

being pressed to retain the platform by a warm indication of approval from the meeting, proceeded to deliver an eloquent address on the thought that in the silence of the Bible as much as in its speech, was to be discovered proofs of the inspiration of Holy Writ. The Rev. gentleman, in support of this proposition, said :—

It is a philosophical maxim which is not unfamiliar to us, that "Speech is Silver, but Silence is Gold." In some sort we may apply it to Scripture, that is, if we bring ourselves to regard the metals as equal in value. The silence of Scripture is inspired. It is not silent by inadvertence, but by design. The same spirit which taught the writers what to write, withheld them also from writing when God did not will the revelation. *Dean Trench* says, in one of his *Hulsean Lectures*, "It was said by one wise man of another, that more might be learned from his questions than from another man's answers." With yet higher truth might it be said that the silence of Scripture is more instructive than the speech of other books. *Boyle* says that its expression and its silence are teaching, like a dial in which the shadow as well as the light informs us—and there is truth and power in the words which the lamented *Archer Butler* applies to the Old Testament, "what we see is holy, what we see not is holier still."

"It is the glory of God to conceal a thing." To repress our unhal-
lowed curiosity—to vindicate his own prerogative—to try and exercise his
people's faith—to bring out the harmony of his plans to a grander issue by-
and-bye, God mingles obscurity and brightness in the revelation of His
Will. There is no obscurity in matters that are necessary to salvation. Here
all is clear as the morning. But truth is dogmatically asserted, there is no
theorizing on facts, nor elaborate tracing of them to their original causes.
We cannot connect them with their reasons as they appear to the Divine
mind. We must receive them because God has spoken them, nor seek to
know what it is His pleasure to hide. The ancient oracles were chary of
response sometimes, but when *Alexander* wanted an answer he politely
compelled the priestess to the tripod and made her speak. So when the
priests of *Naples* were unable or unwilling that the blood of *St. Januarius*
should liquefy, the message came from one whose position gave him power,
that it must liquefy in half an hour, or the chief priest should be hanged.
But, spite of royal will, or military insolence, the silence of Scripture is in-
volute. Its seal may not be broken by the touch of human hand. It is,
moreover, notable that it is silent especially on the points on which human
curiosity has been most inquisitive, and on which speculations have been
multiplied almost without end. We inquire about the creation of the world.
It is dismissed in a chapter, perhaps in a verse. We speculate whether
there are more worlds than one, and would fain analyze their nature, and
become acquainted with their inhabitants, and we wonder whether there
is sin among them, and "whether they ever felt above, redeeming
grace or dying love." But the Word makes no sign. We are lost as we
think of angels—of good and evil, mysterious and lofty intelligences,
of whose existence and of whose movements we long to know some-
thing more. Their brightness and their shadow have come to us in
dim glimpses which we have gotten behind the veil, but the Scripture will
not lift it, and there is no power that can rend it in twain. We shudder at
the dark secret of sin, and we wonder how it came. Evil is among us
and we cannot trace its origin. An earth with many scars—a sickly and wail-
ing child—volcano and pestilence—tyranny and wrong—many weepers and
many tombs—these things are ; and if God be love, and if God be power,
whence and why ? But the Scripture is silent, lets the past alone, busies
itself only with the future—is not concerned so much to account for the dis-
ease, as to discover the remedy. We follow the loved dead to their resting-
place, and have an undying instinct that they are not the things that rest
beneath the sod, but where are they ? What has become of them ? In what