

fails to account for Christ Himself. Christianity is not a system of morals, a collection of dogmas, a series of rites and ceremonies; Christianity is Christ living and reigning in the hearts and lives of those who love Him.

The study of comparative religion is often appealed to in connexion with this subject. But the more thoroughly that study is pursued, the more completely does it prove the *uniqueness* of Christianity and of Christ. The doctrines of God's Holiness and spiritual Fatherhood are found nowhere else, except in some measure in its preliminary stage, Judaism. The idea of human brotherhood is purely Christian. Our Lord's inculcation of gentleness, humility, patience, and His command to return good for evil, were absolutely contrary to the ethnic systems of his time, as they still are to those of non-Christian nations. His attitude to children, to women, to the poor, the outcast, the common people, the sinful, the degraded, the lost, the penitent, was, again, so startlingly new that the more we think of it the more it astounds us by the contrast it presents to everything even theoretically taught, much less practised, elsewhere. Christ showed that to serve one's fellow-men is the noblest and loftiest of human tasks, instead of being a degradation. His revelation of God is unparalleled before or since, as all must admit. Leaving entirely out of account the uniqueness of His miracles, His parables, His prophecies, His self-abnegation, His death and resurrection, we come to the most practical and not least remarkable matter of all—the influence He exerted and still exerts over countless millions of men of every class and race, of every clime and every time. It has well been said: "There has scarcely been a town in any Christian country since the time of Christ where a century has passed without exhibiting a character of such elevation that his mere presence has shamed the bad and made the good better, and has been felt at times like the presence of God Himself."¹

This being so, it is clear that no possible modification of either of the theories which we have been considering will satisfy the conditions of the case. The only solution of the problem of the origin and influence of Christianity is that stated by Christ Himself: "My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me." "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world." "Lo, I am with you all the days."



God's Hand in Earth's Past History.

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THE aim of the author of the work which we are now noticing² is to show that the past history of the earth, extending through the periods of geology, and passing over vast eras of time, could have only brought about the present condition of our globe by being guided at every step in its long development by the guiding Providence of Almighty God.

¹ "Ecce Homo," cap. xiv. *fin.*

² *La Providence Créatrice*, par A. de Lapparent. Troisième Edition, Paris, 1907.

The work is one of a series now being published in Paris,¹ and called "Science et Religion." This series contains works by eminent scientists, written in order to refute the materialism of the day. The books deal with the problems connected with physics, astronomy, geology, biology, and anthropology, and are especially directed against the materialistic school of Haeckel and his followers. They are small and very cheap, the largest being 1 fr. 50 cents in price. Several hundred volumes have already been issued, but we are not aware that any have been translated into English. The science of the books is good, and the series will be most useful.

Geology presents to us the history of the earth in the following order. It shows us first a vast nebula, intensely heated, and rapidly turning on its axis. Then a ring of nebulous matter is thrown off, which at length condenses into a molten globe. Slowly a crust covers the fiery mass, which is enveloped in a dense shroud of vapour. Water is deposited on the heated crust, and spreads in time over its surface, as a universal ocean. Animal and vegetable life begin in the waters, and by-and-by the land appears and is covered with a luxuriant vegetation. Monstrous reptiles swarm upon the earth, gigantic lizards and fish inhabit the seas, and strange birds and grotesque flying dragons sweep through the air. Change follows change, and after long ages great beasts appear on the earth in vast numbers. At last man himself comes upon the scene, and the course of creation closes with his advent.

Thus the history of creation as revealed by geology exhibits a continuous progress, but we must be careful to understand the nature of this progression.

It is not simply *change*, but change with a *purpose* and *design*. Let us see the ways in which this progress manifested itself in the past ages of the earth's history.

First, there was a progress in stability. When the earth was but half formed, as it were, fire and water strove on its surface for the mastery. The solid crust was again and again broken up, and fire-deluges devastated it on all sides. Afterwards, when a more substantial earthy covering had been established on the molten nucleus that tossed its waves of fire beneath it, the solid crust at the surface was raised, sunk, crumpled, and twisted in an extraordinary manner. By degrees, however, in the course of ages these disturbances quieted down, although from time to time convulsions burst forth with appalling power. Frequently, also, gigantic outflowings of molten rock from the interior burst through the crust and inundated thousands of square miles with oceans of fiery lava. There is in the south of Africa a tract, 100,000 square miles in extent, which is entirely composed of hardened lava,² and in India there is a region which is nearly as large as all Great Britain, covered to the depth of hundreds of feet by one vast overflow of consolidated lava. These proofs are strengthened by the fact that from time to time whole races of animals were swept away at once, all over the earth's surface, by appalling convulsions.³ Now, at such a time and in such

¹ By Bloud and Co., Rue Madame.

² See Livingstone's "Last Journals," vol. ii., pp. 215-16.

³ The *Geological Magazine*, 1885, p. 13.

a world, when the earth's crust was constantly crumpled up, and its surface buried again and again by fiery deluges of molten rock, and when sea and land were often changing places with convulsive rapidity, man could have found no home. He could not have lived in such a tempest-tossed world. His reasoning and calculating mind would have been utterly out of place in a world in which he could reckon on no stability or order of events. Gradually, however, these violent changes became less sudden and less frequent. Through the course of long ages the alterations in the earth took place in a slower manner. Until at last, just before man's advent, the earth became quiet, regular, and stable. Now, all this could only have taken place by means of a *Guiding Power* directing the physical and vital phenomena on our globe. So it was with our earth; its violent forces were steadily calmed down through the course of long ages by the guiding Providence of God, in order that it might at last become a fitting habitation for man.

Secondly, there has been through long ages of the earth's history a steady progress in the development and perfection of natural beauty. The world is not only an elaborate machine which testifies to the skill of its Maker, but it is also a beautiful picture which bears striking witness to the power of its Painter. The elements and principles of natural beauty are variety, harmony and colour. Its details consist in sea and land, trees and flowers, hills and dales, blue skies and variegated clouds; sunshine and shadow, gay-coloured birds, and beautiful animals. When all these are combined, man admires the perfection of natural beauty.

Through long ages in the earth's history no human eye gazed on its variegated features. But through all those countless ages natural beauty steadily increased, until it attained its perfection just before the advent of man. There was no clear sky in the early periods of the earth's existence, so that its glorious tints could not be revealed, nor were there any bright birds or any beautiful flowers. Slowly, however, as the world grew older, new elements of beauty appeared one after the other, until at last, just before man appeared on the earth, natural beauty on the world was perfect. This is the manner in which a painting is developed: after many weeks all the lights and shadows, the tints and tones, are perfect, and the aim of the artist is not merely to gain money, but to give pleasure to all who may see his picture. So it was with the earth. After long ages of progression of its beauty towards perfection, the picture was finished. Who was the painter? Almighty God. Why was the picture so slowly executed, and finished with such elaborate care? In order that it might be a revelation of His glory, and a source of enjoyment to His much-loved creature, man. This conclusion is rendered certain by the fact stated, that natural beauty only attained its perfection just at *the very time* when man appeared on the earth.

Thirdly, in the course of the past ages of the earth's history, there has been a progress in *utility*. I mean that the earth was for ages gradually being more and more filled with those things which are useful and necessary to man. At present the earth contains plants, animals, minerals, and metals, by the use of which man develops his civilization. But these things were not in the earth at the beginning, and when later on many of them appeared, they were not in a position for man to make use of them had he then been

upon the earth. The useful plants and grasses only appeared a comparatively short time before man's advent, and there were no animals that he could domesticate, until a short time previous to man's appearance in the world. Then, as to those metals and minerals which are absolutely necessary for man's progress and civilization. They lay in the deepest layers of the rocks, far underground. In this position, if the strata had all been horizontal, and covered with deep layers of rock, man could never have reached the mineral treasures beneath. For instance, the layers of coal were raised in such a way that they ultimately lay in basins, so that the edges of each could be worked. Each layer formed by the decay of a special forest was covered by earthy matter, then raised, and another forest grew over the covering mass, and once more the forest sank. Sometimes these alternate sinkings and raisings have gone on uninterruptedly until more than *fifty* forests have been buried in *one* region alone. This could not have taken place without interruption unless there had been guidance and superintendence. The coal, also, all through these long ages was preserved *pure*, so that its combustion might be perfect. How this was effected we do not know. The precious metals lay buried deep in the earth, but the rocks containing them were raised above the surface in mountain chains, which enabled man to dig the metals out of their sides. The flanks of these hills were also shattered and ground up by immense glaciers, and then torrents of water poured over the hills, and swept the mud and gravel containing gold, tin, and other metals into the valleys, where man could easily examine them. Different climates did not exist at the beginning of the earth's history, for at that time there was one uniform climate over all the world. Slowly, however, different zones and regions of climate began to appear, and at last, after a long series of changes, extending over vast ages, the different climates were established. Thus the earth, in the course of millions of years, was slowly prepared to be a great *training school* for man. Could there be a better illustration of the way in which the ceaseless working of the Providence of God has, through vast ages, prepared the world to be a home for man? The very *soil* in which man grows his harvest was prepared for him in a special manner. Just before his advent the whole of the Northern Hemisphere was covered with enormous glaciers, which ploughed up the land, and ground the rocks to powder. Then, when the glaciers disappeared, torrents of water swept over the land and deposited the *débris* in sheets of loose earth all through the valleys and over the plains. Thus was formed that arable soil which bears man's harvest, and its origination just before man appeared on the earth is another striking proof of the way in which God prepared the world to be a dwelling-place for man.

These are some of the ways, and there are many more that could be referred to, in which the long course of the ages in the past history of the earth exhibits the incessant guidance and superintendence of its Creator, and on studying them the verdict must be that pronounced by Tennyson—

"I doubt not through the ages, one unceasing purpose runs."¹

If the world's development *before* man's advent was thus so carefully

¹ "Locksley Hall."

guided, can we doubt that the same superintendence, even in a higher degree, was bestowed upon it by its Maker *after* man had appeared upon it? Certainly not. Human history is the exhibition of Divine Providence.

And so it also is with the little worlds of our own lives. They form, each of them, a field in which the Providence of God is working ceaselessly. Fret as we may, and worry as we will, there is a certain end to which everything is working, and towards which the guiding hand of an Almighty Father is steadily leading us.



The Missionary World.

BY THE REV. A. J. SANTER.

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HOW naturally children take to prayer, when they get the chance of being taught to pray, may be gathered from a report of work among the little ones at Bhagalpur, in *India's Women*: "At the time of Halley's comet . . . a report was widely circulated that on April 19 there was to be a great earthquake, and that the world would come to an end. The children of the Mission School at Sahibgunj had also heard of this. One day, when the teachers arrived at school, they found big and little girls assembled in one room and praying most earnestly, first of all for themselves, that they might be ready at any time to go to be with Jesus, and then imploring God to have mercy on their relatives." This, it must be confessed, is a great advance on the usual Hindu custom, which is to beat drums, pots and pans, and make a hideous din, in order to frighten away the demon who is about to swallow the earth!



We are constantly receiving proofs of the value of Christian education as a means of spreading the Good News, and of the appreciation thereof shown by non-Christian parents. The Rev. A. J. Harvey, Hon. C.M.S. Missionary among the Moslems in Lucknow, writes in the *C.M.S. Gleaner*: "Recently, as I was walking in Lucknow, a Hindu gentleman of my acquaintance, who was driving, pulled up his carriage, and, coming up to me, expressed his regret at not having been able to attend a lecture I had given at the end of January on 'Proofs of the Existence of God.' He said to me, 'We must have our boys grow up with faith in God, else they will turn out anarchists and come to a bad end. I myself went to a mission college in Calcutta, and I mean to send my boys, when they are old enough, to a mission college. We must have faith in a personal God; the impersonal God of our own religion is of no use.' What striking words from a man who does not call himself a Christian!"



Still another case from the same source proves the permanent effect of a Christian training in the days of one's youth. "An 'old boy' of the above-mentioned High School, now a Hindu gentleman with a large family, has for