

as dogmatically as any theologian can speak—it “necessary to our scientific salvation that we should pronounce each of them in turn.” The facts of nature remain the same, but the interpretation of them changes; and, may we not hope, improves from age to age? In like manner we have to understand that theology is but a *provisional* reading of the facts of religion; only a human, imperfect and ever varying interpretation of the contents of Scripture, and changes its forms and terms at least as rapidly as science itself. The great facts of religion and revelation remain the same, indeed, through all ages and changes, as do the great facts of nature. But our interpretations of these facts, affected as it must be by ever advancing knowledge of related facts and truths—necessarily vary, and our theories about them change; and surely we may say that they grow larger and more complete as men grow wiser. “God does not change, nor does His relations to men: but our conceptions of Him, and of our relations to Him are very different from those of the early fathers of the Church, just as our conceptions of the universe are a great advance upon those which were held before Galileo arose, and Kepler and Newton.” There is, hence, a place, both in the science of nature and that of theology, for important things which may nevertheless be shaken and taken away, but also one for greater and more glorious things which cannot be shaken but ever remain; and do so the more firmly because of the shaking and the passing away of that which was destined thereto.

No one supposes that an Assembly of Divines, representative in character, as was the Assembly at Westminster, in 1643, if now gathered in London, Edinburgh, Dublin, or New York, would put forth the precise catechism with its proof texts which came from that able and learned body. What are called by some denominations “their standards” and which pertain to some such period as that, would now undoubtedly be modified. The great everlasting truths would remain unchangeable as the Throne of God, but the human conception, and hence exposition of them would indicate change and growth.

If the present inquiry is to have any practical bearing we must begin with man—*with ourselves*—for we are the perceiving, judging, moral and spiritual beings with whom theology concerns itself, in our relations to God and to one another. What are we? Certain facts about us are beyond dispute, but certain other facts and the theories concerning all of them do not abide. They change with the time. That we have an animal nature, that we are intellectual beings, and that we have also a something which links us to the spirit-world and to God are facts which abide unshaken. One theory is that we are simply *two-fold*, matter and mind, body and soul, and that the latter is a spirit which includes the thinking and reasoning principle, namely, all that we mean by the intellect, and also by the God-consciousness,—that which enables us to hold communion with Him. Another is that we are three-fold,—body, soul, and spirit,—according to what is thought to be the affirmed psychology of the Apostle Paul, and that the last-mentioned only is the God-consciousness; namely, the part of us which while we live in sin is comparatively dormant, but which, being awakened and quickened into action by the Holy Spirit, using in order thereto the Gospel of Christ, becomes the new man in Christ, the ennobled and purified being holding communion with God and serving Him. Then further, in a less scientific age there came forth expressions from good and earnest men which no thoughtful one would now adopt. The fact of man’s depravity, of the dissimilarity of his thought and will to that of the ever-blessed God, remains true in all its intrinsic dreariness and all its sad results, but he is not a devil. There are points in him which the grace of God can reach, and doing so lift him up. The mark of the crown is on his brow, though it has been cast into the mire and trampled upon. There are lineaments of beauty oft-times, there are genial tempers, loving hearts, probity, honour, and uprightness in dealings with fellow-men, which are good and beautiful; and yet, alas, it has to be said to them as the Lord said to one such-like, “One thing thou lackest.”

Now in respect to the two theories concerning the two-fold or tripartite nature