

(Continued from first page.)

and we can scarcely conceive of God altering His original plan it is apparent that He can approach the human intelligence through such agencies of sense as man possesses. He must materialize in some way. This is a much more comprehensive limitation than is generally appreciated. Think what it involves. If, as a man, he was to confront us face to face, how can He communicate ideas? What of language? Even to us it must be apparent that God has vast stores of knowledge to convey ideas of which He could find no words, or no group of words in our best vocabularies, to say nothing of the worst; and even if this difficulty could be overcome by impressions being conveyed to our minds in some other manner, does not the fact remain that the human reason cannot rise above the level of its standards of comparison? Try to explain the Theory of Napier's Logarithms to a child of three. You fail. Why? Is it not because the child's mind possesses no material for the comparing faculty of the brain to work upon, and, therefore, apart from the necessity for training and growth, thought is an impossibility. Not that the required knowledge cannot ultimately be imparted to the child, but that from the very nature of the human mental constitution the process by which it may be done must be gradual, commencing with the crudest perceptions and proceeding therefrom by simple to complex until the desired end is attained. The question then we have to face is, whether God can impart knowledge to us by any other method unless He upsets His design as regards our present system of mental development. If not, then, any revelation must commence with crude perceptions, and each successive lesson will convey the truth but partially, the human conception of it being useful mainly as a basis upon which more enlarged ideas can be founded. More, any formulation of a revelation, however strong may be the personal perception, must be necessarily limited to the capacity of the individual or individuals formulating it, for by its very constitution it cannot express a measure of the truth revealed as the standard of comparison. It is not this, however, that we are to grasp. Is not this exemplified in the fact that the Christian Revelation, so far as it treats of man in relation to his fellows, is still our highest standard; whereas, in dealing with man in his relation to a spiritual life, and to Deity, its dogmatic teachings fail to satisfy present conceptions? In the first instance, the formulators were practically as capable of expressing the truth as we are; in the latter, the knowledge of the day afforded them the only possible method for assimilating ideas, their standard being to us faulty, their teachings unaided, in the light of our advanced knowledge, betray a greater or less degree of crudity. This, by no means, need discredit revelation. It is the only method conceivable to us whereby a commensurate knowledge of the Deity can be obtained. On the contrary, may not a clearer perception of its characteristics aid, not destroy, its usefulness. What voice is raised against the practical effect of the teachings of Christ? Is it not the one unwelcome argument in favor of the Divine character of the revelation? It is only the claim of infallibility for dogmas that is assailed. The dogmas themselves for practical purposes may be as effective as ever, but used as a basis for purely doctrinal teaching, their disabilities ought to be carefully considered. To-day as a thousand years ago we talk of the sun rising and setting and the statement conveys the same practical truth as regards the effect manifested. But if we attempted to base astronomical theories upon it what would be the consequence. So with theological dogmas for practical teaching they convey the truth, but in respect to the relations of Deity to man they are ever becoming more faulty, and if we insist upon their identification with the Divinity of Revelation we must be prepared for the rejection of both. Few care to subject their true religious belief to critical analysis, or it would be realized that this unconscious revolt against dogmatism has gone much farther than is generally appreciated. And what reason is there to dread it. May not the danger be all imaginary. What are we ourselves doing with regard to the teachings of a revelation having the same assigned origin as our own. Take such a passage as that from Judges, which declares Jael to be blessed among women, because she slew with a tent pin the sleeping Sisera, her guest, or any of the countless instances narrated of the manifestations of God's furious anger against the heathen nations, viewed in the light of crude perceptions of the great law of recompense, the conception of the Deity involved in them is so far true and intelligible, but considered with a fuller knowledge of another characteristic of that Deity—Love—dare any minister of the Gospel to-day teach them? Yet in adjusting them to present conditions, we do not consider that such action need impair in any way the usefulness of the older revelation. Then what reason can be advanced why the conceptions of the Christian revelation shall be exempt from the causes which thus operated upon the Mosiac? Would any of Christ's teachings suffer? What of His sermon on the Mount? What of His parables? Why did He ever use natural illustrations to convey His lessons? Why did He formulate no dogmas, if not because He alone had a true perception of the disabilities of creeds of the progressive character of knowledge of the Infinity of Truth. Truth by its very nature is eternal, only that which is imperfect can decay. Let us learn a lesson of confidence from nature. When do we ever observe a failure in any of her operations, and does not the same power control this evolution. Then ought we any more to dread the result. For modes of faith let graceless Zealots fight. His can't be wrong whose life is always right. In faith and hope, the world will disagree; But all mankind's concern is charity.

Any arrogation of truth on our part would be absurd. No age had it, none can have it, but each age and each individual has just as much of it as it or he can absorb. That taken and used, new supplies will ever follow. Let us not imagine that the mysteries of ages will suddenly be unfolded to us. The increase of knowledge is ever gradual. The unknown is infinite. Man can at best know but little, but he can ever know enough for his purposes. Let him use such means as are placed at his disposal, and with the growth of the higher type of life, the perception of it will open to him such knowledge of the Great Intelligence who controls all as will fulfill his needs. And as regards difficulties, Pope, in his Essay on Man, gives better advice than is often heard from the pulpit:—  
Cease, then, nor order imperfection name,  
Our proper bliss depends on what we blame;  
Know thine own point, this kind, this due degree  
Of blindness, weakness, Heaven bestows on thee;  
Submit. In this or any other sphere  
Secure to us as bliss as thou canst bear.  
Safe in the hands of one disposing power,  
Or in the fatal or the mortal hour—  
All actions but art unknown to thee,  
All chance, direction which thou canst not see,  
All discord, harmony not understood,  
All partial evil, universal good,  
And spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,  
One truth is clear, whatever is is right.

Our balance of winter goods at a big discount.—D. A. Bruce.

A Terrible Explosive.

If there is any truth in the statements which have been published as to the results of a series of experiments which the British war-office has been for some time carrying on with a new explosive, the American dynamite with a fish torpedo, and every other offensive weapon which finds a place in the world's navy, have been relegated to the position of the thirty-two pounder cannonade of Nelson's day. This explosive is as powerful as explosive gelatine, and unless fired by an especially prepared detonator, it is as harmless and as inert as so much clay. It can be beaten on an anvil with a steam hammer, thrown on an exploded powder magazine and even on the most intense heat of a forge without exploding, but the disinclination of this terrible explosive to go off in an improper manner does not prevent it from replying to the message of its detonator invariably and with tremendous force. Unless some as yet hidden weakness lurks in this new explosive it can be used in shells with even more safety than ordinary gunpowder, and the result can only be to revolutionize naval architecture once again. The great ironclad battleship of the present time will, when subjected to the fire of shells filled with this substance, very much in the position of the medieval knight after the invention of gunpowder. It was then speedily found that the heaviest armor which a man could wear could be easily penetrated at close quarters by a musket shot, and that the armored man was therefore, in much worse case than the naked man by the extent of his extra burdens. If the result of the use of this new explosive in shells is, as it is expected it will be, to give a six-inch shell a penetrating power greater than now possessed by the greatest shot that can now be fired from a floating gun, and can now be fired from the thickest of existing armor, the day of the armor-clad fighting ship will be past, and the day when naval war, at least, will be impossible will be nearer by another year.

On Economy.

It is a mistake to suppose that economy is a virtue which only the poor need practice. Emerson says, "A created economy is the fuel of magnificence; and therefore, 'great estates are not sinecures if they are kept great.' It has often been a matter of surprise that a keen eye for the smallest details should go along with great power of organization, and great wealth already realized. Howard, the prison reformer was one of the most exact and economical of men, and found the habit of exactitude in details useful in philanthropy as in trade. Samuel Budgett, the Bristol merchant was another instance of the same combination; and it is said that George Moore, the "Napoleon of Watling Street," and later, the magnate of Bow Churchyard, would throw all the clerks in his large establishment into excitement because "his fare of threepence had been charged for which no voucher could be found. George Moore would doubtless have said, in answer to any objections to his apparently impractical procedure in this case that the threepence was of little consequence, but that the principal of the voucher was of infinite consequence; and so far, certainly he was right in insisting on the same painstaking as though it had involved three hundred pounds. "Economy of labor is the essence of all good husbandry," said the Prince Consort, and this implies that no means however trifling, is to be despised. A grain of sand in the oil may stop the machinery. But this is not to be construed as though the best use is not to be made of such things as a man has. He who takes what he has, never wastes; and much may be done by zealous attention to render serviceable as it may be. "A cracked plate," says the proverb, "will last as long as a sound one;" and if we may, without irreverence, take a quotation from Scripture, we may say that in gathering up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost, we are not only acting as economists, but in obedience to the highest law of the spiritual world.

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