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## ARTICLE V.

## VIEWS OF TRUTH PECULIAR TO CHRISTIANITY.

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THE determination of the views of truth which are peculiar to Christianity, demands, almost necessarily, a previous consideration of the truths which are peculiar to revelation. For the inquiry, in its scope, is not limited to the doctrines or religious truths which distinguish the new dispensation from the old; but aims to determine what is distinctively Christian truth, as given in the New Testament, compared with religious truths, found anywhere else, within the range of human knowledge. Only a small portion of the world have enjoyed a written revelation. But without this limited circle, much knowledge of Divine things has been found in every age, and numerous correct ideas of duty have been entertained. To what extent this knowledge is traditional from earlier unwritten revelation, and how far it may have incorporated into itself the ideas which had their origin in the Jewish or Christian Scriptures, cannot be easily determined. The strong presumption is, that the notions which prevailed among oriental nations of a Supreme Deity, and which, in connection with many superstitions and human inventions, were communicated to the Greeks and Romans, were derived from those, who, in the early history of the race, knew the true God as their Creator and Sovereign. The successive modifications which these notions underwent, give considerable force to the opinion, that a knowledge of the one true God preceded the gross forms of polytheism and the refined ideas of an elevated philosophy. From whatever source the primitive idea may have been derived, it is certain that men and nations, who have not had the written word of God, have arrived at many just and impressive conceptions of the Deity, and established many rules of duty in harmony with those of the Holy Scriptures. In order to determine what truths, or what views of truth, are peculiar to the Bible, it is necessary to compare the ideas taught in the Bible with those which are found elsewhere. In making this comparison let us consider,

1. The notions held concerning God. In the Old Testament, God is distinctly announced as the one living and true God. To him is ascribed the creation of the world. He is the sole governor of the universe, the disposer of all events in providence, the one lawgiver. The various natural and moral attributes of the Deity are clearly exhibited, presenting him as omnipotent, omniscient, infinite in holiness, goodness and truth. He is a just God, a merciful God; kind and compassionate, regarding with paternal affection all the intelligent subjects of his kingdom. The unity of God is made especially prominent, and contrasted strongly and variously with the idolatrous notions prevalent among men. It is a pure system of Theism, allowing not the slightest departure from the strict idea of one God only, supreme on earth and in heaven, and alone entitled to the homage and adoration of men. God is distinctly an individual, not an abstract power, not an undefined cause, not a principle in nature or the animating spirit in a material universe. The personality of God, his independent existence, his individual spirituality are most rigidly declared. He is the antagonist of all pantheistic, material or polytheistic notions. The force with which these peculiarities are expressed, seems evidently to have been designed to meet the necessities of mankind at the time the revelation was given, and to check the tendency to idolatry and superstition. There is a manifest tendency in the Old Testament Scriptures, to reestablish and fix the knowledge of the living and true God, which had become so greatly obscured, or had been lost sight of. The teaching of the Old Testament, in relation to God, proceeds from this one idea. In passing into the pagan world, we at once meet with a different set of ideas. A conception of God, some notion of a Supreme Being, is found, perhaps we may say, everywhere. Connected with the grossest forms of Polytheism, the germs, at least, of the idea, that there is one God, are easily distinguished. This idea enters, with various degrees of clearness, into different religious systems, until it comes to be a well-defined spiritual idea in the minds of the gifted and deep-thinking philosophers, who earnestly struggled to comprehend both themselves and the universe. They taught that there is a Supreme Deity, who is to be worshipped and prayed to; who governs the world by his providence; who imparts knowledge, and presides over the actions of the intelligent creation. Plato, Seneca and Socrates, with a surprising depth and

clearness of intellect, uttered many profound and truthful sentiments respecting Divine things, and exhibited an understanding enlightened with striking views of God and his attributes. The idea of God is not, then, peculiar to the Bible. Nevertheless, the most erudite and acute philosophers mingled gross errors with the truths which they taught. They did not reach the simple idea of one only God, entirely and alone God, without connection with or any likeness to, any other God. The supreme *numen* of philosophy and of poetry, was only the greatest of the gods. He was the highest, the creator, he alone self-existent, king of kings, the father of men, and his existence defended by much the same arguments drawn from the order, fitness and beauty of material things, as are now used; but he was not God alone. Other inferior, subordinate beings, were also gods, so that, in the language of Cudworth, throughout the whole world "there is one agreeing language and opinion, that there is one God, the King and Father of all, and many gods, the sons of God, coreigners together with God." Without a written revelation as their guide, a very high and enlightened Theism was maintained as the speculation of philosophic minds. They reached these admirable notions by reconstructing and refining the fragmentary knowledge which they gathered from books and traditions, while, at the same time, the clear processes of reason which they adopted, justified their lofty conclusions. And, if the truths which they grasped, had not been obscured and weakened by associated errors; and had no polytheistic or pantheistic ideas been incorporated with them, philosophy might with much justice have vindicated its claim to a true knowledge of God.

2. We next consider the relations which were recognized towards God, with and without a revelation. It at once strikes the mind, upon surveying the two aspects of mankind, that, in one, the knowledge of God is with substantial authority, with the other, it is an almost powerless inference. The philosophers, whose researches were most profound and whose statements were most explicit, had no certain testimony. They proclaimed the being of God upon the authority of their own reason. It was with them the result of a nice and far-reaching speculation. From God they had received no communication, and such belief as they had, was so without sanction that, after all, it was little more than a bare, inoperative conception. They had ideas of God, notions of God, but not a substantial knowledge of God.

But in revelation God communicated himself, addressed himself to his creatures, uttered his law with awful sanctions, and the living and true God, in the absoluteness of his authority over men, was distinctly made known. Thinking men among pagans admitted that God was the lawgiver, but the people had no positive and authoritative knowledge of his law. Divine requirements and prohibitions were never understood so as to command the will and conscience. In the best forms of religious opinion, it was declared that men should submit in all things to the will of God, as the highest liberty. But this will was never explicitly known, nor was it known how God would deal with those who violated his will. It was a remarkable notion of the Stoics, that nothing was to be done without reference to God; and it seems much like the teachings of Scripture, when they say, that we are to trust in God and rely upon him, praise him as the author of all good, address all our devotions to him, and implore his assistance against temptations. These are Biblical ideas; and yet, as they stand upon no other authority than the conclusions of superior intellects, they have but little force. A revelation sets forth the exact relations of man to God; it is an authoritative director to obedience; it gives law precisely, in the name of God; it teaches from God, how God is to be worshipped, and what course of life he would that men should lead. It is doubtless true, that men had a consciousness of separation from God. But without a revelation they were unacquainted with the method of reconciliation with God. A great design, fulfilled by revelation as a whole, is, opening to men a way of pardon. The heathen mind was sadly in the dark on this important subject. Some faint glimpses they had concerning God's forgiving sin. They cherished some inadequate ideas of pardon. Still, they were profoundly ignorant of the way of peace with God. They were stung with a sense of guilt. They trembled before incensed deities. They brought sacrifices and offerings to altars consecrated by superstitious fears. They sought relief in expiatory rites and in solemn ceremonies. But no sweet promise of pardon had diffused joy in their sad hearts. The most refined speculations concerning God, and the relation of his creatures to him, afforded no practical solution to the weightiest problem of life. One message from the throne of Jehovah, one promise of mercy distinctly announced with its intelligent conditions, would have been of more worth than all the collected wisdom of the Grove

and the Porch. While cultivated minds cherished so many shadowy and unsettled notions respecting Deity, they could not teach the vulgar those necessary truths on which peace with God depends. They were left in a night well-nigh rayless and hopeless. "Across this night philosophy flitted on like the lantern fly of the tropics, a light to itself and an ornament, but alas! no more than an ornament of the surrounding darkness." Most strikingly in contrast are the vivid and luminous expositions of the Bible, revealing a God whose most illustrious attribute is mercy, and who delights in forgiveness upon known and settled conditions; pointing out to us our duty, and defining, with admirable clearness, the important relations of men to their Creator.

3. The views entertained in respect to the immortality of the soul. The germs of knowledge on this subject are almost coextensive with thought and reflection. Pagan systems generally imply, if they do not express, the notion of a future existence. Philosophy, in its speculations upon the immortality of the soul, has presented some of the proudest evidences of its strength, and reached some of its happiest conclusions. It has not, indeed, lifted the veil of futurity and dissipated its gloom. It has not fixed and delineated the position and character of the soul in another life. But, while it really settled, beyond question, no one truth of the doctrine of immortality, it did much to meet and encourage the unquenchable yearnings and aspirations of the mind. It accomplished all that could reasonably have been expected from the limited and infantile struggles of unaided reason. Even the Old Testament does not give all the light which the immortal aspirations of men crave. It is reserved for the more perfect revelation of Jesus Christ to bring life and immortality to light through the Gospel. And, moreover, the views entertained in regard to the condition of the soul in the immortal life, without a revelation, are insufficient and unsatisfying. It was declared that God would punish sin. Some taught that sin would be punished and that virtue would be rewarded in another life. But with how much childishness of fancy, and with what grossness of imagination these ideas were reduced to form, is too well known to be adduced here. It is eminently a distinction of revelation, to instruct men definitely in regard to a future state, and its condition, and the relation which its happiness or misery bears to this life. The teachings of the Bible transcend all human conceptions in regard to these vital points in religion,

insomuch that all the knowledge the world ever had without it, may well be considered as nothing.

4. In regard to the resurrection of the dead. The doctrine of the resurrection of the dead does not rest upon such evidences as sustain the belief in the existence of God and the soul's immortality. For the support of these, reason discovered many substantial and convincing arguments, and the human mind has always been profoundly exercised upon them. Much more sparing are the notices of the other. The resurrection of the body is a fact which can be settled only by a distinct revelation. The heathen world furnishes some speculations on this subject, but hardly anything more. Though some learned men have assumed that it was a fixed article of belief under the Jewish dispensation, the evidence of the Old Testament together with the information gathered from the discussions which arose during the ministry of Jesus Christ, lead us rather to conclude, that the resurrection of the dead was maintained by some, while it was denied by others. It is highly probable, that those who had any ideas upon this subject, did not advance beyond an undefined, perhaps a conjectural, opinion. It seems rather to have been a probability resting upon insufficient proof, than a settled faith.

5. If we compare the moral knowledge abroad in the pagan world, the notions so beautifully expressed by poets, and uttered so eloquently by orators and wise men, with the teachings of the Bible, we shall find a very remarkable correspondence between them. It has been said, and perhaps with truth, that almost every social duty, almost every moral sentiment, and even every Christian virtue which adorns the Holy Scriptures, can be found in the literature of the heathen world. To so great an extent is this true, that we can hardly claim for the Bible any great preëminence in the inculcation of a pure morality. It is not to the point, to say, that these acknowledgments among the heathen of the excellence of virtue, were only verbal, and lacked the force of those practical illustrations which are the highest teachings of morality. As moral truths they were largely admitted; as practical rules they were almost universally neglected. They wanted a Divine sanction, an authoritative enunciation; but the propriety of the conduct which they demanded, was in harmony with the best exercises of the moral sense of mankind. The elements out of which an admirable

life might have been formed, were certainly not wanting in the heathen world. But they were elements uncombined and unexplained. They were not reduced to a code. They were never uttered with the voice of authority. No tables of stone had come down from the thunders and flames of Sinai, engraven with the finger of the Omnipotent. No Ebal, appointed of God as the mount of the curse, raised its frowning brow to warn the disobedient; no Gerizim, alluring with the blessings of the same God, confirmed the faith of the righteous. In the Bible, "thus saith the Lord," gives weight and impressiveness to every commandment or prohibition. Conscience is stimulated by the thought of the Sovereign who is jealous for his law. A sense of right, with no one to punish wrong, is a feeble restraint. A perception of virtue, with no rewarder of righteousness, is an insufficient allurements. And, therefore, the heathen world, notwithstanding its sound maxims, its wise precepts, its luminous and beautiful sentiments, the energy with which wrong was denounced, the glowing pictures of innocence and virtue with which it abounded, was still deeply sunk in the filth and wretchedness of debauched manners and allowed vices. Seldom were the virtues exhibited in life as the fruit of the eloquent teachings of their wise men. The tone of society was constantly lowered, and wickedness progressed with but little restraint from the theories of morals or the requirements of religion. They needed a distinct knowledge of God upon the throne, both lawgiver and executor. The moral sense needed to be confirmed in its dictates by the sentence of a coming judgment; and all the passions and propensities of the heart, to be held in check by the prospect of a final retribution. And because the theories of morals in the heathen world were separated from these sanctions and supports, they were practically powerless.

In this brief and limited inspection of a field so extensive and so full of interest, it will be seen that the elements of religious knowledge, the germs of the highest and most important truths, are discoverable where a written revelation is unknown. But in most respects they are only elements and germs. The world had notions, undefined ideas on many subjects relating to God and duty, which were of value. But the principles of morality, as well as higher speculative truths, existed only in a fragmentary condition. They were scattered in various productions of different minds. They were mixed with the crude devices, the

wild fancies, the absurd theories, the gross mistakes, and the ignorant conclusions of a dark age. And, although by careful selection over a wide field one might bring together many choice specimens of wisdom, and collect much excellent instruction which might serve for the direction of mankind, yet no one heathen mind ever digested the principles of morals into a system, or arranged religious truth so as to present it in a simple homogeneous form. So that, notwithstanding glimpses here and there, thoughts which seem to have glowed with a celestial fire, principles which are admitted even under a Christian dispensation to be sound and satisfactory rules of life, yet men really had no repository of truth to which to resort, no standard by which to try themselves. Everything was loose, unsystematized, disjointed. Even the knowledge of God, the relations we hold to Him, the immortal life of the soul and its conditions of misery or happiness, and the resurrection of the body, these great truths were never, independently of a revelation, so understood and received, as fully to impress and control the human mind. Revelation, in its enunciation of truths common to it with pagan systems, does present them with a fulness and decisive utterance, which not only makes them a substantial part of knowledge, but invests them with imperative claims upon the conscience and the heart.

Having considered the character of the knowledge of Divine things in the two conditions, with and without a written revelation, we proceed to inquire into what is distinct in the New Testament as compared with the Old. Religion, so far as it may be considered as determining the moral character of an individual, is the same thing under both dispensations. We have the same God and Father, to whom is due the supreme love of the heart; we are to approach him with penitence and faith, and to serve him with all the mind and strength. The same moral elements constitute goodness, the nature of holiness is the same, and righteousness is predicated of substantially the same life. Whatever belongs to the state of the heart in order to a reconciliation with God, the same subjective feelings, wrought in us by the Word and the Spirit, are common to both. The same moral law is the guide of conduct. Sin is the wilful transgression of the law. Many formal acts are required in the older system which are discontinued in the later. The form in which truth is presented, is adapted to a lower state

of intellectual development. The elementary ideas which are common to the two, are not brought out with equal distinctness. The relations of truth to conduct, the development of the spiritual life, and the symmetry of the character of a man of God, are by no means exhibited with equal clearness and fulness. Love to God is the basis of religion in the Old Testament. It is equally the basis of religion in the New. But, in the former, the objective truth concerning God is presented under severer outlines. For the sake of impressiveness, the most intense and glowing descriptions are given of the terrible attributes of Jehovah, those competent to alarm and startle hearts which are under the influence of the sterner and rougher passions of our nature. Interpositions of God are made with striking boldness and nakedness. The power before which men tremble, power applied to the production of physical results, is exhibited, to reach minds which are unspiritual and sensualized. It was a necessity of the case. The revelation of the old dispensation was given to men of the same intellectual and moral natures as in after times; of the same inherent susceptibilities, alike free in their wills and accountable for conduct. No principle was involved in God's requirement which is not eternally binding upon his moral subjects. But being then sensual in heart, with but sparing intellectual culture, and having strong tendencies to materialism, unchecked by abstract views of truth, the manner in which God and duty were presented necessarily conformed to the existing conditions of the human mind. The later dispensation is placed upon a higher level. It throws off the material form. God retires more from the direct and palpable connection with events. He is represented in the refined spirituality of his nature, and in the more tender and attractive attributes of his character. His worship is withdrawn from the symbolic and ritual modes, to the higher exercise of communion and heartfelt adoration. Without an altar, without gifts and sacrifices and a priesthood, the incense of a loving soul is presented as the most acceptable service. But the character of God, in the Old Testament and in the New, is really the same. There is no discord or contrariety in the two views; and, although a lower spirituality than is now expected, gave efficacy to the formal service, yet the offering of the heart to God in pure and holy affections really constituted the inherent worth of both. The New Testament meets the wants of humanity as they exist in all their variety, and

adapts itself to the human race in all the possible progress it can make in intellectual development. It retires from the formal, and expresses, in the simplest mode, the spiritual elements of the religion which God requires. Without a change in its nature, the manner in which it is presented and the motives which are pressed, are in many respects different.

The same comparison holds true in regard to the relations of men to each other. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, was the basis of the required intercourse between men. In the New Testament we have the same fundamental principle. We do not find any new doctrine. And if, under the practical requirements of the one system, there are acts tolerated which the other seems to discard, the inconsistency will be harmonized, by referring to some more general principle which involves both. Thus certain retaliatory acts which Christ disallows, were admitted into the Mosaic code. In the teachings of Christ, the directions are given as consistent exemplifications of the universal law of kindness. The permission was granted of old, under the necessary law of self-defence and of just punishment, which were indispensable in a rude and unformed state of society. Injuries affecting persons and lives must be restrained. Under governments with but feeble and imperfect organizations, the power which otherwise is entirely delegated to rulers, resides partially with the people. They are to an extent the necessary executive. The order, the peace and happiness of the community is the great end to be attained. The better way of securing it is by mutual forbearance, the forgiveness of injuries, and returning of good for evil. The execution of penalties is most wisely lodged in the hands of the executive. But when there is neither energy in the government nor the self-restraints of moral culture in the community, the primitive laws which are essential to protection and safety, are needfully in force. And hence the Mosaic code, instituted in a rude age, for a passionate and sensual people, exposed to all the vicious examples of insolent barbarity and unrestrained violence of surrounding ferocious tribes, almost of necessity embraced rules of cogent and severe application. But none of these rules can be construed into the admission of radically different principles in the required conduct of men. They do not refute the idea, that morality and religion in their elements were the same thing in both systems; that God delighted in substantially the same feelings and affections in the hearts of

men, formerly as now, and that a real goodness of character was built upon substantially the same basis. The moral law embraces all the great principles of social welfare. It defends the personal rights and secures the personal happiness of each member of society. It is designed, not merely to restrain violent acts, which disturb the repose of the community, but to extinguish those evil passions, which are the internal springs of wickedness. There is a spiritual energy and application in this code which makes it the code of mankind in all ages and all situations; and, although its higher and more comprehensive aims were not discovered by the bigoted Hebrew, yet, under the luminous expositions of Christ, its length and breadth and depth are convincingly illustrated. This code was the basis of duty under the old dispensation; it is the basis of duty under the new. Our Saviour fully adopted it, when he said: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself; on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

While this common ground of fundamental principles in the Old and New Testament, seems to be a fact to be admitted without controversy, there remain very many points of difference in which the revelation made by Christ and the apostles is distinguished from that of Moses and the prophets. However strongly the teachings of the Gospel now throw light upon prophecy, and with whatever advantage we read the Gospel by reason of a knowledge of the law, it can be shown that the New Testament discloses facts, and develops truths, which the human mind had never before perceived, or if perceived, had not clearly known.

Let us first consider what is known in regard to God. We have seen the full and explicit testimonies given to the unity and personality of the Deity. The Jehovah of the prophets stood revealed in the awful majesty and almost loneliness of the unapproachable Supreme. Respecting the Divine nature as involving a Trinity of persons, though it may be implied or dimly intimated, no declaration is made. This is a distinctive doctrine of the New Testament. The fact that God existed as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is not coeval with its enunciation. Nor is the knowledge of this fact necessarily connected with any acts of the Divine being, which imply such a peculiarity in his essence. As we trace the history of God's hand in the recorded events of

his church, we presume that we see distinct evidences of the work of the Son of God, as the angel of the covenant, and of the Spirit of God, as the teacher of his prophets and the sanctifier of the spiritual Israelite. To our minds, already enlarged with other views of the Divine economy, it may be easy to perceive that God, in many of his interpositions, before the advent of Christ, did still communicate with men in the person of his Son, or in the person of the Holy Ghost. Is there decisive evidence that the fact was recognized? Does the Old Testament contain proof, that the people of God had the conception of a Trinity in the Divine nature? Looking at the question in a merely speculative view, the immediate conclusion is, that it would have been very difficult to communicate the idea in definite terms without danger of its degenerating at once into that of a plurality of gods. The pure Theism of the Old Testament was the essential antagonist of the gross polytheism of a corrupt and material age. The world was full of deities. There were gods many and lords many. The divinity was distributed among innumerable supernatural existences. If God had been declared then as existing as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; if it had been said, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God," and the "Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us," how could it have been possible, with the crude and uncultivated minds of the age, already accustomed to the idea of a multitude of gods, to have stopped short of the conclusion, that the Father was the true God, and that the Word was another true God? There certainly would have been reason to apprehend, that one great design of the revelation given by Moses and the prophets, and in fact of the whole Jewish economy, would have been subverted by such an enunciation, as that "the Word was with God, and the Word was God." One most important and, indeed, a chief end of the ancient revelation, together with the Jewish institutions and ritual, was, to establish the knowledge of Jehovah as the one living and true God, in opposition to, and in distinction from, the imaginary gods and deified heroes of the pagan mythology. The unceasing influence of idolatry in obscuring this idea, was the occasion of the successive judgments of God upon his people; and, as a historic fact, the existence and absolute preëminence of Jehovah was only firmly fixed by the long and severe discipline experienced under the theocracy. Until this was accomplished, the

appropriate time for the more perfect revelation of God and the deeper facts in his nature, had not come. The question, however, is not to be settled by a speculative argument, but by the facts in the case. It is not uncommon to assume that the Holy Spirit and the Divine Saviour are both revealed in the Old Testament. In justification of the known existence of the Holy Spirit, it is adduced, that many acts are ascribed by the prophets and inspired writers to the Spirit of God, or to the Holy Spirit. The term Holy Ghost is confined to the New Testament. To us, who live under the dispensation of the Spirit whom Christ promised, and who have known that there is a Holy Ghost, it is entirely natural to connect with the phrase, the Spirit of God, and Holy Spirit, the same idea in the Jewish Scriptures as in the Epistles. To our minds it has a definite meaning. We understand it as the third person of the Holy Trinity. The usage in the Old Testament does not necessarily imply such a knowledge. It is sometimes a term convertible with God. Sometimes it means a Divine influence. It is the exerted or manifested power of Jehovah. It is either God himself or an agency assumed as the medium of the Divine operation. There is no positive evidence, that the Spirit spoken of in the Old Testament, was recognized, either as a mode of the Divine existence, or as one of a trinity of persons in the Divine essence. It was either a name of God himself, not indicating any peculiarity in his nature, or the expression of the Divine energy as it produced results in the material world or enlightened and directed the human mind.

In like manner, the Son of God was not known in his mysterious unity with the Father. Our Saviour teaches us to search the Scriptures for testimony concerning himself. And we find in the Hebrew Scriptures many express allusions to him. The prophetic declarations and glowing descriptions of the Messiah, have found their fulfilment in Jesus. They are ample testimony to the identity of his person with the one who was to come. And however clear it may be to our minds, that many of these passages are consistent with the absolute divinity of Christ and of his coequality with the Father, it is by no means evident that they conveyed such an idea to the Jews. It is not, indeed, to be affirmed that the devout prophets of God were wholly ignorant of the spiritual character and offices of the Messiah. David did in spirit call him Lord, and he may have seen in vision the

Divine glory of Christ's person. Others by the same special gift may have enjoyed the same sublime privilege. There are passages in the Psalms and in Isaiah, which, to our minds, are emphatic descriptions of a spiritual deliverer and a Divine Redeemer. Neither would it be safe to assert that, in the early communications of the Spirit of God, no intimations had been given of a mystery in the Divine nature, or to maintain, with confidence, that devout Israelites, under the inspiration of God, had not some visions of the true glory and character of the Messiah. God certainly did communicate such facts to their minds, and through them to his church, as can be fully understood and appreciated only by recognizing the divinity of Jesus Christ. This form of the revelation was essential to a record to be read in all ages. In no other way could the unity and harmony of Divine revelation as a whole, have been maintained. It was necessary to the full establishment of the claims of the Messiah to his place in the Godhead, that the voice of prophecy should be in unison with the more full announcements concerning Jesus to be made in a later dispensation. We go to the Old Testament for proof concerning Christ. It is a witness to his Deity which cannot be impeached. Its testimony is strong and convincing, now that Messiah has come. But we are not, therefore, to conclude that, antecedent to the verification of the prophecy, its full force was discovered; that, before the actual person of Christ was known among men, his whole character was made out, and all his transcendent features and attributes moulded into the glorious image of the Son of God. The Hebrew Scriptures, read in their independent obscurity, and without the solvent for their almost enigmatical intimations, which is furnished by the New, would scarcely enable the most sanguine mind to discover, in the promised one, the fulness of the Godhead. Certain it is that no decisive facts can be adduced to show, that the Hebrews ever obtained from their Scriptures a well-defined spiritual idea of the complete character of Jesus, or were led to expect him, as a king, possessing the attributes and enjoying the throne with God himself. God did, however, disclose enough concerning his Son to awaken a high expectation concerning his coming, and to fortify the minds of devout men with the hope of a future deliverance from the evils under which his people were laboring. Their ideas were probably very vague. The oriental imagery under which the glories of his kingdom were predicted, fore-

shadowed a splendid and beneficent sovereign, who would bless the Jewish nation with great prosperity, safety and peace. But the intimations of the manner in which this was to be accomplished, are very sparing; and nowhere is it indicated, in language sufficiently exact to convey the idea definitely, that the Messiah was really the God of the Jews, or the Son of God, equal in all Divine attributes with the Father. It is quite certain that, when Christ appeared, even those who knew him most intimately, were not prepared to appreciate him in this exalted and mysterious character. The near disciples of our Lord were constantly exhibiting the darkness of their minds, and the narrowness of their conceptions, in regard to the person and character of their Master. And the idea seemed with slow progress to have gained their credence. Whatever the New Testament discloses of the Divine character of Christ and his mysterious union in the Godhead, is plainly a new revelation. It was opening to the human understanding a fact in the Divine nature, which had before been veiled in darkness. God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, may have been the essential condition of the Infinite Being from eternity. In the creation of the world, and in the government of the moral universe, each of these mysterious persons may have been exerting their peculiar agency. In the Jewish economy, each may have entered in the various interpositions and manifestations of the Deity. But the wonderful and transcendently mysterious fact never arose in its clear radiance upon the human mind, until the great purposes of God in the accomplishment of human redemption were fully disclosed. Then, the Divine character of Christ, the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person, appears. Then, in connection with his life on earth, he illustrates his omnipotence and reveals his union with the Father.

From him, too, comes the knowledge of the Holy Ghost, who was not manifested as the Paraclete until after the resurrection of our Lord. And by these revelations we gain all that, in the present world, we can conceive of a Trinity in the Divine essence. The knowledge of God thus subsisting, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, is due to the light shed upon us in the Gospel.

In affirming that the doctrine of the Trinity, or of God existing in three persons, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is peculiar to the New Testament revelation, it must not be included in the assertion, that no doctrine of a Divine Trinity was otherwise

promulgated. The notion, that the Deity involved a Trinity, is of very early origin. Traces of it are to be found in many of the most ancient mysteries, so ancient that it has been called a "revealed theology." Its highest and most elaborate form is found in the writings of Plato and his school. As Plato wrote four hundred years before the Christian era, his views must be considered as purely human speculations, even though he caught the first notion of his theory from a dim tradition, derived originally from the Hebrews, but afterwards lost from among them. The similarity between the Platonic and Christian Trinities is certainly very striking. The Highest Good, the Intellect and the Soul, of Plato, are presented to us as the One Divinity. These three hypostases are exhibited as an extension of one essence. They are each eternal, and uncreated, and unsubstantial. This Trinity is not a threefold manifestation, nor yet a merely nominal Trinity, formed by different notions of the same thing, but an actual Trinity of persons necessarily existent and universal; infinite, omnipotent, and creators of the whole world. With these ideas others were variously mixed, partaking of an entirely pagan character, and different authors presented the leading facts with many confused and incongruous speculations. Now, while the purest Platonism discovers to us a system bearing so strong a resemblance to the Christian Trinity, and proving, beyond all dispute, the possibility, that the human mind can entertain the idea of a Divinity in a Trinity of persons, it must be evident, that this is not a true knowledge of the essential mode of the Divine existence, as given to us in the Scriptures. This Trinity of persons, while it is together affirmed to be the Divinity, is nevertheless a Trinity of mutually dependent and subordinate beings. The second was dependent upon and subordinate to the first; and the third, dependent upon and subordinate to the other two. It has more the appearance of an emanation or a development, than of the coequal persons of the Christian Trinity in one Godhead. The infinite goodness, the infinite wisdom, and the infinite love or active power, are very unlike the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. And with whatever admiration we are struck, by the exceedingly lofty and acute speculations of Plato, and by his seeming apprehension of the necessity of conceiving of the Deity as not a simple Unity, we are still compelled to admit, that the only knowledge of the actual subsistence of God in three coequal, coeternal, omnipotent and

omniscient persons, together one and the same Deity, and yet without a tritheistic individuality, is purely a doctrine of the New Testament. The notions which have been adduced as preëxisting, and variously involved in older systems than the Christian, are important facts in the history of human thought. By a foreseen and wise concurrence of events, God prepared the way for the advent of Christ into the world. Not less has the providence of God been visible, in the preparation of the mind for the doctrines which cluster around Christ, as the incarnate Word. The speculations of philosophers, in regard to a Trinity, may be looked upon as an important influence, in preparing the way for the true doctrine of the Divine nature, while they all fall very far short of the doctrine itself. They are to it less than the morning twilight to the brightness of the sun. They are only comascatons, which shoot up in the night of pagan darkness. In the gloom they are brilliant and attractive. They vanish, when the sun of true knowledge arises in the pure revelations of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

In like manner, the assertion that the Divinity of Christ, as the second person of the Trinity, is purely a New Testament doctrine, needs to be viewed in connection with what is affirmed concerning the knowledge of a personal Logos among the Jews, at the time of the advent of our Saviour. It has been maintained that the Jewish Scriptures convey the idea of the Logos, in the phrase, the Word of God, implying that this phrase is the designation of a Divine person, with omnipotent power, and that it is identical with the Logos of John. If we rest upon the Scripture alone, for the meaning of this epithet, we should undoubtedly come to the conclusion, with some of the most learned critics, that it is only a periphrasis for God, or used as expressive of his active power, or his wisdom. It can hardly be maintained that this term could have conveyed to the Jewish mind the conception of the Word, who was to become incarnate among men.

Aside from a purely Scriptural testimony, the chief reliance, in maintaining the view in question, is founded upon the writings of Philo. He was contemporary with Christ, and all accounts of him agree, that he infused into his Jewish notions many ideas derived from the Platonic philosophy, and that the Logos which he held was neither a purely Jewish, nor a purely Platonic idea. It has been characterized by Dr. Pye Smith "as merely conceptual, capable only of being manifested to the spiritual or intellec-

tual part of man." Philo asserts, "that the Divine Word would not assume a visible form or representation, and that it was not to be reckoned among the objects known by sense." But his views were discordant and confused. As a philosopher he reasoned, and speculated, and uttered his sentiments under forms which are Platonic in their type. At other times, speaking as a Jew, he seems to have admitted the personality and the visibility of the *Logos*. It is probable that his own opinions partook of a mixed character; and, while in some representations he harmonizes with the most abstract and spiritual views of the *Logos*, as a mere intellectual conception, in other representations he coincides more nearly with the ideas of Scripture. Authors who treat of the doctrines of Philo do not agree. He is, in fact, inconsistent with himself. There is a presumption, that his speculations were modified by opinions common among his Jewish contemporaries, and therefore his writings furnish some evidence that the doctrine of a Divine *Logos* engaged the thoughts of men at that period. But the facts in the case hardly justify the opinion that either Philo or the Jews immediately antecedent to his times, understood the Divine character of the Messiah. Upon comparing the clear and definite descriptions which the evangelists give of Christ, with these vague speculations, and gathering up the material for an exact idea of his person and character from his own sayings and acts, it seems impossible to merge one of these into the other. The Jewish *Logos*, and the *Logos* of Philo are not convertible. So that we cannot derive, from the facts in question, a convincing argument that the Divine Saviour, in his distinct personality, and his coequality with God, was known before the Messiah himself was manifested. And after Jesus himself appeared, a true knowledge of him was slowly developed. He illustrated his Divine attributes in his life, and the profound wisdom of his communications; and gradually his disciples and those who followed them, received the hitherto unacknowledged fact of Jesus Christ, as God manifest in the flesh, the Son of God equal with the Father.

In view, then, of what may be gathered concerning a Trinity of persons in the doctrines of the Platonists, and a Divine *Logos* in the writings of Philo, we are still left to the conclusion, that God, as subsisting under the conditions of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three coequal persons in one Godhead, belongs purely to the doctrines of revelation. While we discover, in regard to the

Platonic Trinity, some surprising similarity, and while Philo taught some things concerning a Divine Logos, like the characteristics exhibited of Christ in the Scriptures, yet the two systems are not at all convertible. The point where it is possible for either of these to be merged into the Scripture statements, is, to say the least, obscure. It would be difficult for any one to substitute the Highest Good, the Intellect, and the wisdom of Plato, for the Divine Being, who, in the threefold form of the Scriptures, carries on the work of human redemption. Still more difficult would it be to convert Philo's Logos into the crucified Redeemer of the Gospels. The notions of these systems do not compare with the true doctrine of the Divine Being, as the elementary notions of a Deity do with the true idea of the one God. In the latter case, the connection is readily discerned; in the former, it is not. So that, before we can really accept these refined philosophic theories, as a preëxisting knowledge of the peculiar doctrines of the New Testament in regard to the being of God, they must be greatly changed in their form, and more distinctly traced to a fundamental conception of the real mystery of the Godhead.

We may then pass from the character of Christ and that of the Holy Ghost, to their offices in the economy of redemption. The great design of the incarnation of the Son of God was, to complete the work of redemption. It was the Divine economy to expiate sin only by suffering, and to deliver mankind from punishment by means of a sacrifice worthy of the magnitude of the occasion. The connection between pardon and expiatory sacrifices was very early disclosed. It was involved and clearly illustrated in the Mosaic ritual. The Jew read it continually in the death of the victims slain at the altar, "that without the shedding of blood there was no remission." The idea must have been closely woven into the texture of his religious views, so that whatever hope he had of mercy, rested, in some way, upon an atoning sacrifice. And yet it was never taught him, nor intended that he should believe, that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sin. It was forcibly impressed that God had no pleasure in them, but that his delight was in a broken and contrite heart. In fact, the conditions of forgiveness under the old dispensation, so far as they relate to the feelings and character of the individual, are identical with those in the new. Sorrow was to be exercised for sin, the mind humble, the heart

contrite; evil ways were to be forsaken; God was to be loved and honored and submitted to. Even faith, which holds so prominent a position in the evangelical system, was an indispensable condition of salvation. It was not a specific faith in Jesus Christ, exercised as we are required to exercise it. Its object was primarily God. To trust in God was the imperative duty, and the richest blessings were offered in connection with its performance. Those who sought God's favor, were to approach him with penitent confessions, with prayer and offerings, with a new heart and with the purpose of an holy obedience. So that, subjectively, the way of salvation under the old dispensation, involved the same elementary feelings, and was expected to produce substantially the same devout and godly life, as is looked for under the Gospel. But the object of faith, and the specific manner of its exercise, were widely different. The real ground of pardon, and the method of God's mercy, were, to say the least, but very obscurely revealed. It could not, indeed, have escaped the spiritual Jew, that their sacrifices were only typical. We may freely believe, that they looked upon the altar and the lamb, as emblems and shadows of better things to come. It may be, that, throughout the whole system, there was a dim intimation to their minds, of another more princely victim, a royal sufferer; and that, through the gloom, faith strained its feeble eye to catch a glimpse of one, who was worthy to suffer the just for the unjust. Whether or not they sang with the understanding in their Psalms of the agony of the garden, or read in Isaiah of the true Lamb of Calvary, they evidently had this before them, that their forgiveness was assured by believing in the promises which God made. And these promises were presented to them in close dependence upon the blood of sacrifices, and these sacrifices were only a faint representation of the great sacrifice. The efficacy of the promise was in the provision of mercy in which we rejoice. The blood which cleanses us, really cleansed them. And though their faith was exercised in the midst of obscure revelations, and visions hardly palpable in the overshadowing cloud, while ours is demanded in the full brilliancy of the sun of righteousness, yet a true faith in them was as efficacious, and as sufficient for justification, as the faith of any believer in these better days. But the glory of the Lord had not risen upon them. A deliverer was promised. They looked forward to a Messiah who was to come. And yet we are forced to admit, that the way of salvation

which is the preëminent revelation of God to lost men, could not have been known to the early saints, in its explicit terms, its reasonable method, in its openness, its freeness, its unfailing security. Its only clear exposition is in the life and words, the sufferings and death of Christ. The Jew lived in hope. His probation was passed amid shadows and perishing emblems. A prospective glory lay before him, and his imagination was excited by the lofty enunciations of his inspired prophets. In various forms, sometimes of regal splendor and magnificence rising to an unearthly grandeur, and then of lowliness and suffering, a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief, did the pencil of the seer delineate to them their expected Messiah. The prophets, it may be, saw and comprehended clearly. But to other eyes the picture was confused, the light and the shade mysteriously blended, the characters obscure, and the precise meaning of the whole never apprehended. They hoped for things which they saw not. And hence, notwithstanding the abundant help which we get from the ritual service, and the prophetic declarations of the Old Testament, in determining the precise import and bearing of the doctrine of atonement, it must be evident that these had, before the actual appearance of Christ, less significance. So that, while the death of Christ is really the ground on which every believer is accepted of God, the early saints exercised their faith vaguely and blindly, without a specific object, and an intelligent comprehension of the method of God's redeeming love. Not so under the new dispensation. The fulness of time has come. What the prophets saw in bewildering vision, what the saints longed for with holy ecstasy, what the angels desired to see but were not permitted, is unveiled and present to our wondering eyes. That point in history, toward which all the prophetic rays converged, has been passed, and the full light now shines. The Son of God has appeared. He has unfolded the Father's love and the purposes of his mercy. He has opened to all men the way of pardon and explicitly announced the conditions and grounds of forgiveness. The death and sufferings of the Redeemer have furnished the key by which are unlocked those treasures of knowledge, which were hid in the obscure intimations and types of the early dispensation. The character and government of God appear under a new light. His justice is vindicated in Christ's sufferings. His mercy is impressively proclaimed in the sacrifice of his Son. The nature

and evil of sin are manifested in the divinely appointed remedy for it. The whole way of life is open and clear. The conditions of pardon are specific. The object of faith is definite. The knowledge of Christ, as the atoning Saviour, who hath shed his blood and hath promised eternal life to every penitent believer, removes from the way of salvation all darkness and uncertainty. How a sinner can be saved, is now as clear as the sun at noon-day. This is the peculiar glory of the Gospel. Not that there is any new mercy in God, not that the possibility of salvation is a new thing, but that a full, sufficient, intelligent disclosure is made of the grounds of acceptance, the way of coming to God, and the abundant and sure provisions for the redemption of the soul. So greatly do the light and knowledge thrown upon human duty and destiny, from the pages of the New Testament, transcend all previous communications, that we are constrained to feel that we have in it a new revelation, opening to a ruined and fallen race, the most full, elevating and satisfying hopes of glory and immortal life.

From what has already been said concerning the person of the Holy Ghost, it will be readily inferred that a knowledge of the specific place assigned him in the work of redemption, is confined to the New Testament. His coming to impart miraculous gifts, was a new manifestation. His coöperation with Christ in perfecting the salvation of believers could not have been previously known. He was promised by Christ, to be with his disciples after his own death, to enlighten, comfort and sanctify. The truth of his agency in convincing of sin, as well as his constant influence, as dwelling in the hearts of Christians, are parts of a new economy. Before the giving of the Spirit in these offices, God was the refuge and strength of his people. His own agency was the sanctifying power, and he sustained and comforted the faithful who put their trust in him. And, so far as these effects had been heretofore attributed to the Spirit of God, we apprehend that they did not, as we have before stated, indicate to the believer a separate personality in the Divine essence, but an influence which God exerted spiritually. If this is not so, it is difficult to understand the teachings of Christ, in regard to the Holy Ghost, and the ignorance which was manifested by the first disciples on this subject. They, without doubt, knew the Scriptures which spoke of the Spirit of God, but they had had no instruction in regard to that peculiar agency of the Holy

Ghost which began to be manifested after the resurrection. If the Holy Ghost was himself unknown, as distinguished from the Father, then it is a necessary consequence that his personal work should be unknown; and we are, therefore, authorized to consider, as peculiar to Christianity, all those delightful announcements for the comfort of Christians, which Christ made in his promises of the Spirit.

To some minds, these views concerning God and the economy of redemption, may perhaps be thought to invalidate those arguments for the Trinity, and the character and work of Christ, which are gathered from the Old Testament. It will, however, be observed, that what has been said, does not at all interfere with any reasonable inferences which may be made from the Hebrew Scriptures, from a Christian point of view. We gather important evidence from these Scriptures to confirm the true doctrine of the Divine essence, the character and work of Christ, the person and offices of the Spirit. Such testimony is appropriate and weighty; it is indispensable in filling out completely the Christian argument. And yet the same statements and facts, seen only in a Jewish light, may have been, and probably were, altogether incompetent to the establishment of the conclusions which we reach. As a prophecy finds its highest elucidation in the fulfilment, so the type is best expounded by the antitype. And thus, facts and doctrines of the Gospel, which were unknown to the ancient church, though seminally imbedded in their Scriptures, are detected there and brought out, by reason of the light thrown back upon the past by the fuller revelation now enjoyed, and are used as helps to confirm our knowledge and our faith. The Scriptures are but one system of truth, arranged according to a law which most successfully develops its varied relations and its exhaustless significance. The recorded experience of the church is an illustration of the power and application of truth, and, as history progresses, the development of truth will progress. So that we may not yet indulge the feeling that any part of Divine revelation has been searched to the bottom, or that any one doctrine of the Word has yet been exhibited in all the distinctness, in which it will bless the eyes and cheer the hearts of believers, in coming generations.

With such increase of knowledge of the character of God and the methods of the Divine government, with the full manifestation of a Divine Redeemer and a Sanctifier of God's people, it

must follow, as a necessary consequence, that the whole development of religion in the lives of disciples, would partake of a more definite form and exhibit greater strength and moral purity. And hence it is that, in the whole New Testament, there is a higher type of spiritual religion, a wider range of duty inculcated, and a more intelligent faith. Upon the knowledge of the way of life in the atonement made by Christ, is based the distinct and elevating hopes in which Christians rejoice. For, in the Gospel, the fact of immortality is established, the resurrection of the body is plainly announced, the final judgment disclosed to view, and the condition of the soul in eternity.

The state of human knowledge before the coming of Christ, on these points, has already been adverted to. The apprehensions of men in respect to them were undefined. The ideas entertained were involved in all the uncertainty and vagueness of conjecture. But in the teachings of Christ and the apostles, the fact of immortality is settled with the utmost precision. And it is not merely declared that the soul continues to exist when it leaves the body, in virtue of its spiritual essence, but that it shall live in the body which has passed under the dominion of death in virtue of its inherent corruptibility. The body itself is to live again, the soul to be reunited with it; and the body which has undergone the process of dissolution, is itself to be re-composed in an incorruptible and glorious form, identical with its previous self, so far, as that the soul and body united, shall again constitute the same person. And with so much exactness is this transformation declared as a contingent of an immortal existence, that those whose lives are continued up to the period of this general resurrection from the grave, will pass through a like process, without the usual dissolution, their bodies being changed at once into the glorious bodies which are to be the eternal habitation of the soul. The Christian revelation has surpassed all other knowledge in the disclosure of this great mystery. The human mind clings to the belief of a continued life; but, in respect to the body, the obvious conclusion of the understanding is, that it is irrecoverably lost. So entire is its decomposition, and so scattered are the elements which entered into it in its integrity, that it is to us inconceivable how it should be resuscitated, and again resume its physical unity. Even with the revelation, we are yet in great darkness, as to the particulars of the change, and as to the condition and precise constitution of the

glorified body. So profound is the mystery, that science does nothing at all to enlighten us. Its speculations serve only to make the mystery darker, and to raise doubts of a great fact, which can only be received upon Divine testimony. This doctrine, then, so far from having been included in human knowledge without a revelation, is now only known because it is so declared. We receive the fact. Our reasonings and our researches are as incompetent to explain it, as were the unaided minds of men to discover it. It is one of the great things in the methods of God, which is disclosed as far as our profit required, while the rest is still held in the profoundest concealment.

As consequent upon what is declared in the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, and its reunion with the glorified body, we have the knowledge of the general judgment, and the final separation of the righteous and wicked. The whole scene, in its distinct purpose, in the person of the judge, in the precision and solemnity of the process, in the absolute justice of the sentence, in the unchangeable fate assigned to each individual, is altogether new. The mythological representations of ancient superstition may be said to be the embodiment of the anticipations of the human mind concerning retribution. The reason and conscience claim such a reckoning as this life does not afford. The foreshadowings of a judgment have not otherwise found a reality. In the Christian Scriptures it is revealed. It stands as a sequel and completion of the work of Christ. Jesus Christ is the constituted judge of the whole human race; a man, by virtue of his incarnation; God, in virtue of his union with the Father. His union with man fits him to meet man, and to appreciate the trials and the infirmities of his condition, and to understand the force of his temptations, and to measure the quality and extent of his ability, which is the just criterion of blameworthiness. The interests of humanity are safe in his hands. As God, he is qualified in respect to absolute omniscience and infinite justice; so that the necessities of the Divine government shall be met, and all the purposes and requirements of the holy law of God applied to human conduct. So exact an adjustment is no human conception. The plan is Divine in its origin, and is discovered to us only in the revelation which God has made by his Son. It is the only satisfactory solution ever presented to the human mind, of the hitherto unresolved problem of retribution. In combining God's omniscience and infinite justice, in a nature which

sympathizes with the frailty and trials of offending man, the interest of the throne and the interests of the subject are equally defended. This is a purely Christian idea; and one which marks the advancement of the knowledge imparted in the New Testament, beyond all that is attainable from other sources.

We cannot claim that the idea of happiness, as consequent upon righteousness, or of suffering, as consequent upon sin, belongs distinctively even to the Bible. They seem to be the necessary growth of our moral constitution. It comes into the mind with a seeming unavoidableness, along with the consciousness of guilt, that a punishment awaits us. And all nations have been found erecting some form of prison-houses for the endurance of future torment. And so also has the mind pictured abodes of blessedness attainable by a life of virtue. And here we can only say in respect to the New Testament, that it opens to human view, with an absolute certainty, the punishment of the wicked, its fearful character and its eternal continuance, and with a power and distinctness which surpass all previous conceptions. It is authoritatively, and with fearful strength of description, announced, as the warning voice of God to those who are approaching retribution. And, in like manner, the character, the fulness, the purity, the security, and the permanence of the joys of heaven are propounded to us, insomuch that the Apostle says of these communications of the Spirit, that eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the joys which God hath in store for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit. And with such knowledge of the eternal world, the reunion of the soul and body, the final judgment of the Son of man, the retribution of eternal death to the wicked and of eternal life to the righteous, does the Christian faith leave all other systems and schemes far in the background. It contains, in these momentous disclosures, all that is needful for us to know for our own advancement in holiness and salvation, while it opens to us a field of elevating contemplation, and plies us with motives of the utmost cogency.

In concluding these remarks, it may not be improper to observe, that truth has been communicated to the human mind very much in the degree in which the mind has been adapted to receive it. There is a process of growth and development in the intellect of the race, as in that of the individual man. It has its infancy, its season of progress, and of maturity. The power of generaliz-

ing, of noting abstract relations, and conceiving spiritual ideas must have been very limited, in the early history of the world. Knowledge assumed a rougher and more material form. Rude passion and uncultivated feeling, of necessity, had a more unrestrained play. And it could not but have been, that the form in which moral truth was communicated, and the particular character of truth were modified so as to be adapted to the particular condition of the human mind. The great elementary principles of duty, both in respect to man and God, are found to have been imparted to the mind almost coeval with his existence. But they could not have been understood in all their necessary or possible applications. The ten commandments are an exceedingly abstract and comprehensive code, the real intent and meaning of which hardly dawned upon the world till after the time of Christ, though it had been known, in its formula, for two thousand years. The whole ante-Christian era was one of slow progress in correct principles, and in the rectification of notions and ideas which the mind seized in the gross, but which were not analyzed. There was a struggle going on between the material and the spiritual, between the forms of conduct and the reign of motives; and it was only by this process that the human race was brought up to a condition to receive a new and more spiritual revelation by Jesus Christ. If we admit that, in the older condition of the race, there were scattered among men the great elementary notions and principles of human duty, we are only yielding to a necessity, when we say they were not truly combined in human knowledge, and that they were not apprehended in their true intent and spirit. And, by the same necessity, we are compelled to look for higher forms of truth, and for a wider range of knowledge, under the new dispensation. The progress of the human mind makes it capable of rising to higher views of God, and of conceiving spiritual relations more truly. This is precisely what we find. The New Testament contains a revelation which adapts itself to this growth and development of the intellect of the race. It is a vast repository of objective truth, which the mind of man is to explore, and into which it will continually make new researches, and from which it will continually derive knowledge, to satisfy its constantly widening capacity. Truth, as it exists, does not alter. But the perception of truth is destined to become clearer and more impressive, and the relations of truth to human conduct, to be known with more exactness and

fulness. As the powers of the mind are more highly exercised, as the laws of mental operation are better understood, as science unfolds to us more of the mysteries of the material world, and as language becomes a more nice medium for the transmission of thought, the truths and doctrines of the word of God will shine in a new and distincter light. As under the long discipline of the Jewish theocracy, the conception of God was purged of the gross materialism and multiplicity in which it was involved, until the Divine unity stood out unimpaired, so, under the higher discipline of Christ and the Spirit in the kingdom of the Redeemer, will the truth be gradually purified of whatever crudeness and darkness still mixes itself with it, until the whole spiritual firmament shall shine with unobscured brightness, and every particular star in the radiant galaxy shall be marked and known by its own familiar light. Truth itself is eternal; the mind of man progressive; and not until the mind shall have reached the last stage of its development in time, will the whole mystery of the wisdom of God be fully known or understood.

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## ARTICLE VI.

### THE SIMILARITY BETWEEN THE EPISTLE OF JUDE AND THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER.

By Rev. Frederic Gardiner, Bath, Maine.

MANY and various are the conjectures which, from time to time, have been put forth to account for the remarkable resemblance between the epistle of Jude and the second of Peter. One critic finds, in the fact of this resemblance, conclusive proof that neither Apostle could have seen the epistle of the other, or he would not have written his own; another thinks it equally clear that one of them must have had the epistle of the other before his eyes. This one cannot doubt that the epistle of Jude, being more terse and having greater concinnity, bears the plain mark of originality, and must have been the earlier of the two; but another is convinced that the epistle of