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History and Revelation.*

INTRODUCTION. (a) You are gathered here as students of history, and the badge of your great tribe might well be a dictionary displayed on a map. The *map* and the *dictionary* are the chief tools of the historian. With these he works on the documents which are his material. The map represents the fundamental conditions in which begins every part of the history of mankind upon this earth. The map shows three great factors operating in succession—the hills, the rivers and the roads, the hills which decide where the rivers shall run, and the roads which are prescribed by the hills and the rivers. To read the map aright is to know the climatic conditions, the economic characteristics, and the whole material environment. On the other hand, the dictionary represents what may be called, in the largest sense of the phrase, the spiritual conditions of history. The dictionary is a book of words, and words mean both speech and the thought behind speech. The dictionary unlocks the historic documents in which the speech and the thought of other generations are enshrined. The essential test of the historian is that he can use with accuracy and with judgment the map and the dictionary, and so deal faithfully with the material and the spiritual conditions of human history.

(b) Within the realm of history all *the great religions* have come into being, and their features always betray the place of their origin and the stage of spiritual culture at which they were born. The nature-worship and many gods of the Vedic hymns belong as essentially to the India of ten centuries before Christ as do the hatred of idols and the stern monotheism of Islam to the Arabia of the seventh century after Christ. The emphasis may fall on the material conditions, so that the gods represent

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heaven and earth and sky and sun and wind and storm and fire, as in the Vedic hymns; or it may fall on the moral consciousness of man, as in the higher Semitic religions. Ultimately the two can never be wholly separated, any more than a man's body and soul; material conceptions are spiritualised, and spiritual ideas may be materialised. All through the history of religions we may trace this constant interplay of *the two factors*. However varied be the material which is presented to the human consciousness, the mind of man is always striving to make a unity of it, which is the only condition of living with it and comprehending it. Man's mind is like a kaleidoscope. The jumbled fragments of coloured glass without pattern or meaning are given beauty and significance by the mirrors of the mind.

(c) But can we go beyond man's mind to a greater, and believe that somehow and somewhere history can be *the revelation of God*? Is there any truth in the claim of the Time-Spirit in Goethe's *Faust*:—

Thus on the roaring loom of time I ply,
And weave for God the garment thou seest Him by.

Certainly the product of the loom of time is not an ordered and complete pattern, but a very tangled web. There is much in history to exalt the conception of the human race. There are fine heroisms, noble sacrifices of self, patient and passionate loyalties, creations of beauty, achievements of thought, which seem not unworthy to be regarded as revealing God. But there are dark patches, ugly blemishes, in the story both of the individual and of the race, that seem to contradict any suggestion of God. Here history resembles *nature*. What are we to make of her utter disregard of human desires, her relentless pursuit of ends beyond the individual, her heartrending catastrophes? If there be a God who has made and who upholds all this, is He handling an intractable material which He is not able to control? Has He established laws and forces with which He can no longer interfere? Well, you know what the theist would reply; he would say that God, in creating nature, has accepted certain conditions of His own devising, that He works by a multitude of secondary causes, and that nature may have ends and issues far beyond man's immediate comfort, though controlled to man's ultimate good. There is a parallel here with human *history*. There is much in both that seems to contradict any assertion of that divine activity which underlies revelation. We cannot rationalise history. But if the human will counts for anything at all, and if God, who has created it, has chosen to accept its free activity within the limits He has appointed, then we shall have an explanation of many things in history that seem to deny

God. We may still believe that the whole of history will be a full and adequate revelation of the divine purpose, but the end is not yet, and we may well find that some parts and stages of the history will reveal God more or less than others, just because another will than God's is being allowed to operate.

(d) But "revelation" in religion means something much more definite than such general reflection of the divine in physical nature and in the course of human history. In the great religions which have maintained their dominion over man's heart and mind, *revelation means that direct and purposive activity of God which discloses Him to man for man's good.* Beyond man's search for God in physical nature or in the moral consciousness of man, there has arisen the great conception of God seeking man, and seeking him in more special ways. Amongst the living religions, we find the doctrine of special revelation in Judaism and its historic successors, Christianity and Islam. We find it also in the religion of Zarathushtra, still alive amongst the Parsees, though much more obscurity rests on the beginnings of this religion. We find it also in the Bhakti development of Hinduism, with its thought of divine Avatars or incarnations, such as that of Krishna in the Bhagavadgita. The original Buddhism knew nothing of revelation, for the Buddha had no place for the gods in his teaching; but the subsequent development of Buddhism reached the thought of many divine revealers and saviours. It is clear that *no religion which is to retain the faith of men can dispense with the belief in divine revelation*—the activity of the divine for man's good; that is one of the plain lessons of history. No god is worth worshipping who is unable or unwilling to help his worshippers, and that help, to be effective, implies a revelation of the divine nature and purpose. But not all of these religions of revelation can be called historical religions, in the sense of finding the revelation of God in human history. The Bhakti devotion of Hinduism or of Buddhism has little or no concern with history; the exact place and teaching of Zarathushtra are too little known to yield much for our purpose, which is the relation of revelation to history. We are left, then, with *Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, as the religions which can be called historical in the full sense, that is as claiming to have received a divine revelation on the basis of history. The religions of the further East do not link history and revelation; they are *in* history, but not of it.

I. THE PROPHETIC CONSCIOUSNESS. The first thing that must strike us when we examine these religions of revelation, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, is that *they all go back to the consciousness of a prophet, Moses, Jesus, Muhammad.* They are

born within the experience of an individual man, and they illustrate some well-known words of Professor Whitehead: "Religion is what the individual does with his solitariness. . . . The great religious conceptions which haunt the imaginations of civilised mankind are scenes of solitariness: Prometheus chained to his rock, Mahomet brooding in the desert, the meditations of the Buddha, the solitary Man on the Cross." The three great founders of the three religions that concern us speak and act under the sense of a divine compulsion. They all bear the marks of their historic environment; you cannot interchange them; they belong to the human race in one particular land and at one particular time. Yet each of them claims to speak and act, not for himself, but for God, and history has so far confirmed their claim that what they thought and did still remains central in the devotion of many millions of the human race. True, much which has been ascribed to them by later generations is removed to that later date by the touch of sane and sober historical criticism. Moses was a prophet who led Israel out of Egypt, and interpreted that deliverance as the act of God; his work was continued by many later prophets, and issued at long last in a sacred book, which is an epitome of the whole development, rather than a record of the teaching of Moses. Jesus, whatever else He was or is, was known as the prophet of Nazareth, and the record of His life and work in the Synoptic Gospels is much less elaborate than the conception of Him which prevails in any of the Christian Churches. Muhammad, in the early years of the seventh century after Christ, witnessed to his sincerity as the prophet of Allah by the persecution he faced, before he became a shrewd politician and a worldly-wise statesman, whose sayings and doings themselves became an additional revelation of Allah. All these religions begin in a prophetic consciousness. What is the significance of this for revelation?

The significance is that *man has found his highest and most influential ideas of God through the highest category of human experience, which is personality, and through personality wrought to the highest intensity of conviction.* Just as, from ages immemorial, men have climbed the mountain top to build the shrines for their offerings to the gods of heaven, so in the spiritual realm, the highest point of human nature has become the most effective contact with God. By no means every religion has done this. Some religions all the time, and all religions some of the time, have resorted to *the lowest, rather than the highest.* They have tried to control God by the material means of magical spells; they have sought exaltation by the intoxication of the Soma plant or by the sensual orgies of fertility cults; they have claimed to fetter God to an institution or to an organised society. But

in origin, and at every recovery of the original breath of divine inspiration, there has been resort to the highest experience of a spiritual nature to hear what the Lord God would say unto men. This is the mark of the prophets of *Israel* denouncing idolatry and sensuality and social injustice, and implicitly claiming that God speaks through the moral consciousness of men rather than through the ritual of the living or the mutterings of the dead. How could an idol of even the costliest metal adequately represent God? how could anything but the noblest testimony of the most enlightened conscience? So spake *Jesus* in the Sermon on the Mount, which carries the great issues of morality and religion into the inner consciousness of the heart, and bids the man with hate against his brother leave his gift unoffered to God. So did *Jesus*, when from the Cross He made forgiveness of the most cruel wrong the divinest thing in human history. So also *Muhammad*, in spite of all his later compromises, when he denounced the idolatries of his contemporaries, and inspired men to deeds of the highest courage.

We are then faced by the fact that behind the sacred books of the three great types of monotheistic religion there is a prophetic consciousness, that is, a human will believing itself to be in such contact with God that its purposes are His, and that His will is revealed through it. This is the most important fact, and *the modus operandi of the conviction is subsidiary to it*. The intermediary may be an angel, as for *Muhammad* and for some of the later prophets of *Israel*, such as *Zechariah*. The condition may be an ecstatic state, as in the call of *Isaiah* or the abnormalities of the prophet *Ezekiel*. At the highest there may be the direct consciousness of fellowship with God, as in the troubled dialogues of the prophet *Jeremiah*, or the untroubled consciousness of the prophet of *Nazareth*. These differences belong to the psychology of prophecy, and though they are intensely interesting, they are secondary to the main conviction that human nature is capable of receiving the revelation of the divine. This can be true only if there is a certain kinship between God and man, so that what is true for man at his highest is also true for God, with all the necessary limitations of given historical conditions. This may be called the higher anthropomorphism, and all religion ultimately rests upon it. We have a simple example of it in the words of *Jesus*, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good gifts to them that ask Him?" If, in our desire to exalt God, we make Him the "altogether Other," we leave it impossible for Him to communicate with man. However transcendent God is, the point at which He reveals Himself to us must be a point at which

He becomes intelligible to us, that is a point at which there is kinship between His nature and ours. This is a principle which some theologies have ignored, notably the present-day Barthianism.

But, if we grant this kinship, how are we to conceive *the working of the divine inspiration within the prophetic consciousness*? It is not enough to think of man's discovery, we have also to think of God's revelation, that is, of God's activity in bringing the prophet into truth, or truth into the prophet. Here, as in all genuine religious experience, we must refrain from putting asunder what God has joined together. When we try to analyse the convictions of a prophet, we must not forget that we are conducting a *post-mortem*, whereas the living experience is always a unity, in which the prophet forgets himself in God. We who come after may trace this or that line of the prophet's preparation, this or that endowment of his nature, this or that relation to his fellows, all of which is implied in the ultimate word of God which issues from his lips. But the essential thing for him and for religion is that all this is *welded together into a hammer of God*, as the prophet Jeremiah calls the word given to him. One of the most significant sayings about prophecy is that of Jeremiah himself, when he is most depressed by the sense of abandonment and failure. God says to him, "If thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth." That means that the highest he knows and feels is to be God's word to him and to his fellows. We find the same *sense of unity* everywhere when religion is most intense. Within Islam, we find a Sufi poem, quoted by Söderblom, in his fine book, *The Living God* (p. 31), in which one who is tempted to doubt God like Jeremiah receives the message:—

O much-trying one,

Did I not engage thee to my service?

Did I not engage thee to call upon me?

That calling "Allah" of thine was my "here am I,"

And that pain and longing and ardour of thine, my messenger;

Thy struggles and strivings for assistance

Were my attractions and originated thy prayer.

"Be comforted," says Jesus to Pascal, "thou wouldst not seek Me, if thou hadst not found Me." But the highest word of this unity of the human consciousness with the divine is that of Jesus:—"All things have been delivered unto Me of My Father: and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him. Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Thus at the "Land's End" of human experience we have the intuition that man's conviction is God's revelation.

II. THE ACTUALITY OF HISTORY AS REVELATION. Let me confirm this by thinking of *the teacher's work*. The best teacher does not simply or chiefly impart information to his pupils; he trains and inspires them to the art of discovery. He will direct their studies in the library or the laboratory, but certainly not by dictation. He will start them on some pursuit, and leave them free, within certain limits, to work out their own results. Somewhat in this way we may conceive God's activity to be exercised in all that leads up to revelation, though its consummation is always a disclosure of Himself. Within the little circle of our life we are free, but that circle is always part of a larger circle which overlays it, the circle of the divine purpose, directing, controlling and so creating. There is no more room for mere dictation in God's revealing activity than in the work of a true teacher, who thinks more, *far more*, of *the training of his pupil than of the communication of knowledge*.

If revelation is not mechanical, neither is history. It is not the mere accumulation of what we call facts; they are only its raw material. We cannot write or even comprehend history till we relate these data to one another, and trace their connections. There is something more in history than the study of cause and effect which underlies all the physical sciences. In such study we never get back to a real cause, but only to that which is an effect of some other cause. But in human history we are brought face to face with *real causes*, however limited their operation. The human will in great things or small is continually making history. We can never foresee its action in the same way as we can that of an acid upon a salt or of the sun upon a planet. The human will is continually making new beginnings. It creates something that was not there before. The spiritual world is not ruled by the laws of the physical world, though it has its own laws. Human activity is like *the creative work of the artist*. There is a whole world of difference between his vision of beauty and the actual creation out of it of some beautiful thing, whether it be a picture or sculpture or symphony or poem. Existence in thought is one thing; existence in act and fact quite another. Our wills are constantly influenced by our thoughts, yet not wholly determined by them. So long as we are human beings we have the power and the responsibility of choice. No one doubts it in normal life, however difficult it may be to explain it. Indeed, it cannot be explained, except by saying that personality has this power of taking up all motives, desires, influences into itself and making them, if it will, its own. This is the experience of that inner world, strange, mysterious, unique, which each of us has for himself. But the great world of human history, with all its

social ramifications, is the same thing writ large. You may isolate a single factor, such as the economic, and usefully show its range and influence. You may trace back the French Revolution, for example, to the misrule of generations, to the teaching of Rousseau, to the state of Europe, but you must still leave room for the personal activity of Marat and Danton and Robespierre and the rest. In the whole course of history something good or bad is being created by personal agents, never to be reduced to physical causes. This is what we may call *the actuality of history*, its quality of adding something new, or of expressing in a new way that which before existed only in idea. The time-process, in which we are all agents, and not mere puppets, is the partial and confused working out of an eternal purpose, adding to it no new idea, but giving to that purpose the quality of the actual. Our inner consciousness of being real agents is a true indication of the reality of the whole.

It is surely significant that this quality of actuality has been taken up into the three great monotheistic religions, which are all based on a *historical revelation*, that is a revelation through real agents, who give actuality to the divine thought. The Old Testament is full of this; the God of Israel is known by what He does in history, as in the deliverance of Israel from Egypt. The New Testament is written round the life and death and resurrection of Jesus, which are interpreted as acts of God. Islam's creed is not simply, "There is no God but Allah," but also "Muhammad is the prophet of Allah," which brings the Moslem faith into the definite circumstances of history, and turns history into revelation. But history is revelation only if time be more than the shadow of eternity, and an actual part of it, with a specific quality and a new value with which to enrich it.

It is significant also that *the very conception of universal history, as we understand it, has been born of these great religions*. It was Christianity that first taught the western world the unity of the race, and the conception of a purpose working itself out in history. But Christianity learnt that truth from the Old Testament, from the apocalyptists such as Daniel, whose ideas go back to the prophets of Israel, who interpreted contemporary history in terms of a divine purpose. It is to Biblical religion that we owe both the modern conception of personality and the modern conception of the history in which that personality works out its destiny. We cannot reduce that history to the rational process which Hegel attempted to construe. But we can see how revelation interprets history and history becomes the actualisation of revelation. We cannot successfully and completely join up and splice together the meeting of the human and the divine, either in the individual consciousness or in the history

of the race. But we can see that *history has meaning and spiritual value only as we do succeed in discovering within it both the human and the divine*, and our discovery is made by what religion calls revelation, the high points of religious genius which catch the light of dawn whilst the valleys are yet in the twilight.

III. THE AUTHORITY OF REVELATION IN HISTORY. So far we have been considering revelation purely on the basis of history, without regard to the specific claims which it may have upon us as being truth. But we must now face this difficult and thorny question of authority in regard to a revelation through history. The very fact that we have gone behind the sacred books and the sacred societies to the history from which they sprang, compels us to ask *what authority can attach to history* when it is conceived as the medium of revelation. Lessing, it will be remembered, epitomised the movement of the German Aufklärung by saying "contingent truths of history can never be made the proof for necessary truths of reason." Yet religion is certainly never exhausted by the intellect, since it always appeals to the whole of personality, with its emotional and volitional capacities. As a matter of fact, the thoughts of religion have always been gained through some historic personality in a given environment; the actuality of history comes first, and reason comes in to confirm or disprove the rationality of what history has given.

We must distinguish *two different kinds of difficulty* which history occasions for revelation. There is the philosophical difficulty, which is indeed the great difficulty of philosophy itself—how can the relative reveal the absolute, and time become the vehicle of eternity? Then there is the historical difficulty in regard to historicity—how can we ever be sufficiently sure of alleged historic "facts" to make them the basis of religious conviction?

As to the first, all that can be said here is that if we start with a *dualism between time and eternity*, we can never hope to throw a bridge across the gulf. If the eternal is the timeless, altogether different and alien from the time-process in which we live, then there can be as little relation between them as there is between God and man, if *they* are supposed to have no spiritual kinship with each other. But it is not necessary to start with such a dualism. The very view of history with which we have been working is that it is included in the eternal, that it is one form or aspect of the eternal. We need not think of eternity as unending time, or as simultaneity in which all time is gathered up into a single moment. We can think of eternity in the light of

those moral and spiritual qualities which are our highest values in history, namely, *in terms of purpose*. We can believe that when we catch a glimpse of some true and worthy purpose being worked out here, still more when our own purpose is caught up into it, that we are in touch with the eternal world. And this we must believe, if we are not to rob history of its spiritual values. The great claim of duty upon man, for example, is never explicable on the merely human level; it must come from something or someone above time, even whilst it is experienced within time.

From this standpoint, then, there is no reason to believe that what the prophets of Israel taught about their own land and people is any the less eternal truth, and so qualified to belong to a divine revelation. Such *truth will always be relative in form to its own age*; we have no right to say that the ethics of Amos or even of Jesus are directly applicable, as they stand, to every generation. But when they are seen as the temporal application of the eternal principle of the right relation of one human personality to others, when they are taken as the illustrations of an eternal truth in process of revelation, they can claim divine authority over us, as revealing eternal truth to us. If we deny this, we are simply denying that eternity can ever have intercourse with time.

The other difficulty as to *the certainty of alleged facts of history* is more difficult to meet, and perhaps it is impossible to meet it at all in any purely intellectual fashion. The thoughtful Christian of to-day often looks back with regret to his un-instructed days, when he perhaps felt no difficulty about the historicity of the Virgin Birth or the Resurrection or the other miracles associated with Jesus. You simply cannot hope ever to prove or disprove such things by the mere rules of historical evidence, and they never really were so proved or disproved. Our attitude towards them will be decided by more general considerations, such as the ways of thinking of a generation different from our own, which saw miracles where we should find other explanations, or the possibilities of a Personality admittedly unique amongst the sons of men, and of new powers emerging in him which are not seen in men of lesser breed. But what would be the value of a religious faith which was no more than intellectual assent to the conclusion of an argument? It might still leave the will of man unmoved, still be utterly fruitless in moral or religious result. All we can ask is that there be sufficient evidence to make belief reasonable, sufficient data for the eternal truths to gleam through the muddy vesture of our documents. The very lack of complete historical proof in certain cases may constitute a *moral challenge*; are we making the intellectual

uncertainty an excuse for thrusting aside the related moral or religious appeal? This is the line of argument which Browning employed so forcefully in *A Death in the Desert*, and it is by no means outworn. The historian himself must often state a conviction which he cannot prove on the ground of precise evidence. The Christian not less may say, "I accept this death on the Cross and even this deliverance from death as essentially true, though I cannot understand its mode and manner; the influence of this faith on all subsequent history makes it impossible for me to think it historically untrue, and my own experience confirms history."

But this, someone may say, is to remove revelation from the common ground of evidence and reason, and to make its *appeal purely subjective*, a matter of individual likes and dislikes. Well, part of the truth of revelation, part of its evidence, does consist in such an appeal to the individual. In the strict sense of revelation, it has not revealed God until it has made me see Him and won me to loyal obedience and trust. Dr. Edwyn Bevan concludes his skilful and eminently just sketch of the history of Christianity with the words:—"the impulse to believe itself must come, if it comes at all, from the direct perception that a particular kind of life is the life most worth living. For those who have it the perception is a supernatural call—which, according as they will, they may follow or they may refuse." Our argument has been that this is of the very nature of religion at its highest, that it neither desires to, nor can, constrain men into an unwilling obedience, and that the training of the believer into a service which is perfect liberty is far other than a dictation of orders. If this be so, it is useless to compare the great religions as a mere spectator of them, and expect to be able to prove that any one of them has absolute authority. When Festus wished to explain the faith of his prisoner Paul to King Agrippa, he could sum it up neatly in a sentence. He said that the Jews "had certain questions against him of their own religion, and of one Jesus, who was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive." That is what it meant to the mere spectator—"one Jesus who was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive." But think of what that affirmed fact meant to Paul himself, standing within the Christian faith. It is no longer a mere isolated event of history. Phrase after phrase of the apostle's burning speech leaps into mind as we try to measure what *he* meant by affirming that Christ still lives—"declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead—that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, becoming conformed unto His death—ye died and your life is hid with Christ in God—I live,

and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me." That is how the bare formula of a faith glows and quivers with iridescent light when we know it from within.

One thing we can claim for the Christian religion amongst the faiths of history, even whilst we look on it from without. At the centre of its alleged revelation there stands *a man unique in quality, standing in a unique relation to it, and offering a unique Gospel*. We cannot compare Jesus as a mere matter of history, with Zarathushtra or Buddha or Socrates or Muhammad; none of them claims or holds the same relation to God or man. The teaching of Jesus is indeed largely parallel with that of the best of the Jewish Rabbis; but Jesus, living and dying, is far more in himself than they. The Gospel, also, which springs from his historic life on earth, is unlike any other offered to men. Its peculiar quality has been admirably summarised by Karl Holl:—
 "Jesus inverts, as we may say, the customary relations of religion and morality. Every other religion, at least every other religion of high ideals, bases the personal relation to God on the right conduct of man. The more moral a man is—using the term 'moral' in the widest sense, so as to include ritual duties—the nearer he stands to God. But for Jesus, God begins the other way round. It is He who creates something new with forgiveness. From this there springs a real, close and warm relation to God, and with it, at the same time, a morality which can venture to take God Himself as its pattern."

That is what is meant by the grace of God in Christ, and He actualised it in history by His whole attitude towards men. The revelation of this truth is pre-eminently the Christian revelation, and all else is subsidiary to this. The fact that *this revelation came into history at a particular point of time*, which for us lies in an ancient and remote world, casts no reflection on its eternal truth. In these days, we are not likely to claim, as did some of the Victorians, that history inevitably moves onward and upward by the constant evolution of something better, always leaving behind its own past. That is not true of civilisation, or art or music or philosophy or any of the spiritual sides of man's nature, even if it be true of the material. In all spiritual achievements, and most of all in religion, we rise above the time-process, even whilst we work through it. History itself is the tribunal by which all such claims must at last be tried, and in a wider sense than Newman's use of the words, "*Securus judicat orbis terrarum*," or if you like, "*Weltgeschichte ist Weltgericht*."

Let us recall Lessing's moving parable of the three rings in *Nathan der Weise*. In a certain family a magic ring was handed down as an heirloom from father to son. It was to be given to the best beloved, and it had the power to make its wearer

beloved of God and man. A father who had three sons could not decide which he loved best, so he had two other rings made exactly like the ring of power, and gave one to each of the three. After his death, they were inclined to quarrel as to which had the original ring, and they referred the matter to a wise judge, claiming that each had received his ring from his father's hand. The judge pointed out that the ring of power would itself decide the issue in the course of time, for the most loving and beloved would be its wearer. Lessing has in mind those three religions of revelation, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, with which we have been chiefly concerned. He does not mean that it is a matter of indifference which men choose, and that conduct is all that matters. He does mean, however, that the final proof of doctrine is in life, which is exactly what we ought to expect from a revelation made through life.

At the other extreme is the parable of Anatole France of the king who desired in his youth to possess a universal history, that he might learn its lessons. At the end of twenty years his learned men brought him a dozen camels, each bearing 500 volumes, but the busy king said, "Kindly abridge." After long periods they brought smaller and smaller editions, till at last the secretary brought a single fat volume—to find the aged king on his death-bed. The old man sighed, "I shall die without knowing the history of mankind." "Your majesty," said the scholar, "I will summarise it for you in three words: *They were born, they suffered, they died.*"

It is revelation, and the faith in revelation which makes the difference between those two views of human history.

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