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I. THE CONTRA-NATURAL CHARACTER OF THE MIRACLE.

NONE but the maintainers of a rigid process of evolution, enforced by a law of blind, immanent necessity, would deny that man has degenerated from his primitive condition. He has fallen from the estate of holiness and happiness in which he was created into one of sin and misery. That being admitted, it is obvious that the scheme of religion which he originally possessed is now utterly inadequate to his wants. The law which it contained as a rule of action has been violated, and its condemning sentence renders impossible an acceptable obedience to its requirements. So far as that scheme of religion is concerned man is doomed.

On the supposition that God the Moral Ruler were willing to reveal to sinful man another scheme, not merely legal but redemptive, as a directory of faith, a guide of life and a basis of hope, it would be just, if not indispensable, that its credentials should be so clear as to admit of no reasonable doubt. They ought to be not so much deductions from speculative premises however apparently well-founded, as phenomenal facts easily apprehended by consciousness, or immediate and necessary inferences from those facts, and therefore of equal validity with the original data themselves: the concrete results of observation and experience, or good because logical consequences from them. While the revelation itself is to be proved, its proofs ought to be as nearly as possible autopsistic.

real all the careful inductions and logical deductions from them, and thus lives in a world of realities. It is not the vulgar realism which looks merely at the surface of things. It draws distinctions which separate between our original and acquired perceptions, between the real and the additions which man may have superinduced. It becomes a discerning and enlightened realism, which looks on things as God has made them.

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BIBLE STUDY IN COLLEGE—THE METHODS.

The views advanced in a former article on Bible Study in College are not merely speculative and theoretical. It is possible to make a liberal education distinctively scriptural and christian. The distinctive mark of the cordage of the Royal British navy is an imperishable red thread twisted into every strand of the rope. The rope maker finds it easy enough to introduce it in the process of manufacture. All education ought to have the distinctive red thread of divine truth running through the whole; but the educator must intertwine it with all other truth in the very process of education.

The writer has been directly engaged for seventeen years in reducing his views to practice in the class-room, and he maintains that the problem presents no real difficulty. A concrete plan, matured and verified by experience, is better than elaborate argument and skilful speculation, and far more easily understood and appreciated. Let this be the writer's apology for presenting his own methods in this brief article.

1. Bible study is put into the rank of the severe studies, both for time and work. The course is a three-years' course, called junior, intermediate and senior, and three hours a week are given to each class. Latin, Greek and mathematics can claim no more time. A partial, limited and easy course is not valued in any department because it calls for no effort. Successful labor generates a student's enthusiasm. We therefore coördinate Bible study with the severe studies.

2. The studies of this course are enforced by the same sanctions as others; the same system of grading daily recitations; the same written examinations; the same distinctions for excellence. Graduation in the "Bible Course Proper" is necessary to every degree, and every student in the regular classes of the University is required to take one or more classes of the Bible course every year till it is completed. Some are

afraid of such a system, lest the compulsory study of the Bible excite disgust and hostility on the part of the student. Such fears are groundless, for experience proves that exactly the reverse is true. In these classes there is generated an interest and enthusiasm such as is rarely seen in other departments of study. In this the writer speaks advisedly, for he has had large experience in teaching other things.

3. The English Bible is the text-book. No helps are required to be handled by the classes except a Bible dictionary and a biblical geography and atlas. Commentaries and paraphrases and Bible histories and other books about the Bible would only divert attention from the real text-book. There is a common fallacy just here. Classes study a book about English literature, and they suppose they are studying English literature; so we often read and study books about the Bible and suppose we are studying the Bible. These may often be of value as books of reference, but it is a curious fact that none but advanced students can use books of reference to much advantage in any department of study, and they are profited in proportion to their previous knowledge of the subject.

4. The mastery of the contents of the Scriptures by careful study and class-room drill is the leading aim of the course. We begin at the beginning and pursue the order of the history, and take the books mainly in consecutive order. The historical clue is made to throw light on the doctrinal and devotional books, which are studied only by appropriate reference and comparison throughout the entire course. Scripture is made to interpret Scripture at every point. Technical theology is excluded from the class-room, except as it is suggested in the concrete facts and statements of Scripture. Thus the theology of the class-room is biblical rather than dogmatic; concrete, rather than abstract; and a proper foundation is laid for subsequent study of technical theology. An incidental advantage to the student is familiarity with the Bible as a book and ease and skill in handling it. Another advantage is the enhanced interest with which he reads and hears everything which touches the Scriptures all his life after this study of them.

5. A syllabus of every lesson is put into the hands of the pupil. This syllabus is a table of contents or exhaustive analysis of the parts of Scripture assigned for preparation by the class. It is not a set of questions, though some of the heads are thrown into the form of questions. It serves rather as an indicator to the pupil to direct his study of the text. A class will hardly master a few chapters assigned for a

lesson by simply reading them over once or twice without such an indicator. This syllabus or analysis, constructed on the principle of topical divisions and subdivisions, refers to every verse in the lesson by number and to such parallel references as may be necessary to the elucidation of the text. This makes the mastery of the lesson easier and the right comprehension of it far more certain, before the student comes to the class-room. In the class-room questions are asked, *ex animo et ex ore*, just as the exigencies of class-drill may seem to demand, and such explanations are given as seem suited to the grade of the class and the stage of the course. Many questions are answered in brief as they arise, or are postponed to a later period of the course for full discussion, partly because their consideration requires a previous mastery of the entire Scriptures in detail, and partly because students of the lower grades have not had sufficient mental training to grapple successfully with such questions. In making explanations the teacher must avoid commonplaces and rely largely on the perspicuity of Scripture and the native common sense of the class, stimulating it when necessary by question and answer on the Socratic method, rather than by tedious harangues. So, also, in applying the truth, there should be no cant, nor mere preaching, nor exhortation, nor effort at spiritualizing, but let the truth sharply defined do its own work, and let the natural conscience and God's Spirit work through the word mastered. By pursuing this course in the main, the teacher is the better able on proper occasion to drive a nail and clinch it hard in the way of personal application, either to strengthen the wavering, comfort the mourner, warn the unruly or convince the gainsayer.

The pupils are all required to have tablet and pencil, and to take notes of explanations given in class, and to copy the same afterwards, to be inspected by the professor. The value of this exercise cannot be overestimated. It secures constant attention, so difficult in large classes; it secures review and redigestion of the lesson after the recitation; it secures the oral instructions of the teacher from being lost, and it cultivates the valuable habit of attending and thinking and writing at the same time. The facility acquired in this last by many, during a three-years' course, is itself no mean reward for their diligence.

6. The scheme of the course is as follows: The junior course (the lowest) begins with Genesis and ends with Samuel's administration. The student is expected to study every chapter and verse, and to master the history, the biography, the prophecy, the geography, the typology and the archæology of that period, elucidated with sufficient

references to the later Scriptures. The inspiration of the Scriptures is assumed, and the pupil taught to accept them as the infallible Word of God and the final standard of appeal for the truth. And he is taught to interpret them according to the simplest dictates of common sense. The refinements of an "advanced scholarship," if true, would be absolutely valueless to pupils of this grade, while the foundations of a simple, childlike faith in the supernatural must be laid in this class, if laid at all.

The intermediate course (the middle class) begins with King Saul and ends with the death of Herod the Great, soon after the birth of Christ. This includes the remaining historical books and the historico-prophetical books, both previous to and subsequent to the Captivity. The connexions of sacred and profane history are fully pursued down to the time of Christ. The various modifications of the Jewish commonwealth, both before and after the Captivity, are carefully noted and discussed. The relations of Judaism to oriental history, and subsequently to Roman history, are carefully noted and defined; and especially the influence of Judaism on the religions of the East and on the philosophies of the West is indicated and proved, preparatory to fuller discussion and illustration in the senior year.

The comparative study of prophecy and history in this course is extremely fascinating to the diligent student. It gives him the key to all history and enables him to recognize God in history at every point. By the time he has reached the end of this course he is prepared to realize that the "Seed of the woman" is "Head over all things to the church." Without this clue, all history is a labyrinth, dark and pathless. By following this clue the class is able to see the triumphs of Judaism and the preparation of the world for the coming of Christ, in the "fulness of time."

The senior course (the third year) embraces the life of Christ, studied on the plan of the Harmony, with special attention to miracles, prophecies, types and parables, and with elaborate studies of the Sermon on the Mount. It includes also the Book of Acts and the setting of the church in order. More than half of this course is made up of *resumé* studies on the entire Scriptures in the form of lectures. Numerous topics are taken up and discussed exhaustively in the light of the entire Scriptures, or else presented in a bird's-eye view for the confirmation of faith; for example, The Unities of Scripture, The Sabbath, The Family, The Bible and Science, The Hebrew Commonwealth in full detail, The Influence of Judaism on the Ancient World, etc.

The Evidences of Christianity are treated in a brief summary in the remainder of this year. The senior student who has gone over all these courses is already in possession of all the evidences, gathered in detail, and there is really no necessity for anything more than a mere summing up with the help of a popular text-book.

7. The writer's *ideal* of this Bible course is to make it the *unifying course of all sound learning*. He would make it touch human thought and action at every point. He would traverse every domain of earthly knowledge for confirmation and illustration of Divine truth. He would make God's Word unify all history, illustrate every science, answer all heresies, confirm all that is good, and furnish a key to the Babel of human voices and speculations, and, above all, give a solid basis for faith from creation to final redemption, from Eden to the New Jerusalem.

This is the ideal. "Who is sufficient for these things?" The *ideal teacher* of such a course begins with a thorough knowledge of all Scripture, so as to compare Scripture with Scripture; then a practical knowledge of the original tongues of the Bible; then a mastery of the whole field of Biblical literature, and skill to discern withal; then an ample store of universal knowledge, and then strong common-sense to enable him at the same time to instruct the simple and excite new interest in the most gifted. You nor I will ever realize this ideal, but we may reach after it more and more.

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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF 1888.

At the hour of 11 A. M., on Thursday, May 17, we saw a large audience assembled in the roomy Franklin Street Church, Baltimore, with the pastor, Dr. W. U. Murkland, in the pulpit, Dr. G. B. Strickler's calm, smoothly-shaven face on the right, and Dr. William Adams' black eyes glowing on the left. A new, and, as it proved, a finely-toned organ threw up its lofty pipes in the rear of the pulpit. As these pipes were painted in soft olive greens, with only here and there a touch of gold and warm brown tints, the eye had some relief from the Sahara of buff that covered the walls of the church. The windows, however, were decidedly tasteful, and a very pretty one in the northeast corner, designed by Dr. Murkland, perpetuates the memory of Dr. Plumer, a former pastor of the church.

After the usual preliminary services, including an excellent prayer by Dr. Adams, Dr. Strickler, the retiring moderator, took for his text John xv. 5, "I am the vine, ye are the branches," and proceeded to dis-