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I. THE LOLLARDS.

IN the Middle Ages there were developed two opposite views of the sphere and mission of the church. One was that of Hildebrand and his school, who began with the claim that the church should be independent of the secular power, and ended with the demand that all civil rulers should recognize the successor of St. Peter as their suzerain. The natural outcome of this theory was that the administration of civil governments should be largely in the hands of ecclesiastics, that the hierarchy should be enriched at the expense of the state, and that the whole body of the clergy should be practically divorced from their spiritual functions.

The other view found advocates in William of Ockham and Marsilius of Padua, who held that the sphere of the church was purely spiritual. Not only was the state independent of the church, but the pope, with all ecclesiastics, was of right, in all secular concerns, subject to the civil ruler.

Of this latter view John Wyclif became the champion in England. It was as a member of the Parliament of 1366, which repudiated the papal claim for tribute that King John had engaged to pay, that we first hear of Wyclif's opposition to the pretensions of Rome. From that time forth he was busy refuting her claims, and, by the use of all the means in his power, helping on the efforts, then making under the lead of John of Gaunt, to exclude the dignitaries of the church from secular offices and confine them to their legitimate work.

II. THE MAJESTY OF LAW.

BUT what is law? Passing by definitions that are merely technical, it is in the last analysis the authoritative expression of a personal will. The terms are carefully chosen; for there are wills to be resisted, because incapable of enforcement by any recognized authority and tending to the disintegration of society. The will to be obeyed carries with it a sanction through which it is bound upon the conscience, and this makes it law. But it is idle to speak of a will apart from a personal being in whom it resides. If there be a law, there must be a law-giver standing behind it conscious alike of purpose and of power. We might as well cut off the stream from the fountain whence it issues, as sever the connection between the law and the personal will of which it is only the expression.

It would be a truism to affirm this, did we not have just here a notable instance of that "fatal imposture of words" by which the counterfeit is smuggled into the place of the true. In the fondness with which we recognize the reign of law, we are tempted to think and speak of it as though itself were the king, instead of being the mere edict of a king. We exaggerate it into a living entity with personal attributes, and originating within itself the force which it is simply empowered to define and regulate. It is an illusion of our own rhetoric, when we forget it is only a personification to say that the law does this or that. Nay, the very title of this article imposes the same deception, since it is only by a metaphor we transfer the majesty of the sovereign to the instrument by which he rules. However universal, then, the law may be in its presence, however constant in its influence, however uniform in its operation, however supreme in its obligation, it must emanate from a source higher than itself. The intelligence with which it is framed for a given end, and the authority by which it is enforced, are properties of an agent, however hidden from our sight, to whose counsel and power they may be referred. Take

up at random any book which touches this matter, and we will see the impossibility of avoiding the terms which imply this necessary connection. Horne Tooke, for example, deduces the word "law" from a root in the Anglo-Saxon which means "laid down," as the rule of conduct. Richard Hooker, in his "Ecclesiastical Polity," amplifies the definition of law thus: "That which doth assign unto each thing the kind, that which doth moderate the force and power, that which doth appoint the form and measure of working, the same we term law." In both cases, the language distinguishes between the rule and the authority which lays it down; between "the form and measure of working" and the power which appoints the same. Decisions still more ancient may be cited from the treatise of Cicero, "de Legibus." In the first Book, Section 6, he defines thus: "*Lex est ratio summa, insita in natura, quae jubet ea quae facienda sunt, prohibetque contraria. Eadem ratio cum est in hominis mente confirmata et confecta, lex est.*" Here, then, is law on the broadest scale, both as it is physical and instinctive, and as it is intellectual and moral. In either case, its commanding power is due to a superior intelligence by which it is enjoined. Even more precisely, in the third Book of the same treatise, Cicero connects the law with the authority which proclaims it: "*Vereque dici potest, magistratum legem esse loquentem, legem autem mutum magistratum.*" The law is nothing apart from the magistrate, nor the magistrate apart from the law, the two being distinguished in their very coördination. If this elaboration be deemed unnecessary, let it be accepted as a protest against the tendency of modern scientific thought, at least in the more extravagant of its schools, to invest the laws of nature with an undue supremacy above the Being by whom they were ordained.

On the contrary, the law finds the height of its grandeur in this fundamental conception of it, as the expression of a personal will. For as law rises above law in constant gradation, we must ascend from lower to higher until we arrive at the will which is the supreme source of all authority. We rise, for example, from municipal law, resting upon the will of a corporation, to statutory law, resting upon the legislation of a commonwealth; and from this to constitutional law, resting upon the sovereignty of the peo-

ple in the exercise of an original right to ordain their own system of government. But when this supreme human authority has been reached, law has not yet discovered the source from which it springs. No human government would be possible, unless man had been antecedently in subjection under the Divine. The truth cannot be too firmly pronounced that obedience, in every form and degree, grounds in the religious nature of man. The very terms by which man is defined as a responsible agent show him to have been created a subject under law. The sphere of his activity is described in the very faculties with which he is endowed, becoming a law to him, mapping out the relations he must sustain and the duties which are their natural outgrowth. This statement calls for no expansion. There is, for example, the faculty of will upon which the autonomy of man's being depends; it is only the will of a creature at best, which must bow in submission to the will which is supreme. And there is conscience, which has no place among the powers of the soul and is but a solemn impertinence, except as it is the organ of law and the interpreter of duty. Here, then, in the very frame of his being, we find man organized for obedience to authority under a jurisdiction from which there is no escape. It is this antecedent recognition of the Divine supremacy which renders him capable of control, and without whose aid no earthly government would be able to bridle his passions or to subdue his haughty independence. We thus mount through human legislation to the stepping-stones of the eternal throne, and find the shadow of its authority resting as the sanction of law, under all the forms in which it is administered upon earth.

Let us pause before the splendor of this generalization. We found behind every law a personal will of which it is the authoritative expression. We have ascended from one legal height to another, until the last induction yielded the supreme law from which all the rest were seen to flow. This, in turn, revealed the will of a Being uncaused and underived, whose necessary existence and creative power our philosophy itself must postulate in order to account for all else that exists. It is not only a will solitary in its grandeur, but glorious in the supreme wisdom which directs it, in the sublime goodness which impels it, and in the infinite power

which executes it. "God is light," and from the bosom of its whiteness rises the majestic form of the law, crowned with the splendor of His own glory. Here we are at the topmost reach of human thought, where reason kindles her torch at the light which is eternal, and bows with adoring rapture in the presence of the Divine.

2. The grandeur of law is further seen in its universal prevalence, over kingdoms the most diverse and with adaptations endlessly various. We have signalized as yet only moral law, addressed to intelligence and to which conscience responds. But there is law in the domain of matter as well as of mind, law which operates over blind and unconscious force. The immense scope and absolute supremacy of law within this sphere can only be appreciated through the magnificent and recent disclosures of physical science; whose province it is to observe the uniform procedures of nature, to register the laws and to describe the forces by which these are conducted. There is the law which floats the atom in the sunbeam, and the law which balances the planets in their orbits. There is the law which mysteriously builds the crystal into rhomboid, cube or prism, and the law which deposits the layers of solid rock beneath the crust of the earth. There is the law which forms the pearl of dew upon the rose of summer, and the law which rolls up the mighty tides from the heart of the sea.

"That very law which moulds a tear,
And bids it trickle from its source;
That law preserves the earth a sphere,
And guides the planets in their course."

It is idle to press the enumeration, for where can we turn in the world of nature, without being confronted with the presence of imperial law? But there are laws as well in the intellectual and moral sphere: laws of mind by which we trace the birth of every thought and the secret spring of every emotion. There are laws of memory, laws of conscience, laws of the will, laws of society, laws of commerce, laws for the production and distribution of wealth, laws of diplomacy, laws of national greatness and decay, laws of war and laws of peace, laws of honor, laws of friendship and of love. But where shall the breathless catalogue end? Not

until with reason's loftiest flight we take refuge beneath the will of the Infinite Supreme, whose all-embracing law is diffused through the universe as the air through space.

It is not only this diffusion, but the enfolding of law within law, which fills the mind with astonishment. We find ourselves involved in a system where all individual laws are the single threads woven and knotted together into a vast net-work. We draw back, almost in fear, from the microscope which discloses in the drop of purest water a world of life, the prototypes of those huge monsters that lash the sea into foam in the fury of their rage. Science is converted almost into magic, when it shows in the feathery snow the same factors that compose the ragged boulder upon the mountain side; or when the dirty coal, dug from the bowels of the earth, claims full equality with the diamond flashing its lustre, like the gleam of the human eye, upon the brow of beauty. Wonder deepens into awe, as the spectroscope reveals the texture of those distant stars, making them akin to this dull earth and establishing the homogeneity of the universe. It startles one to learn that the very worlds themselves are bound together in family relationship, by virtue of the same birth, in the same mould, through the operation of the same law.

We are ascending a grand stairway to the largest generalization of physical science. Not only do we discover law, in some form, wherever we turn our gaze, but we are overwhelmed with surprise and delight in tracing the extension of the same law as far as the exploration of the universe has been carried. The same principle of attraction, for example, which brings a stone to the earth, prevails as the bond which holds planets in their orbits sweeping in the void immense; and what is more worthy to be noted, it is found to work under the same rule of proportion, expressed by the same formula, as upon the surface of our globe. The vast power of the telescope reveals another extension of the same law. It has resolved some of those cloud-like appearances upon the distant sky into clusters of stars, bound together in the same harmony as our own solar system, and moving in appointed orbits around their central suns. It has not been enough to people space with these uncounted worlds; but they are grouped into vast

families, with domestic ties which relate them to their respective centres and define the spheres in which they shall be subordinated. Even this is not all. These associated systems themselves sweep, with a common movement, around a more distant centre still, which attracts and confines them all, but in orbits so vast that ages are required to mark their slow but steady progression. Our solar system, it is stated, has travelled, since the creation, over only one three-thousandth part of its immense orbit, though moving at the rate of 28,000 miles per hour, and requiring a period of more than eighteen millions of years to complete the entire circuit. Thus not only worlds upon worlds revolve, "orb upon orb," but worlds grouped into tribes, "cycle upon epicycle," until thought reels under the mighty suggestion that the burning throne of the Infinite Creator is the pivot upon which the universe is balanced—the centre from which all the paths are described in which unnumbered worlds move in perfect harmony, the source of that eternal power which gives to all force its energy, and to all law its form. For what if the splendid prophecy of science should be verified, that the mysterious forces which we discover everywhere working under definite rules, should be only modifications of one single and comprehensive force, ordained by Infinite Power as the spring of all the activities we behold? Thus broad and splendid are the steps of that inductive reasoning by which we "ascend from Nature up to Nature's God."

Can there be anything grander than this? To see the worlds, as they are balanced in empty space, all formed of one material and thus akin to each other in their most distant removes; to behold them swayed by the same subtle forces, working under the same rule and measure; to view them in their silent circuits, obedient to one supreme principle as the bond of their allegiance to the Infinite Will which controls them all: can there be a climax higher than this? Yes, we must rise into another realm of thought; we must soar above the physical into the moral sphere; we must regard law, not as expressing mere power and will, but the whole character of the Deity—that which announces the fundamental distinction betwixt right and wrong; which defines the relations, and expounds the duties of intelligent and responsible beings. It

is scarcely necessary to say that such a law, springing from the very nature of God, must be one and singular. There can no more be two laws for the moral universe than there can be two Gods. To all beings in all worlds, "endued with sanctity of reason," it must be the perfect standard of rectitude, the infallible expounder of duty, and the absolute measure of obligation. To whatever extent the conditions may vary in which these beings are placed, to the same extent may this law be modified in the details of its application; but it must ever remain the same in its principle and root, making the same exactions and imposing the same terms upon all beneath its sway. What is there in the widest extension of physical law comparable with this absolute universality of the moral? The one depends upon the simple determination of the Divine will, which was perfectly free to have ordained otherwise; the other springs out of the Divine character itself, and cannot be cancelled even in thought. The one is carried on from world to world, until the fancy is lost in the immensity which it seeks to explore; the other clings to us as an immediate truth, bound to the understanding by the deduction of an inexorable logic.

A weird spell is thrown upon the soul when it comes to feel the presence of this universal, yet unseen, law. Viewless as the air, yet stretching around and beyond us to the infinite, we are overwhelmed by it as by the thought of space. We are in space, and feel its boundary around us; yet it stretches on to the eternal, in which it is merged and lost for ever; so this universal law surrounds with its authority, and in its diffusion we feel that we are covered with the omnipresence of the Deity.

3. Consider now the majesty of law from its *under* rather than its *upper* side, as the codification of all the decisions of the human conscience. This conscience has the two-fold office to discharge of witness and judge, both depending upon its responsive character, as the organ of law. It recognizes the distinction betwixt right and wrong, as the understanding distinguishes between the true and the false, or the taste between the beautiful and the deformed. It pre-supposes a standard for its guidance, just as truth must exist in order to knowledge. Man is so made in the image of his Creator that all his attributes reflect the Divine, as the shadow is the

dim outline of the substance which casts it. There is a quality of justice in man which answers to the justice that is in God, as there is a pity which is the echo of the Divine compassion; and conscience is the lower tribunal upon earth, which affirms the decisions of the supreme court above. It thus becomes the detective that dogs the steps of the transgressor; lifting the voice of warning, or taking the silent testimony upon which the judicial sentence shall be rendered. The inextinguishable vitality of our moral convictions is their marvellous and alarming feature. The memory upon which, like an ancient palimpsest, a thousand inscriptions have been superimposed, will disclose them all before the judicial fires whenever they are kindled. The conscience, which has been debauched or drugged with opiates, will awake at last with its scorpion sting to take reprisal for the wrong it has endured. Not an atom of dust can escape from the control of law; and man, the priest of nature, must lead the creatures in the recognition of law as eternal as the Being who gave it.

Human legislation thus becomes the mirror of the Divine, distorted though the image be; just as the troubled sea reflects, though with saddest wrinkles, the face of the sky. Whatever, then, may be alleged against the imperfection of human law and the uncertainty of human justice, they are invested with a superb dignity as the response which man makes to the authority of the Supreme Ruler. It is the human conscience making its tally against all the requirements of infinite justice; registering on earth what man approves as just and true and noble and good; and holding up the record for the scrutiny of Heaven. It is not for us to accuse, or to vindicate, the law as administered by weak and erring man. It may be a blurred transcript of what is written in a fairer text in the chancery above; but that it is a transcript at all, through the interpretation of the untrammelled conscience, gives to the law a human glory which is the counterpart of the Divine. Man rises, through his vexed career, with an ethical code responding, in its measure, to the law of infinite rectitude: a code not expressed in feeble advice, but in commands enforced by sanctions of its own. The majesty of man's moral nature, then, goes over to the law which is the expression of his attributes, pre-

cisely as the seal of Divine majesty is stamped upon the superior law of which this is but the echo.

4. We take up the law again in its widest scope, as the trusted guardian of both human and Divine interests, now and for ever. Pope has written "order is heaven's first law"; nay, rather it may be said, it is the end or purpose for which law itself is framed. The power which at first produced the elements, must hold them in their due proportion mixed, or the universe would be dissolved in the fierceness of their strife. This control is exerted through what we term "natural law," by which

"The heavens themselves, the planets, and this centre,
Observe degree, priority, and place,
Insisture, course, proportion, season, form,
Office, and custom, in all line of order."

It affords food for deep reflection why, in the constitution of inert and senseless matter, forces are introduced between which the balance of power must be firmly held to avoid a worse than dynamite explosion. Are these materials of its own destruction placed in the frame-work of our globe, for ends strictly disciplinary and moral, that it may be purged for higher and purer destinies hereafter? These are questions to be remanded to theological, rather than scientific, investigation; and they are to be answered only through a supernatural testimony. They are not raised for consideration in this article, but only to indicate the vast issues which are involved in the preservation even of natural law.

A more fearful peril was incurred, when a being was created with the power of will. He may well tremble who appreciates the reach of those faculties which make man so august among the creatures. Does thought in man reflect the intelligence which is in God? Is conscience the polished mirror, upon which is playing the iridescence of infinite purity itself? What, then, is will in man, but the shadow of the Divine omnipotence?—the power by which we become creators upon our scale, and pour the contents of our being into acts that are imperishable for ever. The choice to obey includes the choice to rebel; and this clash of wills involves consequences far more dreadful than the war of elements in the

material universe. Let the ruling hand be withdrawn of Him who first called order out of chaos, and

“The bounded waters shall lift their bosoms higher than the shores,
 And make a sop of all this solid globe.
 Strength shall be lord of imbecility,
 And the rude son shall strike his father dead.
 Force shall be right ; or, rather, right and wrong,
 (Between whose endless jar justice resides,)
 Shall lose their names, and so shall justice too.
 Then everything includes itself in power,
 Power into will, will into appetite ;
 And appetite an universal wolf,
 So doubly seconded with will and power,
 Must make perforce an universal prey,
 And, last, eat up himself.”

It is the genius of Shakspeare which thus describes the universal wreck, in the destruction of universal law.

We may bring the matter nearer home. Around what various interests does not human law throw its daily protection? It silences the tongue of slander, and throws its shield over injured innocence. It restrains violence, and uncovers fraud. It represses crime, and checks the outburst of evil passions. It becomes the orphan's guardian and the widow's counsellor. It opens the prison-door to them that are bound, and provides a sanctuary for the oppressed. It purges society of its recurring disorders, and renders it possible to live. What honor then attaches to law, from this sacred guardianship of human rights! And if there are Divine rights as well, how necessary the wider law into whose custody these are committed! The suggestion is almost oppressive—these rights of God, lapping over the boundary of time and reaching into the stretches of eternity; the right to be, and to be supreme; to reign through the single power of His thought, without the contradiction or rivalry of any other will. Can law be more honored than to be charged with responsibilities vast and enduring as these? If it be grand, as the guardian of human and earthly interests, how superb in its maintenance of prerogatives so supreme as those of the Infinite Ruler!

This supremacy of law is, moreover, upheld in the face of continual insurrection. Account for it as we may, the explosive forces

in nature are ever breaking from control into paroxysms of destructive fury. Lightnings cleave the sky, tempests sweep the sea, earthquakes rend the solid earth, cyclones cut their fatal swath through the forest, pestilence and death scatter their seeds in the air. All nature is convulsed as in the agony of dissolution, as the sworn neutrality is broken in the clash of contending elements. But as sudden as the outburst, the violence is spent. The refractory powers are bound over to keep the peace, and the calm of nature is restored. Behold the supremacy of law, in grappling with these fierce contentions and composing them to rest. Nay, rather, view the omnipotence of law, which not only bridles the tempest and the storm, but with richer compensation converts them into ministers of blessing to an otherwise stagnant world.

Not less does law assert its supremacy in the moral sphere. Account for it as we may, the contingency has happened that man, in the audacity of his own choice, resolves to make "his mind his kingdom, and his will his law." As the result of this independence, the worst passions of the heart have broken forth into deeds of violence and crime, and war has deluged the earth with blood. Yet, as in the natural world, these strifes go by; the law resumes its sway, and a riper civilization marks the progress of the ages. If there be an historic deduction more certain than another, it is that law will hold its own against the caprices of nature and the wilfulness of man; never relaxing its guardianship of rights committed to its trust, and revealing its supremacy through the insurrections which it overrules.

It becomes every man, therefore, to be loyal to the throne of the Great King, and to consent to no dismemberment of His boundless domain. We are to accept no teachings which wrest any part of nature from the grasp of His authority. And those who dispense justice at human tribunals should remember that civil jurisprudence is but a province of that broad empire over which law presides; that they constitute a priesthood ministering not at an earthly altar only, but at the high altar of eternity, in the maintenance of universal law. They should be clothed with its purity as with the linen ephod of the ancient priest, and with its majesty as with the judicial ermine. In no better terms can

the majesty of law be set forth than in the words of Hooker's impressive eulogy: "Of law there can be no less acknowledged than that her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world. All things in heaven and earth do her homage—the very least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempt from her power: both angels and men, and creatures of what condition soever, though each in different sort and manner, yet all with uniform consent, admiring her as the mother of their peace and joy."

B. M. PALMER.

III. THE WORD OF GOD VERSUS "THE BIBLE OF MODERN SCIENTIFIC THEOLOGY."

WE are accustomed to speak of the Scriptures as the Word of God. The Larger Catechism declares: "The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the word of God, the only rule of faith and practice." Our Lord denounces the Pharisees for "making the word of God of none effect through their traditions" (Mark vii. 13). And David, long before our Lord's day, wrote, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psa. cxix. 105). Thus it will be seen that the application of the title "The Word of God" to the Scriptures is made on the highest authority, and is almost as old as the Scriptures themselves.

THE WORD OF GOD.

I. The grounds on which this application of the title "The Word of God" to the Scriptures is made, is set forth in such passages as the following, viz.: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim iii. 16). "God who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son" (Heb. i. 1). "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter i. 21). "We speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth" (1 Cor. ii. 13).