

LECTURE II.

PRIMEVAL REVELATION.

THE Primeval Revelation given in the opening chapters of Genesis has been the great battlefield on which criticism and science have wielded their weapons against revealed truth. Every sort of argument has been employed, every kind of consideration has been adduced to discredit both the authority and veracity of that primeval record. It has been assailed as puerile, fitted only to satisfy the childhood of man, which is ready credulously to accept insufficient reasons for facts of nature and history. It has been denounced as unscientific, and even contrary to the certain conclusions which science has reached. The attack both of critics and scientists was inevitable. Revelation could not escape the ordeal. It had a crisis to pass through. Such periods of crisis recur from time to time. When human thought receives a great impulse (which is the case only

periodically), when it enters into a state of special excitation, it cannot avoid contact and conflict with the past, and especially with the record of the earliest accepted opinion. All praise to the searching, fearless criticism of Scripture by which recent times have been distinguished. Its aberrations may well be pardoned in consideration of its undoubted services in giving us a deeper insight into the Inspired Word. If it has shaken foundations of opinion superficially laid, it has served to lay them more deeply and firmly. The attack has brought forth the defence. The thoroughness of the one has contributed to the thoroughness of the other. And reviewing the stage now reached in the modern attack on Christianity, we can gather this result with confidence and thankfulness, that our Faith stands as impregnable in the blaze of light shed on its darkest portions, as ever it did, when ignorance was said to be the mother of piety.

Equally inevitable was the temporary conflict between Science and Revelation, in our own age. The vast and rapid progress of science has been a characteristic of recent times. The boundaries of our knowledge of Nature have been vastly extended. Scientific

truths, unknown and undreamed of by our fathers, are now familiar as household words. Nor have they been only an increase to the knowledge of the learned ; they have been made ministrants of knowledge to all. The true Science of Nature may be said to be only as of yesterday. At least Science has of late extended our knowledge of nature to an extent unprecedented in all past ages. In so far as Revelation seemed to teach or touch upon Natural Science, there could not but be a comparison between Science and Revelation. The question could not be avoided. Do the teachings of the two agree ? The same God of Revelation and of Nature cannot be in self-contradiction. If contradiction can be proved between the dicta of Science and Revelation, then either one or other must be untrue. Science refuses to yield, therefore Revelation must give way. Sometimes it has been attempted to escape from the dilemma by holding that Revelation does not profess Science, introducing it only by way of illustration, and that it speaks in popular and not in scientific language. All that is true, and more true than is often admitted. Still the human mind will not rest content until even apparent contradic-

tions are satisfactorily reconciled, or at least until ground is shewn why such reconciliation should not be reasonably expected. This result cannot be said to have been as yet fully attained. Yet a decided approximation towards that end has been made. The theological terror of Science has been greatly quieted. Difficulties that startled and shocked on their being first propounded, have on fuller examination been seen to be less formidable and fatal than they originally appeared. Conclusions based on Revelation, and accepted as unquestionable, have been subjected to reconsideration, and with every advantage to the cause of Scripture, broadening and deepening our views of inspired teaching; while Science also has been putting off some of its dogmatism, and especially has been renouncing some of its inferences from ascertained scientific truth, and has been acknowledging that there is no such discrepancy between itself and Revelation as might at first sight appear. Neither the depths of Revelation nor those of Nature have been exhaustively explored. Until Revelation has yielded up its ultimate teaching and Nature has revealed its innermost secrets, the final adjudication cannot take place. That position is yet

far in the future, nor may it be expected in time. Here it will always be true that we know in part, hereafter only shall we know fully. Here is the sphere of faith. Hereafter only is that of full vision.

The proper way of viewing Primeval Revelation is not to study the difficulties which may be started against the form or details of its teaching, but to study what it really does teach; not to perplex ourselves about how it sets forth, but what it sets forth. Whether it is history or parable is a question of secondary consequence to that of the spiritual lesson which it can be shown to convey. This we say not as admitting the objections to the historical veracity of Primeval Revelation in Genesis, but only as suspending such a discussion, and passing over it meantime, in order to approach the more important subject of what religious conclusions it really and unquestionably does inculcate.

Regarding Primeval Revelation in this point of view we shall find it no sterile field, yielding only the gleanings of simple, old world, inchoate truths and principles, but full of significance, pregnant with truths which all succeeding history and experience have only unfolded, exemplified, authenticated, and confirmed.

We shall find it a most worthy introduction to that long period of Revelation recorded in the Pentateuch and subsequent books of our Inspired Canon. The threshold of Revelation ushers us, as it were, at once into the very inmost recesses of the sanctuary, where difficulties are removed, darkness made light, and the truth of God made clear as far as it can be in our present imperfect state.

The subjects with which Primeval Revelation deals are multifarious and important. In fact they include all those more important topics on which the human mind has ever exercised itself—God, Nature, Man, Sin, Redemption; the origin of the material universe, called into existence by the fiat of the Deity; then a mysterious break, of incalculable unknown duration, issuing in a formless void, ushering in a period of renewed Divine activity, when the Spirit of God brooded on the face of the waters; then the re-arrangement of the material universe and its preparation for man's era; then the crowning of the work by the creation of man, whose case is taken up and dealt with primarily and prominently all through the following record—his original upright condition, his fall, its

consequences, his recovery, and so on—the great principle first enunciated gradually assuming a concrete form in specific individuals ; the teeming fountain gushing into the narrow rill, and spreading out far and wide in its onward flow till it covers the earth and the ages, till it embraces the whole race—peoples, nations, kindreds, tongues—losing itself at last in the boundless ocean of eternity.

Thus Primeval Revelation boldly undertakes the greatest questions, and with a precision, terseness, and decision wholly remarkable gives its solution of them. It is as it were the text, of which the Inspired Record is the commentary. It strikes the key-note of a very various harmony. Whether it is in unison with that long drawn-out song will go far to settle our opinion as to its Divine original. It tells the end from the beginning, and if it does so truthfully that will go far to identify its authorship with Him to whom the end is known from the beginning—in whose view the whole plan of time and eternity is seen at a glance, and who unfolds His purposes as men are able to receive them.

Within our limited compass we can do little more than state the truths involved in this Primeval Revelation :—

1. Its doctrine of God, and the relation of God to Nature. It exhibits the Deity as eternal, preceding the "beginning" when His creative act was done—"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." The doctrine of a personal God is impressed on the whole narrative—He works, He speaks, "God created," "God said, 'Let there be light,'" and so on.

Then also the relation of God to Nature is set forth as that of cause and effect. God is the Self-existent. Nature, whether material or spiritual, derives its existence from Him. The long agitated question of Theism and Materialism is anticipated, and pronounced upon with no ambiguous decision. The dictum of Primeval Revelation is unquestionably clear, as somewhat transcendently stated by the old Alexandrian Jewish Philosopher, Philo, the contemporary of Christ (*ob.* after A.D. 39), who defines God as "the Existent" ($\tau\omicron\delta\ \delta\nu$), and Matter as "the Non-existent." ($\tau\omicron\delta\ \mu\eta\ \delta\nu$). On the very threshold of time we have a testimony, clear and unambiguous, to that view of Deity, which is consistently maintained through all succeeding Revelation. Before competing and conflicting ideas come into the arena, Scripture pronounces that decision, which it has un-

flinchingly maintained. It refuses to accept any eternal subsistence of matter, to acknowledge any theory which evolves the present material frame of things from matter itself. It protests against Atheism which would dispense with a God, and against Pantheism which would identify Divinity with Nature, and much more against Polytheism, a variety of Pantheism, which in its purest form deifies qualities, making an abstract idea or quality not merely a scientific generalisation, but a Divinity. There is no tentative reasoning back from the visible to the invisible, from Nature to Nature's God. On the contrary, God is boldly set forth, to begin with, as the Primal Cause, from whom and through whom all that exists is derived. There is no slow process of rising from the lower to the higher, from earth to heaven. Heaven is at once opened. The first scene in the great drama of the universe and time presents God seated on His throne, commanding into existence, controlling, ordering, and arranging all that belongs to Nature, Creation, and Time. Religion is presented to us, as it were, not from its lower, but from its upper side, *i.e.*, in the order of sequence in time, and not in the order which human investigation would follow.

And what is this but Revelation speaking and not Science, inspired deduction as contrasted with human induction. The theory of Primeval Revelation is to postulate, not to prove Deity. According to human scientific principles Primeval Revelation should have come last, instead of first, as it undoubtedly does. Here God reveals Himself directly, and not through types, by an *à priori* assertion, and not by an *à posteriori* induction.

2. In the order of Primeval Revelation we come to the consideration of the natural world as constituted by God. The natural world—heavens, earth, seas, with their glorious lights and teeming inhabitants are facts. They exist, and have always existed, since man existed to exercise his enquiring mind in accounting for their origin. Man calls on Revelation to give such account. Revelation responds to the call. Nor can we fail to mark—

(a) The great contrast between the instantaneousness of the first creative act, when “God spake and it was done,” and the gradual process of forming the world of nature into the shape which it now exhibits. Is this theory of a gradual process con-

trary to the instincts and experience of humanity? Certainly not. The experience of man is uniform, and to the effect that forces work out by degrees (and not *per saltum*) their results. Time is not less an essential element than force in the production of any specific condition of things. Or is this theory of gradual process contradictory to the conclusions of science, especially of Geological Science, as presently reached? Certainly not. Ages of indefinite duration mark the transition from one geological era to another. Eozoic (dawn of life); Paleozoic (old life); Mesozoic (middle life); Neozoic (new, or modern life), these in the geological history of the earth are rough descriptions of periods of incalculable duration by slow degrees passing from the earlier into the later stage. It is legitimate, at least, to suppose that the description in Genesis of the six days' (misnamed) creational action represents the transition from a previous condition of the earth to that in which it was fitted to become the habitation of man, to whom, indeed, it is the special object of the Genesis narrative to direct attention. Upheavals, subsidences, alternations of sea

and dry land; climatic changes, now tropical, now glacial—all these have passed over the same spots of the earth's surface, if we can believe, as we do not doubt, or desire to doubt, the assertions of science. Surely these are not in disaccord with that primeval account of the gradual arrangement of our globe for the habitation of man which we have in the book of Genesis. Whether from point to point they accord I will not pretend to say or shew. This is a question still remaining for final consideration, but in a growingly hopeful state for satisfactory settlement.

(β) We must remark on the fearlessness as to details of Revelation, fully meeting the fearless dogmatism of science. As between the two the future must decide which is in the right, or which has the best of the argument unnecessarily raised between them.

(γ) As a consideration not unworthy of particular notice, we may remark on the symmetry of the narrative in Genesis, and its obvious correlation of precedent and subsequent, its intention of shewing preparation for what is to follow. The Divine work of arrangement (as distinguished from the Divine act of creation) is described as going through a

period called six days. Of these, the first three are preparatory, and the second three are completional. The preparation of the first is complemented by the result of the fourth; the work of the second day is to be read along with the work of the fifth, and that of the third day with that of the sixth, thus completing the preparation of this earth for the habitation of man, whose creation is introduced as a culmination of the whole work—occupying a place apart from, and above all the previous work—as if it were the point to which every preceding detail should lead up, as if nature were only, as indeed it is, a foundation for the superstructure of anthropology, as if heavens and earth had their final cause in man.

3. The condition of man next comes in the order of the primeval narrative of creation. Inanimate and lower animate nature have led up to him. He is the last creative effort of God. We confidently ask of Science whether this is not in accordance with its ascertained facts? Apart from all unsettled questions as to man's geological antiquity, it may be taken for granted that he appeared late, and last among the creatures which belong to the present epoch or period of earth's time. So far, then, Scripture and Science agree.

Further, an essential distinction is made between man and all other terrene creatures. He only is made in the image and likeness of God. A pause is made, a period is marked in Gen. i, 25, "God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and everything that creepeth on the earth after his kind." Then comes a pause in the description, as much as to signify a break in the action, marked by the use of the phrase denoting the close of each previous period: "And God saw that it was good." Then man's creation is described, and both the form and terms of the description distinguish that Divine act as occupying a position distinct from all the acts which preceded it. Now, is not this in accordance with science and experience? In a certain kind of classification, man may be ranked with other creatures formed by God's hand. Thus he is a mammal, and so on. But does not science, except what is falsely or imperfectly so called, acknowledge him to be what the Genesis narrative roughly defines him—a being apart from, and superior to, all other, even the highest being on earth? It may be matter of interest to enquire whether this theory of humanity—as primevally upright, but ulti-

mately degenerating to the condition of corruption and sin in which man now exists, is most in agreement with fact and truth, or whether the contrary theory of man's advance from the lower to the present, from the bestial to the human, from the anthropoid ape to the man, is the more accordant with fact and true science. On these questions Inspiration, with which the mythological traditions of a golden age agree, speaks with no uncertain sound: and human instinct and feeling thoroughly agree with its dictates.

Here also we may notice that the Genesis theory of man's original state is perfectly consistent with that of his consummation, as set forth in the New Testament. Man—originally represented by the first Adam—created in a state of innocence (not perfection), by no natural necessity, but in freedom of will, chose sin, transgressed, and fell. But the second and higher representative of the race—Christ—not only recovers humanity from the fall, and restores it to the pristine position; He raises it higher than that original state, whose capabilities for perfection we cannot define, since the fact of fall excludes the development of the possible. The reasoning of St. Paul

in Rom. v., 12-21, conjoins Primeval and Christian Revelation, compares them, contrasts them, and asserts that grace is more potential than creation. "If through the offence of one, many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many." God's grace infinitely transcends man's effort, even when made under the most favourable conditions. High, then, as Primeval Revelation places man, Christianity places him still higher. There is not merely recuperation, but advance—not merely a flow from the ebb, but an overflow—a tide rising higher than it could ever have done under primeval conditions. What we have been, Primeval Revelation shews. What we are, experience knows: but "it doth not yet appear what we shall be."

In Primeval Revelation man has acquired his special position. He is God-like. He is separated by a wide interval, an immeasurable distance, from all other terrene creatures, however high they may be in physical conformation. Our Genesis narrative next presents him to us as religious—as one who does not live by bread alone—but by "every word which proceedeth

out of the mouth of God." In short, the Genesis creational account leads up to that religious token of humanity, which is represented by the Sabbath.

4. The first Creation narrative closes with an account of the institution of the Sabbath. That the account leads up to this religious end, indicates the object for which the Genesis cosmogony is recorded, and bears out the contention for a primarily religious, didactic aim in *Primeval Revelation*—as well as in Scripture generally. The duty of observing the Sabbath is made to rest, not merely on a positive injunction. Its ground lies deep in the analogy of creation, and in the working of God. What benefits man is drawn from the fulness of God. Religion is interpenetrated by both the Divine and the human elements.

On no subject connected with Revelation has more ridicule been poured than on the six days of creation, as laying a foundation for the seventh day of rest. Admitting that the days of Genesis i. may be regarded as periods of indefinite duration, during which the Divine energy was specially operative—it is asked, How can days, which we enlarge to thousands of years, or any vast multiple of such thousands, found a reason

for a seventh day of rest, wherein day must be limited to its popular duration? and the otherwise allowable enlargement of the Genesis days is held to be proscribed fatally by the words of the fourth commandment itself, which seems to identify those days with natural days (Exod. xx., 8-11). But is the difficulty a real one? Is it necessary to regard the days in *v.* 11 as synchronous with the natural days unquestionably referred to in the rest of the passage? Is it natural to synchronise them? I say, Certainly not. It is obviously designed to draw man's duty out of God's example by likeness, or comparison, but not by exact identity. Man, like God, should work and rest, but man cannot work like God, because His working undergoes no pause or cessation. The work of God is, therefore, spoken of and described in terms accommodated to the conditions of man. The real correspondence is between the creative energy of God, and the infinitely more circumscribed productive energy of man. Though man is God's likeness, he is not God's equal. He is limited by far narrower conditions. Yet the likeness is not the less real. The type comes far short of the Archetype. It is as shadow to substance.

It is but a figure of the True. Yet not less real is the correspondence in the causality. "Human labour in producing is a symbol of the Divine act in creating. Man's repose is a figure of Godly rest. How long did it take God to create the world? Not so long in the Divine lifetime, as a week in man's lifetime. Grand as is the universe, vast as are its operations, many and various the inhabitants, the whole must be regarded by man as not so great a task to God as a week's work to himself. . . . Suppose that Moses meant—For six successive Divine days, in which moments are years, God's hand worked: on the seventh Divine day, not yet concluded (Heb. iv. 3-9), He began to rest. Let all holy men, as made in God's image, observe God's rule. Would not such a meaning add greatly to the force of the Divine command? In it is a moral measure for all time, and the key note of providential arrangements. In it is a peculiar majesty, specially suited to the growth of science; and the interpretation, now, affords proof of original inspiration. The sanctity and safety of the Sabbath are not shaken, but assured; built on truthful, not erroneous interpretation. . . . Our

“days, our weeks, our Sabbaths . . . are made
“holy and linked to God. We may liken them
“to a ladder set upon the earth, by which we
“may climb to heaven. They are as a pathway
“across the territory of time; one end vanishes in
“the past to possess the antiquities of God, the
“other is lost in the great world-times of the future.
“The sacred week has not yet been measured by
“science, as to its duration; nor comprehended, as to
“its work. On the use we make of our own day
“in it, depends our weal or woe in future life.”*

The matter therefore stands thus. There is a week of seven days, as the division of time. Six of these are for work, and the seventh is for rest. That was a fact then existing, and existing beyond the memory of man. No point could be discovered within man's history when it began to exist. How could it be accounted for? The reply is given in Genesis. It is made not a mere matter of temporal human expediency, though it is all that, but an essential part of the Divine economy. It is found in God Himself, is a part of the great accord with the Divine worker. It

* “The Supernatural in Nature,” p. 135, 136.

becomes not an excrescence upon the Divine system of the universe, raised up in time to be swept away in time, but a constituent feature of that Divine system, adjusted in its present form to man's present state, yet destined to be developed in a higher consummation in the future, according to that teaching of Scripture,—“There remaineth a rest to the people of God.” “Let us labour to enter into that rest.” Thus the first account of creation, the first stage of Primeval Revelation, leads up to the Sabbath.

We come now to the second section of the creation narrative. As in the first God is more especially set forth as the God of creation, so in this He appears, more especially in His relation to man, as the God of Redemption: the narrative prepares the way for that, and leads up to it. Here also we can almost do nothing beyond stating some of the principal particulars of a rich and suggestive detail. There is man's bodily constitution, formed of the dust of the ground, into which is breathed the breath of life, and man becomes a “living soul.” Then there is his localisation on earth, and the work appointed him to do. For if he was made

in the likeness of God, he must work as well as rest. Following this is the giving over to man, as it were, of the proprietorship and use of all that God made and provided for his service. "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat." But there is a reservation, a limit put to the exercise of the right so conveyed. A part is expressly withheld. "Of the tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, thou shalt not eat." Man is like God, but not equal to God. The supreme dominion of the Divine is set against the subordinate dominion of the human. The asserted prerogative of the absolute and universal proprietary right in God to give or withhold, brings into full relief the real position and relationship of Creator and creature. To the one belongs command. The duty of the other is submission. The submission of the human will to the Divine, if freely and fully rendered, could not fail to secure the richest spiritual good. Only by such submission could a living link of real and conscious connection be formed between will and will, mind and mind, heart and heart; between the feeble, dependent child, and the Almighty, All-sustaining Parent. Thus only could man be trained to his highest good. The breach of

this prohibition, the intrusion of man on that which God has reserved for Himself, must carry in it and with it, degradation, loss, and ruin. "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." The whole historical development of man's experience on earth corroborates the truth implied in the Primeval Revelation. Man is never so happy as when he denies himself, and never so free as when he serves. There is a great part for man to perform, but it must be within the bounds appointed him. Dominion is his, but in subordination to God. The harmonious combination of the Divine and human is alone perfection.

Then follows the teaching of Primeval Revelation regarding the social nature of man. He was not created or fitted for solitary existence, or even for exclusive communion with God. "It is not good that the man should be alone." The narrative proceeds to describe the formation of the woman from the man. In the first section it is simply said that God created man, male and female, alike in the image of God, and therefore, in the highest sense on a perfect level of dignity and worth. This has to be kept in view in the interpretation of the second account,

where the inferiority of woman, and her absolute subordination to the man, might seem to be implied. The two accounts are not inconsistent, but complementary, setting forth the whole truth in a most delicate and appropriate manner—the divine and equal dignity of the sexes on the one hand, and the relation of the wife to the husband involving a certain degree of subordination, on the other. It is very remarkable, and no mean evidence of the inspiration of the narrative, that such a philosophy of the relation of man and woman should have arisen in the east, where the inferiority of woman has from time immemorial been a fixed and absolute matter of faith. And at what a distance of time, and with what a closeness of correspondence, do the Primeval and the Final Revelations speak of this relation! “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.” However, the leading idea expressed is that of the social nature of man, and his dependence on his fellows for the real and full enjoyment of life. “I will make an helpmeet for him,” a true helper, one of like nature and sympathy, a real counterpart, a kind of other self.

This section concludes by deducing the law of Marriage from the constitution of man's nature. Rightly regarded it is the foundation of all social happiness and wellbeing; it secures the good of man and woman, of the family, of society, of the world. Wrongly regarded it is fraught with evils, such as the history of mankind abundantly illustrates. That such a conception of Marriage should have arisen in a time and among a people accustomed to its violation argues a Divine original. Just as the first section closes with the world's Sabbath finding its full completion in the Eternal Rest, so does this close with the ordinance of Marriage, but with a looking forward to the union of Christ and His Church. Earthly things are shadows of the Heavenly.

The third Section of Primeval Revelation is contained in Genesis iii., and we shall treat, not of the formal machinery through which its action is presented to us, but of the substance of what it teaches. Certain undoubted facts, of the deepest import to man, demand explanation. In the world, as now existing, there is sin, suffering, deep moral degradation, physical and

spiritual pain. If man was made upright, how came all these to mar the beauty and wreck the happiness of that God-created world, where all was made very good. This section is the reply to that question.

It commences its tale abruptly. There is the temptation. This is almost the opening incident alike of Man's Primeval Paradise and of Christ's Public Ministry, but with what different consequences! In the one defeat, in the other victory, Then the conditions of the case required that the temptation or instigation to sin should be external to the tempted. Man was upright but not indefectible. His will was free. Nothing within himself would lead to the determination of that will to Evil. If it should be so determined, the influence must be from without.

True to the conditions of the case, our Primeval Revelation represents it to be so. The tempter is the Serpent—is outside of Humanity. The temptation is presented to the weaker—the more impressionable of the human pair, who yet are in a higher sense one. We cannot help comparing this with the temptation of our Lord. In the one the natural condition was defectible, in the other it was indefectible—"The

Prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." Then, there is the facile yielding in the one case, the Divine constancy in the other. The plunge is made. Shame follows the disobedient act, and the just doom is pronounced on all the actors according to the degree and nature of their guilt. As we might expect in a Revelation which deals with the "youth of the world," the terms in which doom is pronounced are very realistic, appealing to the sight and experience, but not thereby excluding the farther-reaching and more spiritual conception. The curse on the serpent borrows its imagery from the debasement of reptile life. The burden imposed on the woman is subjection to her husband, with the pains and sorrows of motherhood. The punishment denounced on the man is toil and labour in order to procure his subsistence: that which at first was a blessing, becomes now a burden and curse, only to be removed by the Gospel cure, which reconverts labour into a blessing and a dignity. A dark and dismal eclipse envelopes the earth and its human lord. Pierced, however, it is by one ray of light, the promise and hope of ultimate deliverance, the promise that "the seed of the woman should bruise the head of

the serpent." This light was to become brighter and brighter as time rolled on. But the period for its full manifestation was not then. Man must bear his burden, until he has felt all its weight. The bitterness of sin must be tasted in order to his relishing the sweetness of salvation. So with a ray of light to chase away utter despair, the curtain falls on the Primeval scene, with exclusion from Paradise. "Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden to till the ground from whence he was taken. So He drove out the man; and He placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubim, and a flaming sword, which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life."

1. These chapters of Primeval Revelation have furnished critical and scientific difficulties with reference to the Old Testament, not dissimilar to those of the Gospel of St. John in connection with the New. They have often been regarded as the weakest points in the two volumes. Eventually they may be found to be for strength. Indeed, even now, they have more than begun to be so.

2. This portion of Revelation is properly an intro-

duction to the great body of Revelation. That its value may be estimated, it is not to be regarded only by itself, but in connection with the whole body of Revealed Truth. If it be so, a wonderful consistency will be seen between them, with no more variation than the different circumstances of both would lead us to expect.

3. Every one knows how closely allied are the language and imagery of the first and last portions of our Holy Scriptures, how the expressions of Primeval Revelation pervade the whole record of Inspired Truth. But not only is this correspondence in language, it is also in thought. In Primeval Revelation truth is founded deeply in God and in man's relation to the Divine. It loses much of this deepness when man falls, but only to recover it when the Gospel of Christ unfolds the method of his restoration. The Sabbath of the upright man—God's image—degenerates on his fall into little more than a weekly rest from worldly toil, to expand again into that eternal rest which "remaineth for the people of God." The unfallen marriage relation sinks down to a merely temporal union for the purposes of time, but yet to be con-

summated in the union of His people with Christ, of the Bride-Church with the Heavenly Bridegroom. And the lost Paradise of Earth is more than restored in that Paradise of God, into which no tempter can enter, where there shall be no more curse, where God's face shall be ever beheld, where is no night, "and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever."

APPENDIX TO LECTURE II.

THE subjects which compose the Primeval Narrative scarcely admit of historical comparison with other accounts of an independent character. That is, we have no such checks on their veracity as are to be found afterwards when the statements of Bible History may be compared with independent narratives relating to the same events. In fact it is exceedingly difficult to settle to our satisfaction whether these records are intended to relate historical facts, or are merely dark sayings in which the conceptions of a primeval age have been wrapt up—whether they are History or Parable—how far they have a substratum of fact, and how much is the mere dress in which opinion is clothed. Their exceeding antiquity is undeniable. It follows from the correspondence between them and traditions of extremely archaic character among many other races. The inference seems irresistible that they have descended from a common origin. How far back that origin may be in the centuries of time no one can say

with certainty. A rude approximation, as doubtful as it is vague, is the utmost available. To form an opinion of their age from their present form is equally illusive. Among all the accounts of Creation, that of Genesis is the fullest and most cohesive. But it may be objected critically that this indicates a late rather than an early date for its composition. It can scarcely be denied that it is a *recension* of more accounts than one—a compilation of various narratives, in which critics fancy that they can discern the joinings. This at least may be said that the record is wonderfully continuous and consistent, and that, whatever we may think of it as a historical statement, it is characterised by a unity of sentiment, a loftiness of spiritual and moral tone, and an elevation of view, both in Theology and Anthropology, to which no parallel tradition can lay claim.

To give specimens of correspondence between the Genesis cosmogony and others of independent tradition—“The without form and void” corresponds to the “chaos” of Hesiod, the “*rudis indigestaque moles*” of Ovid. The first Creational account in Genesis opens with a cosmogony wonderfully similar to that of As-

syria, as recovered by George Smith, and to that of Persia, as preserved in the Visparad. The Assyrian account adheres closely to the Biblical. The very names show an affinity. There is the *Th'hom* (תְּהוֹם) of Genesis, which is the Tiamat of Assyria. After a lacuna the fifth Assyrian tablet gives the creation of the heavenly bodies—running parallel to the account of the fourth day of creation in Genesis. The fifth tablet begins with the statement that the previous works were delightful or satisfactory, agreeing with the oft repeated statement in Genesis after each act of creative power—"God saw that it was good." The difference between them is one of detail. The Assyrian account contains the statement of satisfaction at the head of each tablet, while the Hebrew has it at the close of each act. The Babylonian account also describes the moon as created before the sun. Hence it is obvious that the Genesis account is truer to nature. These specimens illustrate the similarities and dissimilarities in the two narratives.

The Assyrian account further agrees with that of Genesis as to the creation of man. The tablets are fragmentary, and concatenation must frequently be

guessed at. But the general tendency of the story is not uncertain. It contains a fragment of the address from the Deity to the newly created man on his duties to his God; and it is curious that, while in other parts of the story various gods are mentioned by name, here only one God is mentioned, and simply as "The God." The sentiments enunciated might belong to the purest system of religion. Only it would be wrong to ground an argument on a single fragment. The reverse of the tablet appears, so far as the sense can be ascertained, to be addressed to the woman, the companion of the man, and indicates her duties towards her partner.

The interest of the comparison lies in this, that, while the Bible narrative is complete, the Assyrian fragments are not so. So far as these exist, and are decipherable, they virtually agree. But there are many breaks in the latter.

To extend and correlate our view on the cosmogony narrative, the result seems to be that the western Asiatic nations, like the Aryans of the Vedic period in Central Asia, believed in the existence of a Being who dwelt alone before the existence of the universe.

The earth and heavens, according to the Asiatic cosmogonies, were created by the breath or spirit of this Being, giving life to the abyss of waters which formed the earliest material. Tiamat (the primeval waters), and Apsu (the abyss) brought forth the God of Love, the Father of the three Creators. In Phœnicia, Kolpeah (the voice of wind, the "Spirit of God,") and Bahu (the Chaos of Genesis) were the Creators of man. In Persia, the six days saw the heavens and stars, the waters and firmanent, the earth, the trees, the animals, and finally man himself, created respectively.

The first account speaks of man as created "male and female." The Rabbinical Commentators understood this to mean that man was originally androgynous—two bodies being united together, one male and one female. The idea is very ancient, and was firmly credited by Plato, while in the Persian mythology the original pair bloomed from a single stalk of the rhubarb plant, and were at first united together. The second account in Genesis makes woman issue from the side of man: "The rib which the Lord God had taken from the man builded He into a woman" (Gen. ii. 22, R.V., *margin*).

The story of man's happiness in Eden is widely diffused in the East. The Genesis account is closely approached by what we know of the Chaldean version of the story. The cylinder in the British Museum represents a tree round which a great serpent is coiled, while seated on opposite sides a man and a woman in Babylonish head-dress pluck fruit from its branches. The belief in a Paradise hidden beneath the earth was early expressed in Egypt. Two sacred trees stood in the dreary regions of Amenti, and from one of these—the sycamore fig—Nut, the Sky-Goddess, gives the water of life to thirsty bird-like souls. In India, two (or four) trees, of good and evil respectively, stand on the summit of Mount Meru—the Hindu Kush—where Kuvera, the God of riches, has his northern Paradise. These are called “trees of desire,” and are all ambrosial, resembling the Chaldean thorn tree sacred to the Goddess of love. The Persian myth approximates very closely to the Biblical story. The serpent seduces the first human couple to eat fruits which deprived them of their original happiness, and we find two sacred trees described,—one, the tree “of all seeds,” standing in the sacred stream of ocean ;

the other, the white Haoma, whence Ambrosia is distilled.

These are but samples of correspondences more or less related to the Genesis story. They might be indefinitely multiplied. The folk lore of races the most widely separated has a common origin and a common character. Modern study has correlated the accounts. Modern research in the field of Comparative Theology opens up paths into which many eager investigators are pursuing their researches, and pushing forward their theories. Were we discussing the question of the antiquity of the Biblical story, such lines would lead to the conclusion of its primeval date.

But why is the narrative placed in our Sacred Books at all? Not for information to gratify curiosity, but for edification, to teach lessons of high religious import. It is designed to be didactic, not informative. We may also note that, with all the similarities in the primeval Mythologies, they have developed very different systems. It is not the object which produces the impression, but the quality of the age that beholds and the mind that interprets,—“To the pure all things are pure.”