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I.

NOTES ON THE REVISED NEW TESTAMENT.

THE long-expected Revision is at last before the public. The first rattling volley from the newspapers has spent itself with the result which might have been predicted ; aiding to stimulate the general curiosity, but doing very little to satisfy serious and intelligent inquiry as to the true merits or demerits of the work.

Too much has not been said, too much cannot be said of the general excellence and the wonderful value and power of our Authorized Version. The interest awakened by the Revision is the grandest of all testimonies to these. All that has been so eloquently written concerning its racy, nervous English, its service to literature, and the tenderness, dignity, and inspiring character of its associations, may be reaffirmed with emphasis ; and hence the Revisers were no more than judicious in laying down as one of their first and principal canons—to avoid all unnecessary changes in that which years and associations have made so precious. But on this point two things may be said, the one concerning the Revisers, the other concerning the readers.

As to the Revisers, it may be safely affirmed that nothing in their admirable preface justifies extravagant expectations on this head. Their clearly stated rule is, that the alterations to be introduced should be expressed, *as far as possible*, in the language of the Authorized Version or of the Revisions that preceded it. They are, moreover, at pains to set forth their endeavor, when compelled to use other words, to find such as

IV.

THE BIBLICAL BLANK.

JOSEPHUS says that the Jaddua mentioned, by Nehemiah (xii. 11), in the list of High Priests after the return from the Babylonish captivity, was the one who met Alexander the Great on his approach to Jerusalem. If that be so, the "Darius the Persian" (of v. 22) is Darius Codomannus, whom Alexander conquered; the Old Testament history comes down to 323 B.C.; an addition was made to the Book of Nehemiah after the death of Nehemiah; and the Canon of the Old Testament was not closed until nearly one hundred years after Malachi.

The Rationalistic school of interpreters contend that the Book of Daniel and some of the Psalms belong to the Macabean period.

But even though both these positions were conceded, the historical references which they involve are so meagre that we should be justified in adhering to the popular statement that the four hundred years between Malachi and Christ are a blank in the sacred volume. The voice and the pen of prophecy were totally silent and inactive; and the closing paragraph of Malachi makes on the thoughtful reader the impression that it was designed to close the volume of the Old Covenant: while Mark, opening his book with the public ministry of Jesus, connects the Gospel with those closing words of the Prophet.

The period was perhaps the most seething, brilliant, and far-reaching in the history of the world. The death of Socrates and the retreat of the ten thousand, which Xenophon has immortalized, were coeval with Malachi: a statement which reminds us that the great Persian empire, after having reached the climax of its power, was entering upon its death

throes. Then came the flashing meteor course of Alexander the Great; and following that, the literary Grecian Government of the Egyptian Ptolemies and the more licentious Greek power of the Syrian Seleucidæ, which by reaction led to the Maccabean movement among the Jews, in connection with which Rome first appears with its influence upon the Jewish nation. Within ten years after the Old Testament closed, Rome was taken by the Gauls; and from that time forward the government of the seven-hilled city developed into its mighty and world-wide empire. Thus Persia declined and was overthrown; Alexander rose and died; his successors divided the Eastern world among them and held it for two hundred and fifty years, when Rome crushed them all and became the universal mistress.

The age was the golden one of Greek and Roman literature. Homer was indeed far back in the hazy past; and Herodotus had travelled, written, and died in the century which closed the Jewish Canon; but Thucydides was still living and writing. Then we have on the bright literary roll of Greece, between Malachi and Christ, Xenophon, Demosthenes, Æschines, Anaxagoras, Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, Democritus, Hippocrates, Æschylus, Aristophanes, Menander. Latin literature had not been born when Malachi wrote; and nearly the whole of that literature which has maintained its place appeared before Christ: so rapid was the life of that element of the world's training.

Moreover, with all the great world powers the Jews came in contact. When the Old Testament closed, they were under a province of the still great Persian empire. Alexander subdued them, and was peculiarly favorable to them. They passed in succession under the government of the Egyptian Ptolemies and the Syrian Seleucidæ. Driven at last into rebellion against the latter they became again a power in the earth; and Simon, the son of Mattathias, B.C. 142, "established on the throne the only dynasty that has reigned over the undivided Jewish people, except the house of David" (Stanley's "History of the Jewish Church," iii. 408). Then, Rome, in its resistless progress, threw its dominion over them, and was in possession of their country when Jesus was born.

Some parts of this historic space are of a very thrilling

character. The condition of the Jews, down to the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, B.C. 175, was one of quietness, intellectual cultivation, and social improvement; though their land continued to be the battle-field of the empires, and especially of the mutually opposing successors of Alexander. But the Maccabean period has, in heroism, nothing to exceed it even in the inspired records. Judas Maccabeus, the *Cœur de Lion* of Hebrew history, was one of those warriors who carry the imagination captive. The account of the fearful persecution which commenced under Antiochus Epiphanes, whose object was to Hellenize the Jewish religion—the first religious persecution in the world of which we have a full narrative, and which in its particulars makes us think of the treatment of the Scotch Covenanters—fills us with admiration for the constancy of those who were thrilled by the call to arms from Mattathias. The martyrology of the Books of Maccabees, especially that of Eliezer and of the mother and her seven children, high-flown as is the account in the Fourth Book of Maccabees, is soul-inspiring. Then the first Herod, with all his cruelty, was one of the great and magnificent of the world's monarchs; under Rome, indeed, but perhaps harboring in his mind, as his eventual object, a new and mighty Eastern empire against Rome.

Nor is the Jewish literature of the period weak and insignificant. The Apocrypha, in matter almost equal to the New Testament, should not be permitted to remain in the obscurity with which they have become covered as the natural protest against the effort to canonize them. The devout student finds them destitute of a flavor, the absence of which shows that infallible inspiration did not guide their writers. But as uninspired compositions, these books are marvellous. Add to these the Book of Enoch, from which Jude quotes; which is a work of high imagination, though crude and unregulated in scientific references; which was written probably in the beginning of Herod's reign; which makes important disclosures of Jewish opinions in the generation immediately preceding Jesus; and which is "a curious attempt to reduce the scattered images of the Old Testament to a physical system," repeating "in every form the great principle that the world, natural, moral, and spiritual, is under the immediate government of God": still further, embrace the Mishna, the first portion of the Talmud;

and the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, which was really the Bible of Christ, of the Apostles, and of the early Christian Church : then observe that the Second Book of Maccabees is only an abridgment of the five books of one Jason of Cyrene, which have been lost, suggesting that a similar fate has befallen many literary ventures of the age : * consider, moreover, that such writers as Philo and Josephus, though living after the birth of Jesus, were fruits of the intellectual culture of the age preceding : and we must immediately conclude that that age was one of very great activity and power. Indeed its contact and struggle with the Greek mind would not permit it to be otherwise.

Now a clear understanding of all these facts and influences, and of the political and social life of the Holy Land when Jesus appeared, is essential to a proper interpretation of the New Testament ; and yet we are left to uninspired sources for all our information in reference to them. Let well-established facts throw some light on the reason for this.

The students of the science of Language and of the science of Religion have, in their comparative examinations, exhibited crudities not a few. Some of their inferences are on a par with the one stated by Squier in his "Aboriginal Monuments," of certain "explorers who, finding an extensive cemetery where the Aborigines had buried all their children apart from the adults, concluded they had discovered the remains of an ancient race of pigmies." But the real results reached and suggested by these studies are exceedingly valuable.

They have established the fact not only that man has a native religious faculty, but that religion was originally monotheistic. The Semitic, the Aryan, the Turanian races, before dividing into their subordinate streams, worshipped one God ; and, at first, worship which appeared to be paid to the heavens was really to the Being who was conceived to be there.

It is on this point, by the way, incidentally interesting to note the clearness with which such a writer as Gladstone, without the bias of the professional theologian, recognizes monotheism

* Nicolaus, the Rhetorician of Damascus, the intimate friend of Augustus and of the first Herod, and the advocate of Archelaus before the Emperor, wrote a drama based on the "History of Susannah," a Commentary on the *Metaphysics* of Aristotle, several geographical books, and a "History of the World," in 144 volumes.

as underlying the Grecian mythology. In his "Homer" he emphasizes, as found in the Iliad and Odyssey, "a primitive basis of monotheism, and ideas in connection with it, which seem to defy explanation, except when we compare them with the most ancient of the Hebrew traditions." Zeus, "in his character as a god exhibits the profound moral attributes of an original monotheism." In him "we have a factor representing the supreme theistic element of all the religions which contributed to make up the Olympian system; and as the Zeus of the Helioi, he appears to be in a particular degree a representative of an old monotheism which merges into supremacy in a polytheistic system." He was "heir-general to the fragments and relics of the old monotheistic traditions." In the prayer of Achilles "there is in truth a noteworthy absence of what may be termed pagan elements, and a marked exhibition of the idea of supreme and governing godhead" ("Homer," pp. 65, 66, 92, 104, 68).

But, in the clear historic age of Abraham, polytheism and idolatry had become widely established and were growing. Abraham and his descendants were therefore separated and isolated for the preservation of the true religion, and as the line through which the divinely appointed Redeemer was to appear.

The other nations of the world were not, however, totally abandoned by God. The truths of the original religion remained in their possession, though the tendency was to the perversion, degradation, and loss of those truths. But divine checks were placed in the way of that tendency, though they were not largely effectual in resisting it. Nor was salvation withdrawn from the heathen world. Its religion originally had enough of truth in it to save; and we may not doubt that a saving influence was always exercised through it, so that while, on the one hand, those who saw not the eternal power and godhead, through the works of creation and the teachings in the mind and heart, were without excuse and were condemned by the law written in their very being; yet, on the other hand, God always accepted in every nation those who feared Him and worked righteousness.

"Men were not all cast off from the beginning, except a particular family, and left to grope their way to as much truth as they could find; but, on the contrary, were all

alike put on the footing of the same revelation. . . . We feel constrained to believe that God may have had His people among every branch of mankind ; and that, even when much corruption had contaminated the truth, there may still have been some who saw in the forms of worship their spiritual meaning, and received its message in their hearts." (*Princeton Review*, xxxvii. 348, 9).

Moreover, with the instances of Job, the visions granted to Pharaoh in the time of Joseph, Balaam, Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, Darius, Alexander the Great, and the Magi at the birth of Jesus, we cannot deny that supernatural revelations were granted to other than the Jews.*

"It has long been a matter of discussion," says Ellicott in his "Life of Christ," p. 78, n. 2, "what precisely led these Magi to expect a birth so prefigured. Was it due to a carefully preserved knowledge of the prophecy of Balaam, an opinion maintained by Origen and the majority of the ancient expositors ; or was it due to prophecies uttered in their own country, dimly foreshadowing this divine mystery? Perhaps the latter view is the more probable, especially if we associate with it a belief, which the sacred narrative gives us every reason for entertaining, that these faithful men received a special illumination both to apply rightly what they had remembered, and to recognize its verification in the phenomenon of which they were now the privileged observers."

It is worth noting on this point that as far back as the Apocryphal *Gospel of the Infancy of Jesus* it was intimated (iii. 1) that the Magi came from the East in their search for the Messiah, "according to the prophecy of Zoradascht," or Zoroaster.

The early philosophic champions of Christianity maintained that the divine influence was given in some degree to the good men of heathenism. This view, held by the Greek Fathers who had been trained up in Platonism, condensed in the declaration of Clement of Alexandria, that that philosophy was "a schoolmaster to bring men to Christ," and emblazoned on the porticoes of Eastern churches where Pythagoras and Plato are pictured among those who prepared the way for Christianity, was repelled by the Latin Fathers. *The Apostolical Constitutions* (in Ch. vi. of Book 1, belonging probably to the second century) expostulate thus:

"Abstain from all heathen books. For what hast thou to do with such foreign discourses, or laws, or false prophets, which subvert the faith of the unstable? For what

* The way in which Canon Farrar, in his "Life and Work of St. Paul," i. 631, refers to this (as Paul's "liberal and enlightened view that God had revealed Himself even to the heathen, to a degree sufficient for their happiness and their salvation had they chosen to make use of the light they had") is somewhat singular, and makes an erroneous two-fold and inconsistent impression.

defect dost thou find in the law of God, that thou shouldst have recourse to these heathenish fables ?”

But Augustine both uses them and guards against an abuse which might be made in the putting of the Jewish and Christian Revelations on a level with them :

“Some of them made great discoveries, so far as they received help from heaven, while they erred so far as they were hindered by human frailty ” (De Civ. 2 : 7).

And in his “Confessions” (7 : 20), after saying that he had first read “those books of the Platonists, and thence been taught to search for incorporeal truth,” he adds :

“Upon these I believe, Thou therefore willedst that I should fall, before I studied Thy Scriptures, that it might be imprinted on my memory how I was affected by them ; and that afterwards, when my spirits were tamed through Thy books, and my wounds touched by Thy healing fingers, I might discern and distinguish between presumption and confession ; between those who saw whither they were to go, yet saw not the way—a way that leadeth not merely to behold the beatific country, but to dwell in it. For, had I first been formed in Thy Holy Scriptures, and hadst thus in the familiar use of them grown sweet unto me, and had I then fallen upon those other volumes, they might perhaps have withdrawn me from the solid ground of piety ; or, had I continued in that healthful frame which I had thence imbibed, I might have thought that it might have been obtained by the study of the Platonic books alone ” (Prof. Shedd’s Edition, pp. 172-3).

There was thus a two-fold preparation for Christ carried on by God ; the special one among the Jews and a co-ordinate, though less pure, one among the other nations of the world.

Now the fact has been emphasized, as of important providential significance, that the Jewish people were brought in contact with the mighty empires of the world at the time of their greatest influence. The land of Judea was the highway and battle-field on which those forces met in conflict with each other. By them, as they reached their zenith, the Jews were subdued. Among them all the ancient people of Jehovah planted seed of truth, and from them, we need not hesitate to admit, received retroactive influences.

Rationalists have assumed that doctrines which are common to the Bible and to the sacred books of the heathen religions were drawn by the Jews from their neighbors ; though students of the freer school of Comparative Religion would trace them all to the workings of the one human religious consciousness. Dean Stanley asserts over and over again that immortality was a Grecian seed, first sown by Socrates and then planted in Jewish soil. Among other recent writers, Mr. W. R. Gleg (in “a

Modern Symposium on 'The Soul and Future Life,' in *The Nineteenth Century* for October, 1877), sweepingly asserts: "With the Jews, moreover, as is well known, the belief was not indigenous, but imported, and by no means an early importation." And Mallock, after having stated ("Is Life Worth Living?" p. 16) that the Positivists, in support of their position that the destruction of a belief in personal immortality would not cut the nerve of activity and morality in this life, points to the Jews "as having felt pre-eminently the dignity of this life, and having yet been absolutely without any belief in another"; and admits (p. 27) that "the doctrine of a future life was first learnt by the Jews," not from Soerates, but "from their masters during the Captivity." Matthew Arnold, it seems, has discovered also that the Jews did not even believe in God! But the self-inconsistencies, the mutual contradictions, and the historical denials which such writers exhibit are very eye-opening. Herodotus (2:123) is explicit in his declaration that "the Egyptians held that the soul of man is immortal." In a note on this in Rawlinson's *Herodotus*, Sir Gardner Wilkinson remarks:

"Cicero says the immortality of the soul was first taught by Pherecydes of Syros, the preceptor of Pythagoras, which was chiefly followed out by his disciples; but this could only allude to its introduction into Greece, since it had been the universal belief in Egypt at least as early as the third and fourth dynasty, more than 1,500 years before."

Mallock, in a sentence immediately preceeding the one which we have quoted from p. 27, declares: "The oldest civilization of which any record is left to us—the civilization of Egypt—was based on a theism which, of all other theisms, most nearly approaches ours." Now if, as has been charged in other connections and for other purposes, the Jews under Moses copied so largely from their oppressors, is it likely that they left Egypt without the far-reaching belief in immortality, even if Jacob and his family did not take it down thither?

But we may allow that in the providence and grace of God, the Jews, while carrying to other peoples the peculiarly saving truths which they had received, might in return have some of those truths clarified in their own apprehension by the contact with others, and might derive subordinate views and forms of expression from them. As far back as the second century be-

fore Christ, Aristobulus, a Jew of Alexandria, "found the Hebrew Religion in the Greek philosophy," and the "Greek philosophy in the Hebrew Scriptures," alleging that "the sages and poets of Grecian antiquity had but plagiarized their best parts from Moses, or Solomon, or Jeremiah," and even that the mythological Orpheus had met Moses in Egypt. Augustine held the belief that the idea of creation expressed in the "Timæus" was derived by Plato from Genesis. The idea of such an influence is now almost ridiculed in some quarters; and probably it has in the past been pushed further than the facts warranted; but undoubtedly there was freedom of intercourse enough among ancient nations for the attainments of each to leaven the others, and the Jews were in a position to exercise a religious influence.

The fact that the inspired history and prophecy among the Jews continued from Moses to Malachi, and then abruptly ceased, suggests that the development of spiritual truth in their line had been carried as far as it could be done. They had given to, and received from, the other Semitic nations all that God had designed; and all the preparatory revelations for the coming of the Redeemer which they could receive had been given. When there had been breaks in the history of preceding stages, the thread was on the resumption of the history thrown back over the chasm, and the earlier and the newer were connected; but when the New Testament opened there was no similar gathering up of the events of the four hundred years. As the leading results of that divinely inspired and guided development, Monotheism had been placed upon an impregnable basis. The most striking thing in the history of the Jews is that idolatry, to which they had been perpetually tempted from the days of Moses to their captivity, was never fallen into by them afterward. Their contact with Zoroastrism may have had something to do with purifying them from that evil. The inflexibility of the moral law, which had been specially committed to them, had also been established by the sweep of prophetic teaching and by their chastisement in captivity. It need not be denied that the early literatures of Egypt, of India, and of Persia, contain a morality in many respects equal to that of the Old Testament; and that even many of the precepts which Christ uttered and bound together

seem to be heard in other religions; but it is only in the Bible that they approach completeness and system, and are surrounded with the sanctions which therein enforce them. Moreover,

"the doctrines of creation and providence, of an infinite divine person and of a responsible human will, which elsewhere form the ultimate limits of speculation, had been in the Old Testament assumed at the outset. . . . The call of Abraham had set forth at once the central lesson of faith in the unseen, on which all others were raised. In the history of his family the sovereignty of God was placed in clear light; in the time of Moses he revealed himself in the wider relations of lawgiver and judge. The captivity restored the chosen people to their connection with other nations. The personal relations of God to the individual, the family, the nation, mankind, were then established in ineffaceable history."

As bearing on this, it should be remembered that, after the return from the Babylonish captivity, the High Priest had not the oracular Urim and Thummim; that the Ark of God, the Tables of Stone, the Vase of Manna, the Rod of Aaron had been lost; and that the Holy of Holies was empty. Pompey the Great had the temerity, when he entered the temple, to draw aside the veil and to look within the awful room, expecting to find some image, some sensible object to represent the God of the Jews, but—"there was nothing." Not without its suggestiveness on this point also, is the fact that the Maccabean Jonathan became High Priest as well as King, although he was not a descendant of Aaron, and thus the divinely established Aaronic priesthood was destroyed long before the birth of Jesus.

Why, then, did not the Messiah come immediately at the close of the Old Testament Canon? It may be said that it was necessary to allow a period to intervene during which the divinely given truths and discipline should work without a special preternatural guidance, so that it might be seen that even such rich truths would not themselves redeem; that even truth, without the one to whom the truth pointed, would fail. But during that period another influence had to be brought upon the stage with its treasures also prepared for doing the work of the Redeemer when He should become incarnate.

We accept in its literality the account which Josephus gives (*Antiquities* 11: 8) of the dream that Alexander the Great reported on his interview with the Jewish High Priest. God had appeared to him and had promised to make him triumphant over the Persians; and, on account of that, Alexander

reverenced the High Priest and treated the Jewish people with distinguished favor. And we start from this as a proof that Greece, which Alexander was leading to its position as the next world-conqueror, was then being brought forward by God for its work of preparation for Christ and Redemption.

What was that work? Let the answer be drawn from the undoubted facts of history. The Greek literature leavened and finally controlled the Jewish mind. The nation became largely Hellenized. The Old Testament was translated into Greek as the Septuagint, and that became the best known version of their Scriptures to the Jews themselves and to the neighboring nations. The New Testament was written in Greek. The early Christian literature was Greek. Greek forms of investigation and thought took possession of the Bible truths, and gave them their earliest systematic expression.

The Egyptian successors of Alexander, the Ptolemies, set deliberately to work to influence the Jews by the Greek literature; and they succeeded. The Syrian branch of Alexander's successors, who afterward conquered the land, tried to force the Jews to accept the peculiar and grosser religious rites of the Greeks; but they ignominiously failed, and only succeeded in producing that narrow and exclusive bitterness in the Jewish mind against the Gentile world, which was manifest until and in the time of Christ. That bitter narrowness was not the earlier Jewish feeling. It was not the spirit of their law. It did not exist under the Persian domination, nor under Alexander and his immediate successors. It was a result of the persecution by Antiochus Epiphanes, just as, in modern times, the persecution of the Scotch Covenanters developed bigotry in them.

This difference between the Ptolemies and the Seleucidæ reveals the divinely appointed work of the Greek mind in the true religion.

Dean Stanley goes too far in saying (*American Sermons*, 245) that "Socrates brought down philosophy from heaven to earth." But Socrates did revolutionize Greek philosophic thought; he brought before the Greeks new moral truths, and placed older ones in a clearer light; he originated the proper mode of philosophizing; and through Plato and Aristotle, his

influence in the development of the Christian theology has been controlling.

The great substance of divine truth contained in the Old Testament was to be formulated, for its world-wide influence beyond the Semitic and the Jewish mind, by a philosophy and a language which were to be the philosophy and the language of the world. In that language the New Testament was to be written. That language, though dead, was to be the living one for all time, so that the revealed truth could be preserved in its purity and undecaying freshness. There is a deep philosophy as well as theology in the Old Testament; but it is in the form of facts and acts, to be explored, and brought out, and systematized, as the facts of nature have to be discovered and arranged under their laws. It was not reached by speculation or reasoning, "but by authoritative utterances which faith welcomes as the truth," and which reasoning can take up and further develop. The training of the Jews was essentially moral, that of the affections and the will; but reason has its offices to discharge also. It was, therefore, meet as the Old Testament Canon of revelation was closing that Socrates, the great apostle of reason and moral speculation, should appear with the method of investigation which peculiarly undermines error, if it does not immediately discover truth; so that, as Clement of Alexandria says: "Philosophy was given as a peculiar Testament to the Greeks as forming the basis of Christian philosophy." Thus two Old Testaments or Covenants, though of different value and importance, prepared the way for the one New Testament. For the full exhibition of the great doctrine-facts of the Bible, "the inductive reasoning and general definition," which Aristotle declared marked the teaching of Socrates, have their proper place. And it is significant that the Grecian mind and literature exhibited no further growth after it accomplished its Christian work.

Time had to be given for that philosophic language fully to develop itself and to permeate the Jewish mind before the final Revelation should be embodied in it. It was necessary, too, that the religion which underlay the Greek philosophy and literature should be permitted thoroughly to sift itself, so that what was pure in expression might be incorporated into the Christian revelation, and that the impure might condemn

itself, in its immoral fruits, as exhibited in the heathen world when Christ came, and as depicted especially by Paul in his Letter to the Romans.

The religion of Greece, as it appears in Homer, "was the most purely literary religion that ever existed." Great as were its moral defects, "it repudiated the worship of inanimate bodies and animals; it greatly retrenched the iniquities with which Asia had already polluted its religion; and it expelled altogether the very basest of those elements, which it was left for later and more polished times to reintroduce." "Its offerings to the gods were in singular accordance with those which the patriarchs of the East had practiced, and which Moses prescribed on divine authority." The "notes of kin to the written records and oral reports of the Hebrews appear to be as conspicuous as is the want of anything which could associate them with another source." It is even suspected that "the Apollo of the poems is really founded on the Hebrew tradition, that there should be a woman whose seed was to redeem the world." And in reference to much of their theanthropism, "it is not difficult to see how this refined association of the divine with the human nature may have supplied a preparatory school, in which the Greek mind was trained for the reception 'in the fulness of time' of the Christian dogma" (Gladstone's "Homer.") Connect with this the remarkable theological teachings which Æschylus and Sophocles especially drew from the old traditions, and the still purer efforts of Socrates and Plato, who, in the words of Prof. Plumptre, standing forth "as witnesses to the divine unity" sought to counteract the corrupting influence of the current mythology. And we can see what an admirable providential selection it was which prepared that language and literature as the permanent casket in which were to be deposited the consummate jewels of revealed truth.

But something more was needed: the establishment of an empire which should be influenced by the same language and have a control of the world, so that the treasures of revelation could be carried everywhere. This was afforded by the rise and extension of the power of Rome to a degree that no other government had ever reached, giving greater room for the "universal plan of history," and, itself first subdued by the

Greek literature and language, carrying them with their rich stores to the ends of the earth. Moreover, under Rome, Herod the Great was providentially raised up to exhibit a remarkable combination.

"In him the East and the West were united. By birth an Edomite on the father's side, and an Ishmaelite on the mother's, he represented a third great division of the Semitic race by his nominal adoption of the Jewish religion. Yet his life was entirely moulded by conceptions borrowed from the two great Aryan races of the ancient world; his conceptions of policy and government were entirely Roman, his ideal of life and enjoyment entirely Greek. And in addition to this, he was surrounded by a body-guard of Barbarian mercenaries. At no previous or subsequent period could a world-religion have been more easily preached than it was among the heterogeneous elements which were brought together by his singular tyranny" ("Farrar's Life of Christ," I: 25, n.)

The divine work of those four hundred years was more varied, more widely extended, more complex, than any that had been accomplished before. The account of it, and of all that was necessary to it, could not have been embraced in an inspired volume of convenient size, such as was possible when the Jewish life was restricted to its narrow land. A large part and it is contended the better part, of the nation never returned from Babylon. The Babylonian influence all along was tremendous and far-reaching. In the days of Alexander and immediately afterward, a colony was established in Alexandria which in the end outshone the Babylonian. The Jews became dispersed everywhere through the known world, and had much to do with the production of that wide expectation of a coming Deliverer which existed when Jesus was born, so that this may well be styled "Israel's missionary age." It was impossible to bind all these up in one harmonious account similar to the Old and the New Testament. The narrow, though deep, stream which burst forth from Horeb, divided, after Malachi, into three wide branches, with innumerable smaller rivulets, whose course it would have been impossible to follow as the earlier history had been followed in the Old Testament.

The historical books of the New Testament fit in beautifully with this view. Matthew connects especially with the Jewish prophecies and deals with the Jewish mind. Luke, by carrying the genealogy of Jesus beyond Abraham and up to Adam, hints that it is his purpose to give the Christian religion a world-wide bearing for humanity, while in the Acts he commences its historical extension among the Gentile nations.

Mark has the air of a Roman, whose power was over all the earth. John showing most of all the contact with the Grecian Platonic philosophy in his doctrines and in his expressions, at the very outset sweeps further back than Luke, commences with the creative fiat of the Divine Word, antagonizes the errors of the Grecian philosophy even while showing the influence of its truths, and, after carrying the Christian mind to its highest development, depicts in his Apocalypse the drama of the ages, gathering in the nations of the world, until all evil is overthrown and heaven settles down upon earth.

What is the practical outcome of all this?

1. Boldly face the facts which are brought to light by the science of Comparative Religion. Blinkers are *not* better than spectacles in the discovery of truth. We need not shrink from the issue which Max Müller raises by the assertion :

"He must be a man of little faith who would fear to subject his own religion to the same critical tests to which the historian subjects all other religions. We need not surely crave a tender or merciful treatment for that faith which we hold to be the only true one."

It fears not. But its history gives it the legal presumption in its favor. The burden of proof rests on those who would tear from it any of the claims which, in the Christian consciousness, it has always been understood to make. Test it by all means; but do not commence the test with the assumption that it has been a deceiver through all its past existence, and that the Christian world for eighteen centuries failed to understand it.

2. Maintain that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments stand on a peculiar, inspired, authoritative, infallible plane; revealing all the essential truths of redemption; compactly holding the practical precepts of religion and of life; and containing the standard by which all other Scriptures are to be tried. We may admit that

'the only secure basis for Religion consists in man's own religious consciousness ;, since it is as impossible that any Revelation should make a man religious, whose inner nature does not respond to its teachings, as that any instruction should make a man a musician, who has not got a 'musical ear'' (Carpenter's "Mental Physiology," p. 700).

But that does not involve the error of the historical assailants of Christianity as the supernatural system, that "all

alleged revelations can be shown to have had analogous histories; and that, therefore, even if God exists, there is no one religion through which He has specially revealed Himself" (Mallock's "Is Life Worth Living?" p. 210). Certainly the Jewish and Christian Scriptures claim to be such a special revelation; and there is no half-way position between acknowledging that claim and rejecting them as a stupendous imposture: a most successful and beneficial imposture, however, in their history and in their influence upon men. Strange if a long-drawn-out lie could do so much for truth.

3. Admit, however, divine elements in the other religions of the world. Let us not even stop short with the statement of Augustine that "there is no religion which does not contain some grains of truth." We should not only confess, but gladly assert, that the old historic religions have underlying and running through them rich and solid veins of revealed truth which have given them their persistent power, and which we should eagerly seize hold upon and use in their bearings upon our own Scriptures and for the purpose of commending those Scriptures to the adherents of the other systems.

An article of Max Müller in the *North American Review* of June, 1879, contains some statements which illustrate how safe it is for the advocate of the highest view of the Bible to make this concession. Though claiming that it is not necessary "to look upon the sacred books of all religions except our own as necessarily the outcome of human or superhuman ignorance and depravity," he alludes to the fact that "by the side of so much that is fresh, natural, simple, beautiful, and true, they contain so much that is not only unmeaning, artificial, and silly, but hideous and repellant"; and he writes of "the wild confusion of sublime truth with vulgar stupidity that meets us on the pages of the Veda, the Avesta, and the Tripitaka." Can any such charges be made against the Christian Scriptures? If not, why not? Take those Judean writers, who, through a period of fifteen hundred years, slowly developed our Bible into the full and rounded form in which it appears, and place them on a level with the writers of the books of the other religions; how can their preservation from "vulgar stupidity" be accounted for? The question is the more incisively sharpened by the comparison, which Max Müller further

makes, that if the Jewish Apocrypha, and the Talmud, and the New Testament Apocryphal books were bound up with, and a part of, our Bible we should have something like the exhibition which is made by the books of the other religions. Precisely so. But in the other books there *is* the confused intermingling. Our Book has rejected the very elements which subject the others to the damaging charges made against them. That places it on a peculiar pinnacle. No principle of natural selection will explain it. There was a superhuman superintendence which built up our Book and kept out of it what would have marred it and corrupted its moral influence.

4. As we come in contact with other religions, which in earlier ages were separated from the Jewish and Christian, welcome whatever is good in them, and weave it under, and in illustration and enforcement of, our own. No doubt the average Christian mind needs to be clarified on this point. Missionary appeals once misled the masses into the idea that all the heathen religions were essentially demoralizing, and nothing but demoralizing, in every way. But a change has taken place. A recent volume from the pen of a Presbyterian missionary to Japan, and issued by the Presbyterian Board of Publication ("The Sunrise Kingdom," by Mrs. Julia D. Carothers), makes such a concession as this (p. 32): "Buddhism is a wonderful system, and has a powerful influence over the human mind. Sometimes it appears in a refined and cultivated form, and its votaries are scholarly men. Even Christian missionaries cannot fail to commend the humanizing influences of this system." This is in the spirit of Dr. Schaff's remark (in his "Church History," 1:168) that "the noblest and most effectual way of defending Christianity is not to condemn everything which preceded it, to turn all the virtues of distinguished heathens into splendid vices, but rather to make them testify in its favor." Let the historic religious systems of the world be dealt with in the same spirit. The Gospel will be greatly the gainer. Max Müller has claimed that "true Christianity seems to become more and more exalted, the more we appreciate the treasures of truth contained in the debased religions." He does not mean by true Christianity all that those of us do who hold the doctrines of plenary inspiration and vicarious atonement; but his remark is more true from our stand-point than

from his. The missionary power of the Church of Christ will be mightily intensified by emphasizing the true and the good that are found overlaid by the false and the bad, rather than by magnifying the bad and the false to the utter rejection of the good and the true, in the systems whose adherents it seeks to convert.

5. Resist the attempts which are persistently made to array Culture and Religion against each other, and to force a contradiction between natural and revealed religion. Green (in the third volume of his "English History," p. 333), speaking of the Latitudinarian writers of the Restoration says: "From this moment indeed the work of English theologians turned from the bold assertion of the supremacy of revealed truth over natural reason to a more cautious assertion of the essential harmony of the one with the other." But surely the two may essentially harmonize as far as they embrace the same themes, and the one may control the other on the themes which are above that other. Why seek to raise a contradiction between the two positions? If it were not so serious a matter, ridicule and sarcasm and irony should sweep out of court, with contemptuous laughter, the assumption of certain rejectors of our supernatural religion that they are pre-eminently the students of Culture! As if the culture of the ages were not found among the believers in God and immortality! As if the really great writers, who have influenced the race, have been those who sat

"Apart, holding no form of creed
And contemplating all!"

6. Hold fast to the old creeds in which, under the influence of the Greek philosophy, the doctrines of the Bible became crystallized. Some would have us treat those symbols as the cast-off clothing of an ignorant age. In truth, as one of the results of the study of Comparative Religion, they are advanced to a high position. God prepared the Greek language and philosophy for their work in His Church. In the development of the understanding of His revealed truths through conflict with error, they were made to serve His purpose and express the faith of His people. The Church has never gone back on a doctrine once clearly formulated. It has kept reaching on to a deeper and clearer apprehension of the "unsearchable

riches of Christ, and to make all see what is the dispensation of the mystery which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God (who created all things by Jesus Christ), to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord; the mystery which had been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints; to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you the hope of glory; whom we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom" (Eph. iii. 9, 10; Col. i. 27, 28.)

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