

## A SERMON.

Preached by the REV. CANON DART, M. A., D. C. L.,  
at the Evensong of King's College, 29th June,  
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(Continued.)

"Speak to the earth and it shall teach thee; and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee: Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the Lord hath wrought this?"—Job xii. 8, 9.

Many such instances could be given did time permit, but we will pass on to glance at the work of a great scientist of our day, whose writings were once thought to be entirely hostile to revealed religion. That he was deserving of respect as a most patient collector of facts, and original reasoner upon them, seems to be beyond question, but it is possible to separate his facts from his interpretation of them. Scientific truth is one thing; philosophic speculation is another. Many scientific men of equal eminence dispute Darwin's conclusions, even so far as to reject the theory enunciated in the *Origin of Species* "as a puerile hypothesis." But let his speculations be worth what they may, Darwin himself did not deny (at least in the *Origin of Species*) that the hand of the Lord had wrought the wonders he observed in the earth and amongst the fishes of the sea. He thus speaks in the conclusion of his book on the *Origin of Species*: "From the war of nature, from famine and death, the most exalted object which we are capable of conceiving, namely, the production of the higher animals, directly follows: There is grandeur in this view of life having been originally breathed by the Creator into a few forms, or into one." The grandeur of the view may not be so apparent to us as it was to Mr. Darwin. Whether it be true or erroneous is a question to be settled by scientists, and Churchmen (as such) can look on the discussion with perfect equanimity. When Darwin was carried to his resting place in Westminster Abbey, two of our soundest theologians, one in St. Paul's Cathedral, and the other in the Abbey, spoke with appreciation of his labours, and discussed the relations which the hypothesis that is identified with his name bears to Christianity. It may be worth while to listen to a few of their words, for they show the attitude assumed by true Churchmen towards physical science. "The principle of selection," says Canon Barry, "was by no means alien to the Christian religion, but it was selection exercised under the Divine intelligence. And to man was accorded the privilege of free will which enabled him to be a fellow-worker with God in the great scheme of Providence." Canon Liddon speaks as follows: "When the books on the *Origin of Species* and the *Descent of Man* first appeared they were regarded by many religious men as containing a theory necessarily hostile to religion. A closer study has greatly modified such impressions. It is seen that whether the creative activity of God is manifested through catastrophes, as the phrase goes or in progressive evolution, it is still His creative activity. The evolutionary process, supposing it to exist, must have had a beginning; who began it? It must have had material to work with. Who furnished it? Is it itself a law or system of laws; who enacted them? Even suppose the theory represents absolute truth, and is not merely a provisional way of looking at things, incidental to the present state of knowledge, these great questions are just as little to be decided by physical science now as they were when Moses wrote the Pentateuch, but there are apparently three important gaps in the evolutionary sequence which it is well to bear in mind. There is the great gap, between the highest animal instinct, and the reflective, self-measuring, self-analysing thought of man. There is the greater between life and the most organized matter. Of this gap between vegetable and animal life, Principal Dawson observes, "it can only be filled up by an appeal to our ignorance." "There is the greatest gap of all" continues Canon Liddon, "between matter and nothing." At those three points, as far as we can see, the Creative Will, must have intervened otherwise than by way of evolution out of existing materials. to create mind, to create life, to create matter. But beyond all question, it is our business to respect in Science as in other things, every clearly ascertained

report of the senses, for every such report represents a fact, and a fact is sacred as having its place in the Temple of Universal Truth."

Just so; there may be rivalry and antagonism amongst the seekers after truths in different departments, but there is no discordance amongst the truths themselves. When scientists parade their speculation (often hastily enunciated) as indubitable truths; when they go out of their way to convey insinuations against, or to speak contemptuously of, other departments of knowledge, it may be hard to refrain from retorting in similar language. Nor is the difficulty confined to students of theology and to firm believers in Revelation. When Carlyle denounced the favorite speculations of the day as the "Gospel of Dirt," he spoke with the natural indignation of one who was deeply conscious that there was a world of mind as well as a world of matter against what appeared to him to be a sordid and false materialism. No doubt it is difficult for a Christian sometimes to preserve his equanimity in the presence of speculations that profess to be based upon scientific facts, but are evidently prompted less by a love of science than by hostility to revealed truth. Eminence in physical science is not an absolute safeguard against the use of self-contradictory language and the assumption of unscientific hypotheses. We commend, and are thankful for, the patient investigation of the secrets of Nature, but the explorer (even when not wrongly biased) may be at fault in the interpretation of his facts. It is sometimes said or implied that this is only the case with theology; that it is not the case with the natural sciences; that whilst there is confusion and error in the former, all is certainty in the latter. This, however, is scarcely true. It would be more correct to say that in the natural sciences, as in others, theories have been and are often mistaken for facts, and that the progress of every science has been marked by errors of speculation. With reference to the very hypothesis we have been looking at, on which so much has been built as upon an absolute certainty, Mr. Huxley says, "I adopt it, subject to the production of proof," which, as he admits, is not producible. And Prof. Tyndall allows that it may undergo considerable modification.

A history of inductive sciences is just a history of erroneous interpretations, each displacing the one preceding it, and destined to be displaced by another as more facts come to light after more elaborate investigation. Nor are scientists any more than other men exempt from bias in favour of their own theories or of the traditions they have received. History tells us how the old scientists who concealed their ignorance under the sonorous phrase, "Nature abhors a vacuum," abhorred Toricelli for suggesting the laws of atmospheric pressure. It tells us again of the opposition Harvey encountered from physiologists when he taught the circulation of the blood. It tells us that the emission theory of light preceded the undulatory theory, and, to take but one more instance, that theories of electricity have had to be continually modified or abandoned.

A word in conclusion. Religion is the link which binds together all the various forms of intellectual activity. It supplies them with common motives and gives them vigor which nothing else can supply. Most of the leading scientific investigators who are also practical teachers (Sedgwick, Agassiz, Frank Buckland, Phillips and Dawson amongst others), are expressly agreed in this, that if natural science be robbed of religious ideas it becomes barren and repulsive, its educational value decreases and it becomes even less efficient for practical research.

The student of theology is bound by the precepts of Scripture itself to respect investigations of truth in other departments of thought; and the student of history, or archaeology, or the natural sciences may be well assured that there is no inclination on the part of the true Churchman to undervalue pursuits of science—no disposition to reject clearly proven facts, however much they may conflict with received opinions. The essential unity of all kinds of truth is involved in the very idea of a University. Every honest, earnest seeker after truth is fulfilling in his measure the will of God; and though his face may be apparently turned from God, though he may not have found

the road to Damascus, yet by the answer he receives to his patient questioning of the earth and the fishes of the sea, he is ever revealing to man more clearly the will and purpose of the Creator. May those earnest enquirers who labor on with "toil of heart, and knees, and hands," with little thought of self, but with a burning love for Science (there are such men in the world), be led to see the invisible things of the Creator with ever increasing distinctness through the visible things He has made, and to know Him more perfectly than He can be known in Nature through the Revelation of His Word.

## THOUGHTS FOR SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

## VI.

"Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."

This must have seemed an hard saying to those who heard it fall from the Master's lips. How conscious must they have been that *their* righteousness, far from exceeding, fell far short of that of the Scribes and Pharisees. "Who then can be saved?" they might have cried, but Jesus goes on to show them how the righteousness which He demands from His followers is this higher righteousness, yet one to which the humblest, lowliest soul may attain. It is once more, as ever, the Law of Love which He inculcates, but awful is the warning which He utters to those who will not take His easy yoke upon them. Coming from the lips of Love itself, it has all the terrors of Divine justice. "Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing." Not as the Scribes and Pharisees, "going about to establish their own righteousness," but submitting themselves "unto the righteousness of God," they were to enter the Kingdom of God, and by faith here and hereafter in the fulness of fruition were to live as the subjects of the King of Kings.

In the hereafter of that kingdom there are prepared for those who love God such good things as pass man's understanding. . . . "The key to that kingdom is love, love to God and man," putting forth works, as the living tree puts forth fruit. Such love is the righteous of which Christ speaks which will exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, such love is the fulfilling of the law. We cannot of ourselves obtain it; it must be poured into our hearts from the source of love. And if we make *real* to ourselves that without it we cannot enter the kingdom of heaven, we shall seek it so earnestly, so passionately, that it *must* be ours—our Father will withhold no good gift from those who in faith implore it. Let us dwell earnestly upon the Master's words: "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven."

BISHOP BEBEL, of Ohio, has repeatedly urged the clergy of his Diocese to preach annually a sermon on Episcopacy; and the recent Convention of the Diocese furthered the request by resolution, recommending the second Sunday in October as the day for such sermons. The Bishop emphasizes the statement that our Presiding Bishop of the Church in the United States is but the one hundredth and twentieth in a direct line of succession from St. John. Taken in connection with this the fact that St. Paul provides for the perpetuation of the succession explicitly for five generations from the personal authority of Christ Himself, where He bids St. Timothy commit the Gospel to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also (*i.e.*, 1, Christ; 2, St. Paul; 3, St. Timothy; 4, "faithful men;" 5, "others"); the fewness of the links necessary to the connection of our living ministry with the Founder of the Church may seem a fact of very tangible value. Of course we must admit that there may be, as is charged against the Eastern Church, a lifeless condition of spiritual things, together with an unquestioned succession. But purity of doctrine and zeal for work and progress being conceded, the Church, which has an orderly succession also, must seem to the inquirer to have the best warrant for claiming to be of the Apostles' fellowship.