

was a teacher for us now; for the secret of all keen thinking to-day, whether among quicker thinkers or slower, more radical and rapid men or men more cautious and reserved, is the belief in the immanent God and the consequent unspeakable value of humanity and of nature, of thought, of habit, and above all of religion.

He was surely right in his iconoclastic attitude toward forms, as the tree is right to burst the binding bark which it ever re-forms afresh. Onward then be the watchword we cry, following this leading man of God. Ever new forms; ever more life that dwells in forms, and casts them off to fashion new. More life in more love that comes of more vision of souls, our own, our brothers' souls, the soul of God in whom we live. More vision in more thought; then fearlessly forward to new words and deeds. To this the prophet Jeremiah commands us.

A. DUFF.

THE FOURFOLD REVELATION OF GOD.¹

By the "Fourfold Revelation" announced for this evening's subject, I mean the revelation of God in Nature, Scripture, History, and Life. I propose to speak generally of their relation to each other, and more particularly of the relation of Scripture to the rest. Infinite as the subject is, some aspects of it may be brought within the compass of an evening's paper. It will be convenient to begin with a glance at Nature, History, and Life apart from Scripture.

First then we look at Nature. This is the revelation on which the stress was laid a century ago. Christians were tired of controversy, and inclined to look to natural religion for the substance of their duty; while deists readily fell in

¹ Read before the St. John's College Theological Society, Cambridge, May 22nd, 1890.

with principles which seemed to make the gospel needless. Both parties were at one in an ideal view of Nature, which further enabled them to agree fairly well upon the outlines of faith and duty.

But these conceptions of natural religion were much too definite. Christian ideas were unawares imported wholesale. Men spoke of God like Christians; but Nature tells only of an eternal power and divinity. So too their assurance of a future life was the echo of their Christian childhood, their imagination of infinite benevolence in Nature a Christian reading of its harsh and jarring strife. Their whole view of Nature was fundamentally untrue. They saw the surface harmony and beauty—the happiness of the bird, the glory of the flower—but not the bitter struggle for existence. In truth, stern laws are working everywhere, and Nature's punishments are merciless. Man, even wicked man, sometimes forgives: Nature never. The car of fate rolls on, and crushes man and beast beneath its wheels. There is indeed some mitigation for the beast, which lives but for the moment, and is snapped up suddenly. Only man has no relief, for only man knows the remorse of conscience and the wear of lingering pain. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of Nature.

Next, we look at History without Christ. There were great historians indeed before His coming, and they wanted not for worthy subjects. Herodotus tells the epic of Europe and Asia, Livy that of the rise of Rome. Thucydides had before him the catastrophe of Athens, Polybius the destruction of the last free states by Rome, Tacitus the lurid splendour of the early Cæsars. Yet with all their keen insight they never reached the idea of a plan in universal history, of a divine purpose even in the struggles of barbarian peoples.

If the revelation of History is far from clear, the revelation of Life is covered with tenfold darkness. Hard as it is to

look through History "to some far off Divine event," it is harder still in the trials of life, in personal suffering and pain, in the wrong and outrage with which earth is filled, to see the individual care of God for each and all of us. Men could not rise without Christ to one of the hardest efforts of Christian faith.

Whatever then an ideal man might learn from these three revelations, it is clear that men in general have found them insufficient. Nobody now contends that the gospel is a secondary matter, even if true. If it is not false, it must be paramount. Let us take it into account, and look at things again.

When we speak of the revelation of Scripture, we must bear in mind that Scripture is only the record which contains it. The revelation is the ever-living Person of the Lord. He came not to work miracles or teach religion, but to be Himself the revelation of both God and man to men. In Christ we know that God is no abstraction of the blind and ruthless powers of Nature, but a loving Father of His erring children, and that His all-sovereign mercy is over each as well as all of us. He may not rend the heavens and come down, but the prayer of sorrow and the cry of wrong are not unheard on high. In Christ we know the true prerogative and dignity of man, that he is the son of God, and ruler, not of this world only, but of that to come. Not in the image of angels man was made, and it is not the image of angels that we shall wear when sin has passed away. In Christ we know that the life we live in Him is life indeed and incorruptible. In Him by faith we live in the eternal state, even while we sojourn in the world of time.

The Hebrew prophets found in the world a meaning unknown to the philosophers. They could discern the strife of righteousness and sin, and look through the deliverance of Israel from Egypt or Assyria to a mightier

deliverance of mankind from the powers of evil. But there are two great imperfections in prophecy. For one, its perspective is timeless. It is like the morning dawn, which lights up one range of hills after another, without giving any idea of the valleys between. The other is that it came at sundry times in sundry parts as men could bear. It is only hints and fragments of the infinite and final revelation of the Lord, the far off shinnings of the brightness of His presence. But now that the Lord is come indeed, and nearer to us in heaven than He ever was on earth, His presence with us needs must light up mysteries inscrutable to men before His coming. The mysteries of Nature, History, and Life are summed up and have their answers in His everliving Person. In the light therefore of the cross of Christ we look at them again.

In the first place, we see why thoughtful and cultured heathens could get no further than they did. They worshipped Nature in her beauty, and paid no regard to things they counted vile and ugly. Therefore they could have no true knowledge of Nature as a whole. They plumed themselves on their Greek civilization, and despised the slave and the barbarian. Therefore they could have no conception of universal history. They deified man, but only in his animality, or at best his intellect. Therefore they overlooked his spiritual nature, and with it the deeper meanings of life. Now it is from the gospel that we learn the scientific spirit of investigation. Even as we must become little children to come to Christ, so we must become little children to question Nature, History, or Life. We are not to build our castles in the air of that which might have been, or that which ought to be, but to trace out with loving patience that which God has done. The Christian spirit is the scientific spirit. If we believe that every creature of God is good, we shall not be ashamed to follow out His handiwork in every ugly corner of Nature.

Nay, it is our duty so to do. Even the Old Testament has its rebuke for the men who regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of His hands. If we count no man common or unclean, we shall see for ourselves the unity of History, that in Christ there is neither male nor female, Greek or Jew, barbarian, Scythian, bond or free. If we reverence our own selves as the temple of His Spirit, we shall not fail to see His loving guidance in the storms of life. We are too apt to fancy that mere intellect, if only there be enough of it, will solve all problems. We forget that spiritual conditions limit intellect: witness the colossal blunders of Napoleon. All true insight comes indeed from Christ, but all true insight is not limited to His outward Church. Many a heathen had it in his measure, and many an unbeliever has it now. Candour and diligence and purity of heart are His good gifts wherever they are found, and many a man who walks in darkness is a truer servant of the Lord than some of us who bear His name.

Now let us look again at Nature. From the unity of God we learn the unity of law. We see no longer a chaos of countless lesser forces, but the direct action of a single will upon the world. The old Hebrew conception was the true one after all: "He maketh winds His messengers, His ministers a flaming fire." The laws of Nature are the thoughts of God, and we build our very life upon their fixity. "I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." The mighty maze of being is no longer without a plan. In the light of science, as unveiled by Christian hands, we can trace that plan from a remote and dim antiquity, on which the geologist himself is silent, and even the astronomer must speak with bated breath. Onward through ages measureless to man it unfolds in ever-growing richness and complexity, and rises step by step to higher and nobler spheres of growth and conflict. First we seem

to see the fashioning of streams of incandescent star-dust into glowing suns and lifeless worlds. Then comes a mighty interval for the cooling of this whirling orb of molten rock before the appearance of life and death in plants, and then of life and death in animals. Onward still the conflict rises as higher and higher forms appear. Brighter grow the lights of life, and deeper yet the shades of death, till at last the glacial period clears the way for the age of crisis. Next, and still on the direct line of evolution, come life and death in man, and, last of all, the dread reality of which all that had gone before was foreshadowing and preparation—the transcendent conflict of eternal life and eternal death which was decided for ever on the cross of Christ. And now we watch and wait in sure and certain hope that He will come again to quicken our mortal bodies and deliver the entire creation from its present state of bondage and corruption.

Next we look at History. From the unity of God we learn the unity of History. Above the anarchy of this world's troubles and disorder is an order planned of God. That order runs through Scripture like a silver thread. You may turn from the Hebrew prophets to our Lord on the Mount of Olives, from the Gospel of St. John to St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, from his Epistle to the Ephesians to the nameless writer to the Hebrews, without ever losing sight of it. The work of criticism on universal history was begun by Christian students. Justin and the Alexandrians recognised a Divine teaching of mankind in Jewish law and Greek philosophy. To Augustine all the glory of imperial Rome herself was only an episode in the building of the City of God, whose foundations and completion are not of this creation. And since Augustine's time the order of the ages has been far unfolded. Thus the call of the Teutonic nations, the supremacy of the Latin Church, the revolt of northern Europe, the rise and fall of

Puritanism, the reconstruction of society in our own time, have each of them taught for all generations some new revelation of God in history. The centuries which separate us from the carnal presence of the Lord bring us all the nearer to the secret of His counsel. In spite of the darkness of ignorance and the turbulence of human passions, in spite of the errors of councils and the apostasies of churches, His Holy Spirit guides His people still. Without that guidance in history we should indeed be hopeless ; but it is not the formal guidance of which carnal men have dreamed. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and so is every one that is born of the Spirit." Outward forms of Churches or cunningly devised confessions may blind our charity or turn our hearts to malice, but they cannot limit His holy working in the world. Not in a book and not in a Church, not in the record and not in the witness, is our life, but in the Lord who loves us, our Saviour and our God.

There still remains the hardest task of all—to bring the revelation of Life to the light of Christ. From the unity of God we learn the unity of Life. Our joys and sorrows are not the isolated things they seem, but parts of one connected training for another state. However hard it be to realize, thus we know it is. Though God's call is loud at times in the great and strong wind and the earthquake and the fire, His truer utterance is the still small voice which speaks to us in common duties. Here we tread on holy ground, where a stranger may not intermeddle. Some things however I may say. If you know not yet what God is doing, its meaning will unfold in middle life or riper age. In His guidance, if we only follow it, there is something which ennobles duty and transfigures pain, something higher and far better than any petty dreams and worldly hopes of ours. Whatever of human glory He may call us to renounce, He has promised to recompense us even in

this life a hundred-fold. We know it now by faith, and we shall see it with our eyes at no far distant day, when this world's twilight shall have passed away, and we shall see Him as He is.

H. M. GWATKIN.

ON THE MORAL CHARACTER OF
PSEUDONYMOUS BOOKS.

II.

ALTHOUGH, from the facts adduced in a previous paper, there would seem to be no external evidence that pseudonymous works were in ancient times composed in perfect good faith, as a recognised kind of literature of the nature of dramatic fictions, not intended to deceive any one, it is possible that a proof of this might be found in the internal character of such writings themselves. They might conceivably bear such marks of truthfulness and high moral earnestness as to make it perfectly certain that they cannot have been intended to deceive, even for such good ends as ancient philosophers thought might justify pious frauds. An instance of this may be found in Pascal's *Provincial Letters*, which breathe such a lofty religious earnestness and pure love of truth as, even were there no other proof, would show that their literary disguise was not intended to be taken as true. If, in many of the ancient writings that are certainly pseudonymous, such an internal character of manifest truthfulness could be traced; we should be obliged to conclude, even in the absence of external evidence, that dramatic personation was a recognised literary practice in the times and circles in which such writings originated. It must be observed however, that this argument, in order to be conclusive, requires that the writings on which it is founded be certainly works claiming a false name and authority; for if that is only doubtful, the explanation of