine Judgment." What! to a Divine Judgment between good and evil, between light and darkness; that Judgment for which Christians in Scripture are encouraged to wait and hope and long, however searching and terrible it may be, because it will show that the Prince of the world is judged, that all things are gathered up in Christ, that to Him all things in earth and heaven are subject? Such a Judgment, that which is called, in the New Testament, the unveiling of the Son of Man, the discovery of the real Head and Source of all Life, Order, Peace, in God's Universe, the overthrow and destruction of all Death, Disorder, War,—the Judgment which has cheered the heart of the sufferer on sick-beds, the lonely prisoner, the martyr at the stake, not because he expects some reward for himself, but because he shall see Righteousness and Truth triumphant; because he hopes to hear his prayers answered, that God's Will may be done at last throughout His Creation; such a Judgment we must banish from our thoughts. By proclaiming that all the Divine Government and

Education of mankind have not been necessarily tending to this issue, that the contradictions which every true man feels to be agonizing may be immortal, the idea of Judgment is destroyed. A shrivelled remnant of it may survive in the feeble, flickering expectation that we who have led tolerably respectable lives, shall be paid for our good behaviour hereafter, and that the disreputable will have endless wailings for their portion. But, thanks be to Almighty God, He will, by the goadings of His Spirit, by kindling in us a sense of *our* infinite evil, drive us from that refuge of lies, that beggarly hope which must make us ashamed, that He may restore to us that other and more glorious hope of a full revelation of His Kingdom, of the "*restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began*." I believe, if we lose that hope altogether,—if God gives us up, as He may, for our rebellions, to such an entire extinction of it as there never has been in any period of the world yet,—we shall not stop at Mr. Mansel's point; we shall be certain that Evil must reign for ever and ever, *must* drive out all that is opposed to it. We shall praise thee, O Devil, we shall acknowledge thee to be the lord. And those who still retain the conviction that Christ has come into the world, will realize Jean Paul's tremendous dream. They will suppose that His message to men was, "Children, you have *no* Father."

Yet I am glad that this dreadful language has been used, and used in a Christian pulpit. It will bring the thoughts of many hearts to light. It will show who can and who cannot bear this prospect. And those who cannot, it will lead to reconsider some of the language into which they dropped through conformity to the habits of their time, though it has corresponded very ill to their inmost convictions, and to the teachings of God's Spirit. Among many questions which will occur to them, this I am sure will be one. Has not the language we have used respecting the hopeless division between the world on this side death and the other, deprived us of some of St. Paul's most elevating as well as most practical lessons? It may be well for Mr. Mansel to scoff at the notion of one moral law for all intelligent beings. But St. Paul speaks

of Him in whom we say the Moral Law was embodied, *as the head of all principalities and powers*; speaks of *the manifold wisdom and love of God* being made known to those powers *through the Church*. When he bowed his knees, it was to the "*Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom the whole Family in Heaven and Earth is named*." Are Protestants afraid of such passages, —afraid of accepting the full force of them,—lest they should fall into Romanist notions, either about Purgatory, or our communion with the spirits of just men made perfect? Has not St. Paul always been the great deliverer from Romish notions? Do we tremble lest he should lead us into them? May not some on the right hand and the left be falling into them just because we have not confessed the truth of which they are the counterfeits?

And if private Christians may discover that the notions they have cherished on the subject of the future world, its joys and its terrors, have darkened the Universe, as well as the Gospel of God's Kingdom to them,—surely the preachers of that Gospel have more need still to be inquiring whether they have not entertained theories which go near to make their preaching utterly vain, a tissue of empty truisms, or flagrant contradictions. Mr. Mansel's words may be most effectual for bringing this question to a trial. Can I tell my congregation that God wills them to be saved and not damned? Can I tell them that they may trust His Will absolutely to conquer that which resists it in them? Can I preach Christ as a real deliverer of mankind, as a real conqueror for mankind? Compromises on this controversy must as much come to an end, as compromises about forgiveness when Tetzel preached his sale of pardons. We must determine what we have to declare, or for ever hold our tongues.

So far, then, we have not discovered in this Lecture many rules which can guide us in dark hours of trial, or help us in the action 'which is our duty and destiny.' We have only been taught that we are not to believe in any relation between human forgiveness and Divine forgiveness, that we must not look forward with any hope to the extirpation of evil. These are the great moral pole-stars which are to guide

us over the deep; these are to be substituted for any "principles satisfying to the Reason." Still there is one subject upon which it might have been hoped that a disciple of Butler would throw light. In a Lecture on morals, the Conscience was entitled to some notice. It *is* noticed in the last paragraph. We are told that "the very Philosopher whose writings have most contributed to establish the supreme authority of conscience in man, is also the one who has pointed out most clearly the existence of analogous moral difficulties in Nature and Religion, and the true answer to both,—the admission that God's government, natural as well as spiritual, is a scheme imperfectly comprehended." This is actually the only recognition we find of a fact which Butler esteemed so profoundly important to practical morality. A very strange one certainly! How astonished Butler would have been to hear that his writings 'established the authority of that conscience in man' which he affirmed had been established there by the Creator and Lawgiver of the Universe,—which he said that each man was obliged by the very constitution of his nature to confess. And this is no slip of the pen, no carelessness of language which it would be unworthy to notice even in a careful writer and a professed logician. It is in strict harmony with all Mr. Mansel's teaching. The Conscience is something which we are told about in a book: we are to admit there is such a power, because a great philosopher found it indispensable for his system. How little it is suffered practically to exert itself, the whole course of Lectures bears witness. Mr. Mansel refers with triumph to an exposure which Mr. Rogers has made of the contradictions of the Moral Sense when it tries to utter its voice in protest against anything which seems to it immoral; no writers command so much of his admiration as those who disparage its testimonies, and prove its conclusions to be worthless. I may indeed be told that this incapacity of distinguishing right and wrong refers only to representations of the Divine nature. When I am called to settle what it is unjust, dishonest, treacherous for me to do, it may start into full vigour. At least the distinction should have been illustrated and explained in a treatise which professedly exalts

action above speculation. It should have been shown how this faculty acquires a sudden clearness just at the very moment when all motives and inclinations are most likely to bewilder it; how that which cannot be trusted to give an honest verdict at other times, will do its work effectually, and assert its supremacy just when some hungering lust or great argument of covetousness is assailing us. It may be so, doubtless, but a little effort might have been spared to explain a perplexity which may strike others than Rationalists and Mystics as a very serious one.

I cannot help thinking that we have here decided evidence in support of a remark which I ventured to make when I was speaking to you of Butler before, that his great fame will not be maintained by those who servilely copy his opinions or adopt his nomenclature; that to vindicate it for our time,—to preserve the principles which he asserted from becoming dead letters,—we must be content to acknowledge some facts which the conditions of his age did not permit him to acknowledge. I have for many years felt this strongly about his doctrine of the Conscience; I never felt it so strongly as since I have read Mr. Mansel. Evidently those grand phrases which I am sure have done good, which when translated into life and action are of immense worth, about the supremacy of the conscience, are in infinite peril. They are exposed to the deadliest wounds in the house of his friends. And those who wish to defend him most are obliged to ask how they may do it without overlooking other facts which also have made themselves clear. What has been said and felt and suffered by those who have found that in themselves, that is, in their flesh, dwelleth no good thing, has worked more than all the logic and ridicule of Mr. Rogers and Mr. Mansel—though these may contribute their quota —to make men distrust that testimony to which Butler attached such worth. The difficulty must have a solution; talk about the finite and infinite is no solution at all. To me the solution has come through that very experience of evil which has led many to cast aside the idea of a Conscience, or to rob it of all its significance. The protest against that evil, whence does it proceed? It is in me, yet I cannot call it mine.

Must I try? Must I adopt Butler's phraseology, if the word Conscience itself, if the lessons of Scripture, will help me to a better, and so will save his practical principle from the contempt of his own professed disciples? Does not what was said of Consciousness apply with deepest emphasis to Conscience? Is not that the witness—not of some part of the man, but of the man himself—to a Word nigh him, even at his heart; to a divine Teacher from whose sentence he cannot fly; who judges him, whose judgment he owns, even when he is resisting it most, to be according to truth?

It is the entire failure to recognize the presence of such a teacher as this within man, which renders Mr. Mansel's moral teachings at once so unscriptural and so unpractical. Because he differs from St. Paul and St. John, he must deal unfairly with the witness in our hearts; he must set at nought the lessons even of his own chosen master. For the same reason he is obliged to treat the doctrine of a Universal human Consciousness with mere contempt. The fact of such a Consciousness is forced upon us not by the dogmas of philosophers, but by the commonest observation of life. It works itself into our very dialect. Orators talk of appealing to the great common human heart. They may practise great cheats in the use of such phrases, but the cheats would be impossible if there were not a truth at the bottom of them. Pascal says that it is as dangerous to think basely of ourselves as to think highly of ourselves. Butler commands us to reverence Human Nature when we are most aware of our own evils. How can these sayings be good for anything if there is not some standard which men do confusedly recognize, which we should strive that they may recognize not confusedly but clearly and fully? How is it but because an individual selfishness—that which severs us from communion with our kind—is the great sin of the world? How is it but because Christ, who took away the sin of the world, is the bond between every man and his fellow, as well as the perfect manifestation of the Eternal and Absolute Goodness. Oh, may God make us ready to fight even to the death against the mere Public Opinion of an age which crushes the

freedom of thought, which erects itself into the Judgment of God! But may He teach us to fight against it, not on behalf of some private opinion of ours, but on behalf of that great human standard which He sets before us, which justifies whatever is strong and vital in all our partial judgments, which confounds whatever in them is unsocial and dividing!

Faithfully yours,

LETTER XI. EVIDENCES OF THE BIBLE

Eighth Lecture.—Contents and Evidences of the Bible.—Paley.—Unfairness of Our Mode of Dealing with Evidence.—How the Bible Has Suffered from It.—What Evidences Have Wrought Convictions in Our Time.—Political, Theological, Philosophical Difficulties, How Met by the Bible.—Mr. Mansel's Treatment of It.—Why He Must Be out of Sympathy with It.—Conclusion.

My dear Sir,

Thus far Mr. Mansel has taught us these lessons: That it is not right to be Dogmatists or Rationalists, or Mystics. That it is not possible to know anything about the Absolute and the Infinite. That it is not possible to rise above our own Consciousnesses and Conceptions. That it is not right to pray as the eclectical philosopher Schleiermacher prayed. That it is not right to think about the union of the Divine and human natures as Hegel or Marheinecke thought about it. That it is not in any department good to seek for principles satisfying to the Reason. That it is not possible for us to know that which is. That Philosophy does not teach us, any more than Religion, about the Many or the One. That we are not to esteem one Representation of the union of the Finite with the Infinite above another, except because it is revealed, since one is as impossible for us to conceive of as another. That we are not to know anything of an Absolute Morality. That there is not a general human Consciousness. That Forgiveness in man is not the image of God's forgiveness. That we are not to hope for the final extinction of Evil. Thus far we have advanced at present. The Regulative Morality and the Regulative Revelation have brought us to this point. What remains must be contained in the Lecture we are

now entering upon. If there is anything positive in the course, it will be there.

Mr. Mansel is fully aware that as yet he has established nothing. He admits that his demonstrations, however conclusive, are only preliminary. Preliminary to what? To a study of the 'contents' of the Scripture? By no means. To a study of the evidences in favour of their authenticity and inspiration. When we have finished Mr. Mansel, we are in a condition to enter upon the study of Paley. The object of this final Lecture is therefore to complain of the indifference which is shown in our days to external evidences—to show within what very narrow limits any argument grounded upon internal evidence must be confined; to give a summary of those points of evidence with which we are most familiar; to guard us against the danger of attaching any weight to plausible reasoning on the other side after we have once admitted that the probabilities on our own predominate; to warn us that the Scriptures must be taken altogether or rejected altogether; to propound a theory respecting *Moral Miracles*, which disposes of all objections to particular acts as not being in accordance with the moral character of God; to repeat what has been said before respecting the impossibility of our arriving at any conclusion about what is or is not in accordance with His character; to moderate the reasonings of some theologians of Mr. Mansel's own school, who, he thinks, have too hastily affirmed that there is *no* relation between human qualities and divine; to deepen by these very cautions the sense of our incapacity to pronounce anything certain concerning the relation; finally, to urge the duty of our cultivating self-knowledge, as we can have no other knowledge.

I. I do not feel the temptation which Mr. Mansel deems is characteristic of our age, to undervalue Paley for being too historical. The more I meet those whose passion is for logical formulas and intellectual abstractions, the more I reverence that quality of his mind. It was connected with the transparency of his style, and with that simplicity of character which co-existed with a northern shrewdness, with a

utilitarian creed, and with notions about moral honesty which would have disturbed it if it had not been part of himself. His love of evidence was cultivated in him, as it is in all Englishmen, by our institutions, especially by our jury system. It was not in the spirit of an advocate chiefly that he desired to make use of his skill in weighing the worth of testimony. He shared the feeling which now and then induces a young nobleman to throw aside his conventional dignity that he may wrestle or box with a mechanic, perhaps with a professional prize-fighter. It seemed to him that it was scarcely fair play to meet the objector to Christianity, or even to Theism, with a weight of traditional opinion, with the prescription of centuries on our side. He would do his best to cast off these advantages. He had confidence that his case could dispense with them. There was an apparent justice and manliness in this course which his countrymen, in whose habits of mind he so largely partook, were able to appreciate. The feeling that it was a homage to truth not to profit by assumptions, worked powerfully, if somewhat confusedly, in those who read the 'Natural Theology,' the 'Evidences of Christianity,' or the 'Horæ Paulinæ.' With respect to the first, even those who, like me, yield to the opinion of Kant and Mr. Mansel, that he has not proved anything, may yet be most thankful to him for having given them reasons for adoration which their coldness wants, the *proof* being sought and found elsewhere; may rejoice that any corrections which later discoveries have made in his science will not diminish but increase these reasons, however fatal they might be if we supposed we could not confess the Author of Nature till we understood His works. Again, the books which turn upon the authority of documents, will always suggest a number of thoughts even to those who read the books themselves, and find in them lessons which they prize more, and which carry more conviction to their minds than the most subtle observation of coincidences ever did or could impart.

II. Why then are Englishmen of this day, as Mr. Mansel complains, more indifferent to these evidences, even as they are presented by this able writer, than their fathers were? One very strong reason appears to

me to be this, that the quality which recommended them to Paley and to men of his character, has been found signally wanting in them. The objector has not a clear stage for fighting his battle on. It has proved altogether an illusion that in managing these evidences no favour is shown to one side. I must speak what I have seen and know,—in some degree, what I have felt. Young men at College are *taught* these evidences; they learn them by heart, and must be able to produce them. They are reminded while they learn that a certain conclusion is to be reached; they are told that it is exceedingly perilous if they arrive at any other than that. The statement of Butler, which has been dwelt upon till it has almost extinguished in some minds every other passage in his writings, till it has made three parts of them out of four unmeaning, —that in a question of safety a very low amount of probability ought to satisfy us, is thrown in to make up for any deficiencies in Paley's reasoning; it is accompanied in many cases with serious warnings against rash meddling with adverse arguments. Now whatever may be the justification for such suggestions, they are utterly incompatible with that profession of putting ourselves on the level of opponents with which we started. A young man soon becomes keenly, bitterly, sensible of this contradiction. He says when he goes out into the world, 'The Christian evidences with which I was supplied at college do not answer in the very least degree to the idea of evidence which prevails in the law courts, or which I find recognized by men of science. The maxim *Audi alteram partem* is not one upon which I was encouraged to act; I was warned against it. Why, then, was I deceived by a promise to the ear which was belied in fact? Why was I not told the thing that I was to receive, as people are told it in other countries? Why did they give me sham arguments which I was to swallow under that name, instead of merely thrusting the conclusions down my throat simply and frankly? Was this what Paley meant?' The amount of infidelity among young laymen of the upper and middle class which proceeds from this discovery is, I believe, incalculable.

And how is it with the Clergy? We hear that the conflict which Paley provoked,—which he had courage to believe would turn out for the honour of the Bible,—has been carried on fiercely in another country. We hear that documents, the genuineness and authenticity of which we thought were proved by our evidence, have been assailed. We have not, most of us, leisure to inquire how they have been attacked, or how they have been defended; perhaps we know that the gifts,—very peculiar gifts,—which fit men for this special work, have not been bestowed upon us, that there is other work we can do better. And yet there is an uneasy feeling, which our education—I mean our recent education—has fostered, that our whole faith depends on the settlement of these points; that if any one of them should be determined the wrong way, we should have nothing left us to stand upon. Therefore we practically come to the conclusion, that they must not and shall not be determined the wrong way. In other words, we take Paley's evidences for granted as if they were divine. Nothing must be permitted to shake their authority in our minds. Yet we know all the while that they are not divine, that they are mere ordinary, clever, human arguments, any one of which is liable to be sifted, has a right to be sifted, and may turn out to be worthless. Of course we have all heard a thousand times what Mr. Mansel tells us for the thousand and first, that if there is the least balance of probabilities in favour of a conclusion, that conclusion must be received, however many there may be on the other side. But are we prepared to rest all on which we lean for life and death, all which we tell others is necessary for them, on the cast of a die? Whatever logicians may say, every practical man feels that he does not, and that he cannot. If this is the ground of our faith, it must fall. And therefore, to give it a ground, we throw in the consideration that it is safer to hold some opinion than not to hold it. We all know how that argument works; we all know whither it leads. 'The safety of an infallible Church, oh, will you not seek that, poor youth, tossed by a thousand arguments about this document and that! Consider the repose of receiving whatever you are told to receive!

You can find out nothing that *is*. Oh, take these probable *seemings* to save your soul!' How many clergymen and laymen have listened to the voice of this Siren! If all have not listened to it, we have not our books of evidence to thank for stopping our ears to it.

III. But the book to which those evidences refer—that book, so far as we have opened it, so far as we have cared for the contents of it more than for proofs about it, so far as we have thought of it as our fathers thought of it, that *has* been a protection, for that has testified to us of One who is, of One from whom men fled in the old times to gods on hill altars and in dark groves for the safety of their souls, of One who delivered them from the miserable darkness and captivity into which they came when they forgot Him who was not far from any of them—the Infinite and Eternal, the Father of their spirits—and tried to make Him anew out of their conceptions of the finite and the temporal. It testifies of a God of Righteousness and Truth, ruling in the armies of Heaven, and among the inhabitants of earth. It testifies of the way in which that Being has discovered Himself through the actual doings and sufferings of nations, through the doubts and struggles of individual hearts, through the discomfiture and overthrow of those who were appointed to be the witnesses for Him, but who refused to own Him when He came near to them and showed Himself forth in a living and suffering man. Therefore did our fathers find in the Bible a refuge from dark superstitions and moral evils; therefore did they regard it as the pillar of their national and daily life; therefore did they call it the word of God. The Bible pointed them to a ground of Certainty, not of Probability, beneath them, beneath itself. Its power rested on no arguments about the origin of documents. It proved itself in another way,—by the facts of life, by sore and blessed experiences. They could trust these proofs. They could trust God to show forth His mind and purpose, which they believed to be unchangeable, in their day as in other days, through common events, through the righteous or the foul doings of men, through mighty deliverances and mighty

judgments. They felt that they understood the Bible very imperfectly, but it helped them to understand all that was passing around them.

IV. In the last century, during the lull that preceded the tempest which closed it, the Bible was not thought of much as an interpreter of *political* events. At one time it had almost ceased to be regarded as an interpreter of the problems of *personal* life. As it was smiled at by men of wit and fashion in London, rejected in the salons of Paris, the divines supposed that their function was to extol its beauties or to allege signs of its inspiration. But there were men at that time also who said, 'The Bible has shown itself to us to be the Word of God by other than this evidence. It has come to us with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power. It has changed the purpose of our lives. It has enabled us to become witnesses to others of that which we have found to be true ourselves. We cannot convince people as we have been convinced, but God can. His Word will not return to Him void. It will accomplish that for which He has sent it.' This brave and manly language, or rather the deep conviction which it expressed, kindled a feeling respecting the Bible which all the arguments about authenticity and inspiration in the world could not kindle. It prepared our people for the shock that was to try the nations of what sort they were, whether they had anything better than their own opinions and decrees and the traditions of the past to rest upon; whether they believed in anything, or only believed that there was something in which it was exceedingly desirable, for various interests here or hereafter, that they should believe.

V. It is owing to such men as these that what is called internal evidence has, to Mr. Mansel's great sorrow, so much displaced what he calls external or historical evidence. There was no intention on the part of these believers in the Bible to set up one against the other. They were merely testifying of what they had seen and known; they were exalting the contents of the Book above talk and arguments about the Book. In his able summary of Christian evidences (p. 248), Mr. Mansel speaks of the "inability of human means to bring about the results which Christianity actually accomplished; its antagonism

to the current ideas of the age and country of its origin; its effects as a system on the moral and social condition of subsequent generations of mankind; its fitness to satisfy the wants and console the sufferings of human nature." Well, the men of the last century, to whom I have alluded, believed all this about the primitive time, but they believed it also about their own. They found human means quite unable to bring about the results which the Gospel actually accomplished in them. They found, that when they tried to act upon its principles they were in antagonism to ideas that were current in their age and country, and that were even strong in themselves. They felt that if it had produced moral and social effects upon other generations,—for instance, in breaking the chains of slaves,—it was capable of producing the same in their own. And they deemed it very unnecessary to *prove* its fitness for satisfying the wants and consoling the sufferings of human nature, because they could actually offer it to satisfy those wants and console those sufferings which were as real, and were to all intents and purposes the same, in their time as in the time of the Apostles. Arguments about these things become very important when the things themselves are dead; as long as they are alive, the things take the place of the arguments.

VI. In reference to the strife about documents, the battle of books, in Germany and elsewhere, Mr. Mansel knows much better than I do how these feelings about the internal worth of the truths contained in the Scriptures have operated. He must be conscious, I think, of some unfairness in his way of representing to his English readers the sentiments of those whom he calls Naturalists, or Neologians, or Rationalists. He has not concealed the fact of their being very different from one another; but he has endeavoured to make capital out of their differences, by showing that they could not agree because they had departed from our quiet and uniform standard. Would it not have been fairer to confess, that the mere Naturalists, who looked at the doctrines and events of Scripture as altogether external to themselves, had been driven from a number of their strongest holds by men who had felt

that all true criticism demanded an examination of the meaning and purport of the books and of their relation to human beings, as well as of their origin and outward structure? Might it not have been right to remind us that *we* stimulated that eager inquiry into the origin of the books, that we in some sort were the authors of their Naturalism, and that a spiritual conviction, of which our writers upon Evidences had taken little account, restored much of that affection for the Bible to the German mind which characterized it at the time of the Reformation? The statement of these facts might have been inconvenient for the purposes of Mr. Mansel's argument; it might have been humbling to our vanity. But would it not have been a consolation to some perplexed thinkers to have tokens that God can take better care of His Revelation than we can, and that the criticism which we might have desired to stifle, may, after all, have done more to bring the actual power of the Bible to light than our apologies for it?

VII. I am, however, convinced that there was a weakness in the English asserters of internal evidence, as well as in the Germans who applied that same evidence to documentary criticism. I would adopt Mr. Mansel's phrase, though in a somewhat different sense, and say they were too indifferent to the historical evidence for the Bible,—to the external proofs, that we must resort to other than human means for explaining its wonderful power of "satisfying the wants of human nature, and consoling its sufferings." There has been a very loud cry, ever since the commencement of the French Revolution, for Principles of Political Justice and Order. There must be a Right, it has been said, beneath our laws and conventions. It cannot be measured by the habits and prejudices of particular races or nations. It ought to explain how those habits and prejudices have arisen. This demand was at first eminently unhistorical. It trampled upon history. It tried to find maxims of pure reason on which all society should be constructed and rebuilt. But it has given birth to a painstaking and earnest study of history; a sense of its importance, and of its superiority to all abstract conclusions, such as I believe existed in no former day, prevails among

us. The danger is that this historical spirit having become so lively in its apprehension of the tendencies of ages and races, should almost lose sight of the influence which first awakened it; that it should too much overlook that deep craving in men for that which is not limited by special circumstances, but belongs to all. If, however, this danger becomes imminent for the *student*, it is met and counteracted by a demand—inarticulate generally—yet often expressing itself distinctly and loudly in that class of society which forms the bulk of every nation; that class to which Paine addressed his 'Rights of Men' and his 'Age of Reason.' This class asks whether we do confess any foundations deeper than those we have laid,—any laws not created for the interest of particular classes,—any to which priests and kings are as much subject as other men?

VIII. These needs of human nature cannot be satisfied,—the sufferings which are associated with them cannot be consoled,—by reference to what Christianity or the Bible did in former days. Are we willing to ask manfully what it can do in these days for meeting the questions which are disturbing all hearts? If we are, I believe numerous portions of the Bible which lay almost in shadow from some of the most earnest of our immediate forefathers, may become an illuminated scroll for us. We shall prize the Old Testament as much as the Puritans, or those who argued against Puritans, prized it. But we shall not dare to use it as they did, for the purpose of proving that God is on our side, and against our opponents;—that we are the Israelites, and they the Moabites or Hagarenes. We shall read in it that a living God is sitting as our judge no less than theirs;—that He has been condemning in all ages the unrighteous and cruel deeds of His servants, has been showing forth in all ages His righteousness in contrast to their evil. We shall not scruple to declare that He has dealt with priests and kings, with Churches and kingdoms, in the modern as He did in the old world, justifying what was right in every pagan or Mohammedan land, condemning what was evil and accursed in every Christian land; no respecter of persons, of sinners or saints. If we have not courage

to do this,—if we go on as we have done, pleading and arguing for our schools and our opinions,—I believe God will confound us in the sight of the people; that every day they will become more atheistical for our defences and apologies; that we shall become in our hearts as atheistical as they. If we enter humbly and in fear on that course, I do not say that we may look for any immediate results. I believe that the immediate result will be an experience of our own feebleness to crush opposition, of our own impatience with it; a discovery, to which others have been led before us, that the word is God's word, and not ours. But see whether, if we work on, He will not confirm that word with signs following, whether He will not justify Himself in the eyes of men if He does not justify us.

IX. And if this is so with the poor and ignorant to whom the Gospel was first preached, I am satisfied that a result no less real and satisfactory may be looked for among the patient and conscientious students of history. It has been a miserable part of our apologetic system to set up Sacred History as a kind of rival to Profane; to treat one as if it concerned God, and the other as if it was merely of the earth. At the same time, there has been a discreditable and faithless eagerness to catch at every witness in favour of a Scripture narrative from a profane author, as if we could not trust it without that confirmation; an eagerness which has led us often to accept doubtful legends in Pagan histories, which, when they were shown to be less probable than other statements of the same transaction, left those who had depended on that evidence in great perplexity. Oh! shall we never do justice to our own convictions? Shall we never try whether Scripture, by interpreting God's dealings with one nation, may not expound His dealings with the other nations? Shall we never consider whether the witness which the Bible bears against the idolatry to which Jews were so prone, does not explain the temptation of every land; the forms under which the temptation has presented itself to one and another; the *necessity* of idolatry, if we deduce the Eternal from the Temporal, the Infinite from the Finite; the protest against idolatry which there

was in the heart of every people under Heaven in the assurance that the Eternal must be the ground of the Temporal, the Infinite of the Finite? Shall we never ask whether the Day of Pentecost is not the explanation of the Constitution of human society, the interpretation of the difference between that Universality which is grounded upon a Spirit of Truth, who binds together and quickens the spirits of men, —and the Universality of Despotism, Imperial, Ecclesiastical, Democratical?—whether therefore the record of that day is not a key to the sins with which Church History abounds, as well as to the possibility that there could be a Church in the midst of them? Here, again, we can expect and desire no sudden conversions of modern historians to an acknowledgment of the Scriptures, which have seemed to so many of them a chain upon all free and manly investigation. Our clumsy efforts to connect the Bible with their studies may only display our imperfect acquaintance with both. If we think we have some wonderful new trick of fence, it will be laughed to scorn, as all such tricks ought to be, by those against whom they are used. But if we suffer the Bible to trample upon our tricks, and to speak its own speech, I am sure it will at last be found to 'satisfy the wants and console the sufferings' of those who have found in history most of those wants and those sufferings.

X. Those who have deduced the divine origin of the Bible from their own personal experience, though far more efficient than the mere reasoners about genuineness and authenticity, have failed, then, as I think, in appreciating the social and historical demands of their time, as well as the social and historical character of the Bible. It would have been much less serious failure if they had not understood the demands of philosophers; for just so far as these demands are special, just so far as they are not connected with what is universal, they may be fairly overlooked by those whose message is not to classes but to men. Oftentimes, however, what appear to be the reasonings of Philosophers point to the most serious 'wants of human nature,' to its most intense 'sufferings.' Such, I believe, is that demand for the knowledge of the Infinite or Eternal which has occupied us in these

Letters. Mr. Mansel has said in his third Lecture (p. 68), that "a belief in the existence of an Absolute and Infinite Being appears forced upon us as the complement of our consciousness of the relative and the finite." This is a very good statement of a logical necessity. The terms on which he dwells so much indicate it; the term Finite is unintelligible without the term Infinite. But translated from the formulas of logic into the forms of life, this search for something to complement the finite and relative is nothing less than the most awful demand in the nature of man; that which has been expressing itself in every age; that which, as I have just said, has been the witness against thinking that the "*Godhead is like to gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art or man's device*;" that which has become strongest and clearest in the great crises of human history; that which in our days, though not for the first time, has given birth to the fearful question, Is this Infinite anything, or everything, or nothing?

XI. If we set this question distinctly before ourselves, if we treat it as the question which God is awakening in all men's hearts, I believe the New Testament will be read with an interest with which it has never been read; that it will be taken more literally than it has ever been taken; that the acts and words of Christ, His miracles, His parables, His death, His resurrection, His ascension, the descent of the Spirit, the preaching and letters of the Apostles, the final unveiling to the Beloved Disciple, will all come forth as parts of the answer to the question—as declarations that the Eternal and the Infinite is not the Nothing which it must be if it is a mere generalization from our conceptions of the Finite and the Temporal, but is that Love which was before the worlds were, which was manifested in due time in the Only-begotten Son, which is the ground of all that is loving and true in the hearts or in the acts of men. I do not say that this discovery can commend itself at once to any human being. It must have deadly battles to fight with that which is opposed to it in us and in every man. The battle, I think, will be such as it has never been in any other generation. No one can dare to say how he may comport himself in

it; no one who knows the depth of selfishness in his own heart can boast that he may not succumb to it; no one who takes any measure of the struggle between good and evil, between light and darkness, or who reflects how often the opinion of the world—the religion of the world—has been ranged against that which he is sure must ultimately triumph, can help trembling lest he should yield to that opinion or resist it through selfwill, not in obedience to the Spirit of Truth. But looking at the question apart from these personal considerations, I cannot doubt that a more reverent and childlike faith in the lessons of the New Testament will result from its being brought side by side with this great inquiry. Nor can I doubt that that peculiarity of the Bible which we have all noticed,—that it is written in the language of the senses, and with such an absence of logical formulas as is to be found in no other book,—will explain itself by this comparison. Beginning from the Eternal, and descending to the Temporal, proceeding from the Infinite to the Finite, the forms of logic, which are abstractions from the Finite and the Temporal, have no place in it. The realities which are behind the veil express themselves through the forms of sense, because that is the order and principle of God's universe. The logical difficulty vanishes in its own nothingness. The real difficulty is felt more and more as we feel what we are in the sight of the Holy One who inhabiteth eternity. It disappears only in the awfulness of trust and adoration, only in the belief of an eternal Daysman between the creature and the Creator, who has borne our weakness and carried our sorrows, who dwells at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

XII. But if this question is ignored, if it is treated as insoluble, if there is a perpetual balance and equivocation between the real problem and the nominal one, then I am satisfied that the Old Testament and the New, as far as their contents are concerned, as far as any evidence is concerned which is involved in those contents, must be equally cast aside or explained away. It is one object of Mr. Mansel in this last Lecture, to show that we must either accept the whole Bible or reject the whole. I do not know that I have shown much desire to

reject any part of it in these Sermons or Letters; nevertheless I cannot pretend that I attach much worth to this kind of language. It sounds very well in the ears of the religious world; it has been quoted largely in the religious journals. But does it indicate faith that the Bible is God's word? Does it not look rather as if we thought that it was our word? If the Bible speaks truly, if the experience of godly men in all ages speaks truly, He has guided them very gently and gradually, giving line on line, precept on precept, often through dark roads, to the goal which He meant them to reach. It looks rather as if we were taking the matter into our hands, as if we were assuming to be the guides of the spirits of men, guides most ignorant of what these spirits are and what voices they obey, when we cry, 'Now, you rebels! we have given you arguments such as ought to convince you. Take all, or reject all.' As long as I believe the Bible, I shall hate that mode of speaking, however orthodox and popular it may sound; I shall regard it as the proper dialect of inquisitors, which is quite out of date when there are no swords to maintain it with. The utterer of it is complimented on his faith. It turns the hearer into an infidel.

XIII. But when I am told that I must take all or nothing, I am obliged to inquire whether the all is not a very near approximation to nothing? I have read carefully through these Lectures; I have marked every instance in which Mr. Mansel has quoted a text; I have considered especially those which he has prefixed to his discourses; I must say I never saw Scripture treated with so little reverence, its words so recklessly employed, merely to point a sentence or confound an opponent, without the least reference to the occasion on which they were spoken, or to the meaning which they must bear in the Sacred Volume. I know that the habit of using mottoes to sermons has prevailed greatly;—I hoped it was beginning to be discarded; I hoped that in Oxford, whence we clergy are to derive our models of preaching, it would have been banished altogether. But Mr. Mansel has improved upon the old practice: he has given his mottoes all their sting, by emptying them of *all* their original signification.

The first is taken from that magnificent chapter in the Book of Deuteronomy, in which Moses begins to set forth the privileges of his people, in that the Living God had come so near to them, in that He had spoken to them out of the midst of the fire, in that He had given them ordinances which would make them a wise and understanding people in the sight of the nations, if they remembered Him; the unseen God, and did not bow down to the likeness of any created thing, "*Ye shall not add*," *he says*, "*to the word which I command you; neither shall ye diminish aught from it*." The word that proceeded out of the mouth of God is a religious system. Dogmatists add to it; Rationalists take from it. Conceive such an application of the language of any legislator, whose sentences were *not* written in the Bible: who would not call it monstrous?

The third Lecture is introduced by another passage from the Pentateuch. It is that in which Moses is told that "*He cannot see the face of God, for no man shall see Him and live*." If Mr. Mansel had acknowledged any connection between the Old and New Testament, would not this passage have led him to that in the third chapter of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, in which St. Paul contrasts the Old Dispensation with the New in this very respect, winding up with the memorable words, "*And we all with open face beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory*"?

The fourth and the seventh Lectures also open with sentences from the Old Testament. The first is that from the sixty-fifth Psalm: "*O Thou that hearest prayer, to Thee shall all flesh come*." It is quoted in the course of the Sermon (p. 128), apparently to support the proposition "that it is not as the Infinite that God reveals Himself in His Moral Government, nor as the Infinite that He promises to answer prayer." The second is the memorable passage from the tenth of Ezekiel: "*Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. Hear ye now, O house of Israel, Is not my way equal? Are not your ways unequal*?" I need not tell you to read the chapter. I need not tell you that this verse is connected with the whole argument of it. That argument, you know, is one which God holds with His people,

through the prophet, to convince them that His course of government is just; He explains it to them. The prophet assumes them to have a standard by which they could judge of God's dealings with them. The object of the preacher is to show that as finite human beings they could have none.

Mr. Mansel's treatment of the New Testament is of the same kind; only in some cases there is a curious felicity in the quotation which one might almost call judicial. For instance, the second Lecture, in which there are more logical subtleties than were ever gathered into a sermon before,—for the purpose of proving that there can be no knowledge of the Infinite Being by a finite being,—opens with that address to young Timothy, the force of which some of the congregation may perhaps have felt. "*Keep that which is committed to thee, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science, falsely so called; which some professing have erred concerning the faith*." The persons aimed at are Rationalists and Mystics.

The fifth is taken from 1 Cor. i. 21-24. That text declares that the Apostle preaches "*Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness, but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ*, the Wisdom of God and the Power of God." The Lecturer undertakes to show that "in Religion God has given us truths… which do not tell us what God is in His absolute Nature, but how He wills that we should think of Him in our present finite state." Surely a most valuable correction and mitigation of the Apostle's broad statement of the truth which he declared to men!

The sixth is taken from that passage, in the same Epistle, to which I have referred more than once: "*For what man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of a man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God*." The verse which immediately follows that text is this: "*Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given us of God*." And the 16th verse is this: "*For who hath known the mind of the Lord that he might*

instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ." The object of the sermon is, of course, to show that we cannot know the mind of God.

The Lecture before us is headed by a verse from the fifth chapter of St. John. It is this: "*The works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me*." One of the sermons I have sent you is on a text closely resembling this, from the tenth chapter of the same Evangelist. It is on the subject of Miracles. I have endeavoured to show you how our Lord's works did each of them bear witness by its character of the Father who had sent Him.[26] I will not repeat what I have said, but I will apply it to a very remarkable passage, in this Lecture, on *Moral Miracles*. I could scarcely find a more complete illustration of the way in which an apologist may overthrow the principles of the book for which he is pleading, whilst he is demolishing the objections to it.

XIV. Many acts recorded in Scripture, especially in the Old Testament, have, you well know, been objected to as inconsistent with the moral character of God. The wars with the Canaanites are the most obvious example. These wars are clearly represented in Scripture as part of the conflict of a Righteous God with an unrighteous, filthy, and cruel people. They are set forth as acts of the God of Order in punishing disorder. Some may feel, as I do, that they were so, and may find in them a key to later events in the history and government of the world. Some may be quite unable to take this view of the case; then their true course is, at all events, not to pretend that they think what they do not think. If they follow the example of the prophets, they will ask God to interpret His own ways to them; I, for my part, believe that they will not ask in vain. But what is Mr. Mansel's method of solving the difficulty? He assumes that these wars were not what Joshua manifestly assumes them to be, part of God's Order, but exceptions, or departures from that Order; not illustrations of His righteous dealings

[26]It gives me great pleasure to find that so eminent a Biblical scholar as Mr. Westcott, in a course of sermons preached at Cambridge while I was preaching mine, has treated them as Epiphanies. I need not say that I do not hold Mr. Westcott answerable for any of my statements; but this coincidence is peculiarly gratifying.

with men, but *Moral Miracles*. Thus, to save the credit of the Book, he destroys the testimony of the Book on that point; and, if I am not greatly mistaken, its testimony respecting the whole meaning and purpose of God's works, as they were manifested by Him who "*did the works which His Father gave Him to finish*."

XV. This, it seems, is the modern method of coming to inquire of the oracles of God; by this process they become a light to our feet, a lamp to our path! Accept the book as a whole, and then treat all the portions of it just as you like. Confess all its words to be words of the Lord, and then you may yourself be lords over them, and may perform moral miracles by turning the bread of life into stones for casting at your enemies! Far indeed am I from charging Mr. Mansel either with intending this irreverence, or with setting the first example of it. No disease is so prevalent in our times; there is no one of us who is not liable to the infection; none, who has not often caught it, and done something to spread it. That is my reason for entering upon this examination. If Mr. Mansel's were a new scheme for confuting infidels, or establishing a religious philosophy, one might trust our English Conservatism, or, I am afraid, our indifference, to extinguish it. But he appeals to our Conservatism; he enters into an alliance with our indifference. He promises us peace from foes that we are afraid of. He assures us that we shall be able to repose comfortably in our ancient opinions. The habits and tendencies which he finds prevalent amongst us, he condenses; our floating maxims he reduces into order, flatters our vanity for having entertained them, teaches us to laugh at all as unphilosophical, or to condemn all as irreligious, who do not accept them. He is sure therefore to be popular with us, for he gives us back our own judgments, looking far less incoherent than they commonly look. We have secretly thought that it would be a great relief if we could persuade ourselves that the Eternal lay entirely beyond us; that the doctrines of our creeds may be taken for granted because they treat of matters about which people have disputed to no purpose for centuries; that Morality cannot be brought to any absolute standard,

but is a subject for rules and conventions, such as we can get; that certain services and duties are owing to God, and that certain things are to be believed about Him for the regulation of our lives, but that the truth of these things cannot be ascertained; that truth and falsehood are properties of our conceptions; that we are to admit the evidences of the Bible because it is safer to do so, and not to be anxious about its contents. We have all, I say, held these thoughts; but we have held them uneasily. We have said to ourselves, 'Is this then the faith once delivered to the Saints,—the faith which has overcome the world, and is to overcome it?—the faith which lifts men above themselves, which unites them to God, which makes them partakers of Christ's risen life?' To have all such suspicions quelled; to be assured that we cannot have a faith which raises us above ourselves; to be told that to ascend above our own thoughts is the dream of Rationalists and Mystics; and that to stay on the level of our own thoughts is the duty of all sober Christians,—to have all this set forth to us in logical statements which we do not the least understand, but which we are sure must prove the case,—the old *ignotum pro magnifico* of superstition happily combining with the delight of thinking that we are in possession of the last result of school wisdom;—to have the testimony of a man who knows all about Germans and Philosophy, that we are not only much better, but very much wiser, than those who we were afraid were about to rob us of our treasures—where can we look for comfort if not here?

XVI. My answer is, Certainly not to the Bible, not to the book which Englishmen have cherished and reverenced,—if this is the comfort we want! If we turn to its words, and not to the words which wise people have written about it, or in excuse for it, we shall be robbed of this comfort. We shall be robbed of our notion that we can have rest by suppressing the doubts and oppositions of other men, or the doubts and opposition in ourselves. We shall be taught that truth has never thriven except in conflict;[27] that men have never sought the

[27] I would exhort all clergymen to study a passage on this subject in Mr. Mill's 'Liberty,' pp. 73-78.

true peace till they have rejected the false peace; that those who make the soul a solitude, and call it peace, must part with the peace which passeth understanding and dwells in the knowledge of God. We shall be robbed of the notion that logic can set our minds at rest. It is of great value. It tells us what we are when we are shut up in ourselves, in our own conceptions; how we abstract and form notions from names; how they are to be distinguished from the things which they set forth; how impossible it is for them to exhibit a single living process. For every process of bodily life—seeing, smelling, tasting, handling, walking, breathing—is an act of rising out of ourselves. Not to do that is to die. The Bible consistently and harmoniously shows us that every process of life in the man himself, every movement of thought, feeling, affection—is, in like manner, a rising above ourselves, an ascent into another region. The Bible tells us of the new man who is created after God in righteousness and true holiness, created for the knowledge of a righteousness and true holiness which are not in himself but in Him. The Bible, in every song and prayer, is inviting us to leave the dungeon-keep of our own low, grovelling thoughts; it affirms that the invitation comes from the Creator of the Universe, the Father of our spirits. That our dull ears will not hear this music, that we are always seeking to gravitate into ourselves, is what the Bible warns us of. It is this accursed sloth we have to shake off, this spiritual death from which we need to be delivered. Believing this, I thought it necessary to ask how far one who urged that confinement within the limits of our own thoughts could face the facts and lessons of the Bible. This Lecture, it seems to me, is altogether decisive on that point. The author defends the Bible; the moment he approaches it, you feel that he is at war with it. He must emasculate it—he must reduce it from a word of God into a collection of opinions—before it has any meaning for him. And so the only moral he can leave us with is that which Pope, educated in Romanism, matured by Bolingbroke, expressed, as perfectly as it can be expressed, in the well-worn couplet,

"Know then thyself, presume not God to scan,
The proper study of mankind is man."

On which text I take this to be the true comment. We can know nothing of ourselves till we look above ourselves. We can see light only in God's light. The knowledge of man is possible, because the knowledge of God is possible.

Very truly yours,

Postscript

It may appear to you and to other readers, that I have not done justice to some passages in Mr. Mansel's volume, wherein he holds out the hope that the knowledge which is impossible for us here, may be attained in a future state. A hint of this kind occurs in the peroration to the fourth Lecture. I give all weight to such remarks; I gladly accept them as proofs that the writer longs for that fruition which the Psalmist longed for. But taken in connection with the rest of his treatise, these passages, I must say, are utterly puzzling to me. If it is involved in the very condition of a finite being, that he should not know the Infinite, such promises must imply that hereafter we shall cease to be finite. If it is treason against the limitations which God has appointed for us, to suppose that we can transcend our own conceptions here, will it cease to be a treason in another world? Is then all that Butler has taught us about the relation between the two worlds, about the analogy between our pursuits and expectations here and that which is to be bestowed upon us when we have passed out of this world, a delusion? Is that which is evil here to be the good there? We have been used to think that all the restless ambitions and longings which we indulge in this imperfect state, will be quelled for ever in a perfect one. Far from it. These ambitions, which it is our duty to check on this side the grave, are to be indulged freely on the other. Mr. Mansel speaks as if it were a difference of *degree*. It *is* a difference of degree when St. Paul tells us that we see through a glass darkly here, and shall see face to

face hereafter. The same object is presented to us in both cases,—is presented with equal truth in both cases; only the eye from the very contemplation is growing stronger,—is becoming more able to take in the vision. But it is a question of *kind*, not of degree, whether by faith we rise above ourselves, or whether to make that attempt is to be guilty of infidelity. Whatever is true upon that question now must be true for ever.