

THE PRESBYTERIAN AND REFORMED REVIEW

No. 51—July, 1902.

I.

THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL ARGUMENT FOR THEISM.

IT is not difficult to understand the influence exerted by the Kantian philosophy during the last few decades. To an individual or a generation, engrossed in the study of science and indisposed to metaphysical speculation, averse to materialism and skepticism and moving in the direction of faith, the standpoint of Kant offers much attraction. It combines two signal advantages. It authenticates the concepts employed in science; it provides an independent basis for religion. In both these respects its superiority as a working philosophic theory to positivism is obvious. The late Professor Huxley enthusiastically extolled Hume as of all philosophers the most satisfactory to a scientific mind. But Hume deprives science of its metaphysical foundations; he denies philosophical validity to the idea of causation, and resolves the universe into unrelated atoms. It seems infelicitous that a speculation which invalidates the notions indispensable to scientific reasoning should be regarded with approval by men devoted to the interpretation of nature. The Kantian doctrine is preferable in that it expressly vindicates the concepts which underlie our mathematical and our inductive science.

The other advantage mentioned is of even greater consequence. "Our most holy religion," says Hume, in the *Essay on Miracles*, "is founded on faith, not on reason." Kant uses similar language: "I must abolish knowledge, to make room for belief." His meaning, however, is entirely different. To Hume, religion is a superstition, a product of custom and imagination; to Kant,

VI.

REVIEWS OF RECENT THEOLOGICAL LITERATURE.

I.—APOLOGETICAL THEOLOGY.

MAGIC AND RELIGION. By ANDREW LANG, Author of *Myth, Ritual and Religion; Custom and Myth*, etc. 8vo, pp. x, 316. Longmans, Green & Co., 39 Paternoster Row, London, New York and Bombay : 1901.

Into this volume Mr. Lang has gathered a series of papers. The most of them bear on the problem of the origin and early history of religion and tend to strengthen the hypothesis set forth in his *Making of Religion*, which was published in 1898 and favorably reviewed in this journal at the time (vol. ix, p. 744). That hypothesis is stated by an unfriendly critic—Mr. Hartland—as follows: “Apparently it is claimed that the belief in a supreme being came, in some way only to be guessed at, first in order of evolution, and was subsequently obscured and overlaid by belief in ghosts and in a pantheon of lesser divinities.” That is to say, Mr. Lang, setting himself against the current of popular speculation, supposes that belief in a supreme being, instead of arising as an evolution from a precedent ancestor worship or animism, antedated those forms of belief. He was led to this conclusion, he tells us (p. 224), “first, by observing the reports of belief in a relatively supreme being and maker among tribes who do not worship ancestral spirits;” and “secondly, by remarking the otiose unworshipped supreme being, often credited with the charge of future rewards and punishments, among polytheistic and ancestor-worshipping people.”

In defense of himself against Mr. Hartland’s inuendo, Mr. Lang replies that it is true enough that he holds that belief in “a creative being (not a spirit, merely a being), before ghosts are worshipped,” “came in some way only to be guessed at.” “But,” he adds, “if I am to have an hypothesis like my neighbors, I have suggested that early man, looking for an origin of things, easily adopted the idea of a maker, usually an unborn man, who was before death and still exists. Round this being crystallized affection, fear and sense of duty; he sanctions morality and early man’s remarkable resistance to the cosmic tendency, his notion of unselfishness. That man should so early conceive a maker and father seems to me very probable; to my critics it is a difficulty. . . . No speculation seems more inevitable” (p. 225). Readers of our review of Mr. Lang’s *Making of Religion* (ix, 744) will remember that in this we are quite of Mr. Lang’s mind. That

man should instinctively "project himself upon the heavens" seems to us so inevitable, in fact, that we can account for the difficulties which his critics find with Mr. Lang's postulation of an anthropomorphic religion for early man only by a fatal one-sidedness in their methods—a one-sidedness which, in a word, forgets the subject in absorption with the object. It is not, after all, "primitive religion" in the abstract that we are in search of, but the primitive religion of *man*. And the primitive religion of man can never be reached by methods which leave out of consideration man himself, the producing cause of the thing we are investigating.

Now, what we are saying amounts, of course, to suggesting that the so-called "anthropological method" requires to be supplemented by the "psychological method," in order that we may attain satisfying results in this sphere of investigation. No one will rise from reading the discussions of the origin and early forms of religion by our leading anthropologists, without a strong conviction that what is needed by these writers is a fundamental study of the psychology of religion. The scoff implied in Mr. Hartland's professed inability to conceive how man could arrive directly at belief in a man-like supreme being grates a little on our susceptibilities. It is all very well to collect the phenomena of religion as they appear in the life of races and peoples and tribes, and to seek from these to construct a phenomenological *schema* of the course of religious development. Knowledge of how religion arises in the individual mind is, nevertheless, an indispensable prerequisite to the safe interpretation of these phenomena. No more here than in other spheres of investigation is it other than pseudo-science to seek to interpret phenomena apart from the constitutive factor by which they were produced.

We are not saying that "the anthropological method" is useless and can lead to no sound conclusions. On the contrary we welcome Mr. Lang's investigations in this sphere just because "the anthropological method" has in his hands led to sound conclusions: conclusions which we think, on "anthropological" grounds pure and simple, must stand. Though these conclusions are powerfully commended to us, because they are in harmony with the findings suggested to us by the psychological method also, yet their immense importance as "anthropological" conclusions is revealed when we attend to another consideration. We can imagine anthropologists objecting to the use of the psychological method altogether, or at least looking at it with a certain chary distrust, on the ground of a formed or half-formed or even perhaps sub-conscious doubt whether it is legitimate to attribute to "primitive man" the same mental movements observable in civilized man. We can imagine an extreme evolutionist saying, or at least feeling, that his business is to get behind the man whose mental workings he is conscious of in himself, or can observe in his fellows—or even to get behind man himself, at least, as we know man, to the half-bestial creature that once was slowly becoming man. What he wishes to do is to observe how, in the process of other changes, this change also took place—this evolving being became a religious creature. Obviously, from this point of view, the intrusion into his work of considerations derived from a knowledge of the human mind as at present existing, and its normal workings, might confuse his entire reasoning. It is of the utmost significance that Mr. Lang steps in at just this point and shows us that on "anthropological grounds" themselves, "primitive religion" is exhibited as "anthropomorphic" rather than as "animistic" or "ancestor-worshipping." And it is because he seems to us to have done this, that we attach an importance to his writings on this subject that from other points of view might well seem excessive. Primitive man is observed to have actually reasoned humanly.

Mr. Lang's main thesis, then, is, let us understand, that "nothing in savage religion is better vouched for than the belief in a being whom narrators of every sort call 'a Creator who holds all in his power'" (pp. 9-10); and that this supreme being is not "envisaged as a spirit but rather as a supernormal magnified man of unbounded power and of limitless duration" (p. 17). Thus, he contends, the earliest traceable form of religion was relatively high; and it was due to the process of social evolution that it subsequently deteriorated to the low forms now so prevalent among savages. Now, this opinion, he remarks, may be attacked on two sides. It may be said that the loftier religious ideas of the lowest savages have been borrowed from higher religions into contact with which these savages have been brought—especially from Christianity or Islam. And the validity of the evidence itself by which these higher religious ideas are attributed to lower races may be assailed. The present volume is, for the most part, made up of essays in which these two modes of assault on his theory are met, although other factors in the problem and other attempts at a solution of it are also discussed.

First Mr. Tyler's theory of "loan-gods or borrowed religion" is examined; and it is shown that it will not account for the situation. It remains a fact that low savages, the most remote in time and place from the possibility of having borrowed their "high gods," yet do believe in a creator and moral governor of the world. Then Mr. Frazer's idea that magic has everywhere preceded religion, and indeed that religion has been invented only in despair of magic—when men had tried magic and found it wanting—is examined and equally found inconsistent with the facts. "As to that despair, it does not exist": religion is found not as the successor of magic but existing fully developed side side by side with superabundant magic. Next the central argument of the new edition of Mr. Frazer's *Golden Bough* is taken up—that horrible theory of the origin of the Jewish feast of Purim, by means of which he fancies he can account for the ascription of deity to our Lord. In a running criticism, covering about 125 pages—a criticism so desultorily written as to tax the patience of the reader sadly—this portentous piece of conjectural construction is fairly laughed out of court. Doubtless this was the right way to deal with the nest of unsupported and insupportable hypotheses out of which Mr. Frazer has built his castle in the air; but it makes certainly very confused reading. The result of the discussion is stated in a question, thus: "Seriously, have we not in all this book [*i. e.*, *The Golden Bough*] to do with that method of arbitrary conjecture which has ruined so many laborious philosophies of religion?" Two further essays carry on the general line of investigation to which the book is devoted. In one of these Mr. Frazer's primal theory—that built on "the ghostly Priest"—is subjected to a very telling criticism. In the other South African religion is restudied with a view to validating its original recognition of a "high god." The volume closes with three essays on folk-lore and magic, which have no immediate relation to the main subject with which the volume deals.

We cannot praise the form into which Mr. Lang has cast the greater part of the discussions included in these pages. It has all of Mr. Lang's worst faults in an exaggerated measure. But we consider the matter of the volume important as a buttress to the suggestions enunciated in *The Making of Religion*, and as a really conclusive exposure of the methods of Mr. Frazer in the *Golden Bough*. We do not see how any one, after reading Mr. Lang's criticisms upon these methods, can treat the main lines of argument in that painful book seriously.

Princeton.

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