

"Materialistic evolution must ever, and necessarily, fail to account for the higher nature of man, and also for his moral aberrations. These only come rationally into the system of nature under the supposition of a higher intelligence, from whom man emanates, and whose nature he shares.

"But on this theistic view we are introduced to a kind of unity and of evolution for a future age, which is the great topic of revelation, and is not unknown to science and philosophy, in connection with the law of progress and development deducible from the geological history, in which an ascending series of lower animals culminates in man himself. Why should there not be a new and higher plane of existence to be attained to by humanity—a new geological period, so to speak, in which present anomalies shall be corrected, and the grand unity of the universe and its harmony with its Maker fully restored. This is what Paul anticipates when he tells us of a 'pneumatical' or spiritual body, to succeed to the present natural or 'physical' one, or what Jesus Himself tells us when He says that in the future state we shall be like to the angels.

"Angels are not known to us as objects of scientific observation, but such an order of beings is quite conceivable, and this not as supernatural, but as part of the order of nature. They are created beings like ourselves, subject to the laws of the universe, yet free and intelligent and liable to error, in bodily constitution freed from many of the limitations imposed on us, mentally having higher range and grasp, and consequently masters of natural powers not under our control. In short, we have here pictured to us an order of beings forming a part of nature, yet in their powers as miraculous to us as we might be supposed to be to the lower animals, could they think of such things. This idea of angels bridges over the great natural gulf between humanity and deity, and illustrates a higher plane than that of man in his present state, but attainable in the future. Dim perceptions of this

would seem to constitute the substratum of the ideas of the so-called polytheistic religions.

"Christianity itself is in this aspect not so much a revelation of the supernatural as the highest bond of the great unity of nature. It reveals to us the perfect Man, who is also one with God, and the mission of this Divine man to restore the harmonies of God and humanity, and consequently also of man with his natural environment in this world, and with his spiritual environment in the higher world of the future. If it is true that nature now groans because of man's depravity, and that man himself shares in the evils of this disharmony with nature around him, it is clear that if man could be restored to his true place in nature he would be restored to happiness and to harmony with God, and if, on the other hand, he can be restored to harmony with God, he will then also be restored to harmony with his natural environment, and so to life and happiness and immortality.

"It is here that the old story of Eden, and the teaching of Christ, and the prophecy of the New Jerusalem strike the same note which all material nature gives forth when we interrogate it respecting its relations to man. The profound manner in which these truths appear in the teaching of Christ has perhaps not been appreciated as it should, because we have not sought in that teaching the philosophy of nature which it contains. When he points to the common weeds of the fields, and asks us to consider the garments more gorgeous than those of kings in which God has clothed them, and when He says of these same wild flowers, so daintily made by the Supreme Artificer, that to-day they are, and to-morrow are cast into the oven, He gives us not merely a lesson of faith, but a deep insight into that want of unison which, centring in humanity, reaches all the way from the wild flower to the God who made it, and requires for its rectification nothing less than the breathing of that Divine Spirit which first evoked order and life out of primeval chaos."