

mankind, from the deluge to the Advent, we see the law operating as a school-master to bring men to Christ. Slavery, polygamy, concubinage, the right of the avenger of blood, the law of retaliation, the ideas expressed in the imprecatory psalms, are all evidences of an imperfect state of religious development, which was "winked at" (Acts 17:30) because of the hardness of men's hearts (Matt. 19:8) until the fuller light and higher spiritual influences of the Christian dispensation should make a more perfect moral condition possible. Indeed it is only in the present day that slavery has been seen to be contrary to the principles of the Bible, and on our own continent it is not to be feared that there is even a retrogression in regard to the sanctity of the marriage tie. The moral elevation of the individual, of the nation, of the race, is a progressive process, of which the initiatory stages are no evidence that the standard aimed at by the divine influences that have superintended it from the first has ever varied. Let any sincere-minded student examine this whole subject with the help of any good commentary, and he will rise from his task with an increased admiration of that divine wisdom and compassion which has been so long-suffering towards men, bearing with the dull and obdurate, and educating the race to a reception of the higher standards of gospel times. (In connection with this subject, read, if you can get access to it, "Ruling Ideas in Early Ages," by J. B. Mozley, D.D.).

3. In regard to the third group, I fail to see how we can logically separate the miracles of the Old Testament from those of the New. If we accept the facts of the Incarnation and Resurrection, there is no reason why we should stumble at any others. Where are we to draw the line? What is to be the criterion of an admissible miracle? Shall we make our own ideas of fitness and propriety the test? Would not that be presumptuous? If the story of the miracle is in the midst of a historical narrative whose facts we accept as true, we have no right to reject the miraculous portion because it offends our sense of the fitness of things. We would justly look with suspicion on such miracles if alleged to occur now. They belong to an earlier period in the intellectual and moral development of the race. The age of miracles is past, because we have advanced beyond the "kindergarten" stage to which they were appropriate. Miracles, wonders and signs were refused by Christ when demanded as attestations of His commission, but in a primitive age they arrested attention, impressed the imagination, and taught in symbolic form important truths, apprehensible more easily by such means. Take three instances which have been made the subject of much profane and silly wit: (a) The creation of woman. Of this we could have had no account had not it been divinely revealed. There were no human witnesses. Tradition could have had nothing to say. The account we have must be revealed, or fabricated. Now it occurs in the midst of a calm, unpoetic and unimpassioned narrative of facts. By what right shall we say that all the rest is substantially true, but that this is mythical, because the method seems to us grotesque? Is it not much more rational to suppose that the process adopted was with the view of impressing upon the imagination of the race *ab initio*, as no mere dogmatic statement could have done, the true relation

between the sexes?

"Not from his head was woman took,  
As made her husband to o'erlook;  
Not from his feet, as one designed  
The footstool of the stronger kind;  
But fashioned for himself, a bride,  
An equal, taken from his side;  
Her place intended to maintain,  
The mate and glory of the man,  
To rest as still beneath his arm,  
Protected by her Lord from harm,  
And never from his heart removed,  
And only less than God beloved."

Ch. Wesley.

(b) If the rest of the story of Balaam is true, it is perfectly arbitrary to reject that portion which tells how "the dumb ass, speaking with man's voice, forbade the madness of the prophet" (1 Pet. 2:16). It is entirely in keeping with analogy that the organs and instincts of inferior animals should be supernaturally controlled for a moral purpose. Examples of this abound. Natural hostile species lived amicably in the ark for over a year (Gen. 7:14); the plagues of Egypt were, several of them, produced by abnormal fecundity on the part of noxious creatures (Gen. 8:3, 18, 24; 10:14); the kine which brought back the ark from the Philistines went unwillingly, but irresistibly, away from their calves to the altar (1 Sam. 6:9-14); the lion which slew the man of God at Bethel, but spared the ass on which he rode, and devoured not the corpse, meekly retiring when the prophet came to rescue the remains of the man whom he had deceived to his death (1 Kings 13:24-28), not to mention the fish which supplied the tribute money to our Lord; all illustrate that there was nothing unusual in thus employing the vocal organs of an ass to admonish one whose folly and stubbornness richly deserved a rebuke from such a source.

(3) That Jonah should be preserved alive within the body of a marine monster (for that is what the word translated "whale" means) is surely no more strange and contrary to nature than that the fire of Nebuchadnezzar's furnace should be powerless to harm the three Hebrew youths, or that the soul of Lazarus should return to his partially decomposed body (John 11:39). If we accept the historicity of the mission of Jonah to Nineveh, and find little to cavil at in the miracle of the gourd, we cannot with reason reject the wonder which furnishes the occasion for the beautiful psalm contained in the second chapter.

Upon a fair consideration of all the points raised, does it not appear that the Old Testament, so far from being discredited, is only more fully vindicated as a marvellous book, wonderfully suited to the times in which it was written, yet so as to survive all that was transitory and imperfect in the earlier ages, and retain its applicability to human nature down to the end of time. Can a succession of writings which display these characteristics be other than of divine authorship? St. John, N. B.

#### Reminiscences of a Septuagenarian.

1854—Then and Now—1900.

11.—BYTOWN.

In my first paper I took you as far as Bytown. By way of recapitulation, let me say that Rev. Thos. Wardrope and wife gave us a courteous welcome to their hospitable manse; Mr. Wardrope even smiled when doing so. He is noted for amiability—a perfect Nathaniel.

In a trial case it was announced that he had something to say of a pathetic, if not exculpatory, character. A noted elder said: "Tuts! Mr. Wardrope would apologize for the devil."

That depends!

When he asked which of us was going to preach to-morrow, and we answered neither, the smile vanished, and there stood before us a man cold as a granite statue, but fire in the eye! Clearing his throat, he said, in tones anything but musical: "Either you preach or find a substitute, for I have nothing prepared, as I was depending on you." Heedless of our weary, bedraggled appearance, and still relentless, I asked where John Anderson was, who had just graduated. I found out he was situated a few miles out of town; and ascertaining that there was "a nag" in the stable and at my service, I saddled and mounted, and rode quicker than the granite man deserved, and in half an hour secured supply for Daly street pulpit.

First and foremost, I had only one "homily" in stock, and that never preached. If we had, the cold, unemotional Thos. Wardrope would have opened his fund of sarcasm on Monday, as did Rev. D. Robertson, of Irvine, when he put Willie Taylor, who afterwards became Dr. W. M. Taylor, of Broadway Tabernacle, New York, in the same position with us. Spending Saturday and Sabbath in Irvine when a student, he was informed that he must preach, and had to do so, in spite of the excuse that he had nothing but his homily. "Well, take that." At dinner, after service on Sabbath, after a period of silence, Robertson said: "Well, Willie, it's not often my people hear the like o' that." Whether complimentary, or meant disparagingly, Taylor was left in ignorance.

After hearing Mr. Thos. Wardrope's lecture on the Prodigal Son and sermon on Psalm 10:13, of which I will speak later on, I am quite sure what he would have thought and said about our performance.

It was agreed that I should be sent to Bristol. But afterwards, as the Rideau Canal was to be opened on Monday morning, Mr. Wardrope told me to get ready to go to Perth, under care of Rev. J. B. Duncan.

On reflection, and after years of experience, I suspect what may have led to the change. With a small salary and large family and no help, it must have been burdensome to have the addition of two young students with appetites of "great capacity," and therefore expedient and desirable to send them to "regions beyond."

From the above let us learn:

1. That there is not so much difference in men as one would suppose, and further, that if people only knew everything, their opinions of men would be considerably modified.

2. Let probationers and students take notice, that when they have occasion to present themselves at the manse, on the average, to consider diligently what is before them; and put a knife to their throat if they be men given to appetite. Be not desirous of dainties.

3. Let us be assured that the ungrudging hospitality of the manse is not surpassed in any circle of social life.

NEMO G. D.