

singing and speaking, then Chinese assemble, listen and believe. It is possible to go through dead forms, imitate noted men, and regard the whole affair as doing "duty." What is duty? I conceive it to be doing one's work in a business way and doing one's business in a dutiful way.

"And I will make you to become fishers of men." I remember how we used to fish in Zorra, on the "Mud-branch." With trouser-legs rolled up we waded through marshes, stood on banks, crouched under bushes, searched for pools, and, with a broken branch for pole, bent pin for hook, but good, plump earthworms for bait, caught the brilliant trout, big-headed chub and sluggish sucker. And that too by using the same bait different ways for all three. "Fishers of men." How clear our duty is! Back to the point then. We laboured at the stations above mentioned for conceited literati, busy trader, oppressed peasant and ignorant women and children. We visited at places from house to house, extracted teeth in chapels, temples and streets; preached to all classes, always bearing in mind their environment. Combated, rebuked and exhorted; conversed, sang and prayed. In addition we gave four phantasmagorian exhibitions of fully 200 views each, embracing biblical, astronomical, historical, zoological, geographical and geological. Inside the Tsa-tin-tia church were 583, besides a large crowd outside. The former included merchants, students from the Governor's English school, literati, peasants and officials, men and women.

There can be no doubt about the spread of knowledge here during all these past years. As soon as eclipses of sun and moon were thrown on the screen converts and others shouted "How plain." "Who can doubt now?" "Wonderful the skill of foreigners." "Where's the dragon eating the moon?" I thought best just to remain silent and let the people have their own say. All were delighted with such views as "Icebergs seen by Dr. Kane," Quebec, Thousands Islands, Montreal and bridge, St. Lawrence River, Melbourne, Edinburgh Castle, Mts. Vesuvius and Stromboli, Hecia and Aetna. They were enthusiastic over "The Charge at Balaklava," "Storming the Malakhoff," etc. But six views of the old man and his son going to market with their ass to sell took the audience by storm. The moral of course touched a chord in human experience. Really what a fool the man must be who tries to please everybody when no two are similar. Inspiring thought, our highest aim should be over the heads of men to please our divine Master!

By the above-stated combined means we worked during the trip for souls—laboured for Christ and stirred up the congregations (not we hope and we hope good may result, etc.). We actually gathered in souls and stirred up the churches, working as far as our part was concerned as if there were no helps from above, but confident that all was for Christ's sake, and never more conscious than that all things were accomplished by His Almighty power. I am ever yours sincerely,

G. L. MACKAY.

Tamsui, August 4, 1890.

LETTER FROM REV. JOHN JAMIESON.

DEAR DR. WARDROPE, I have lately been able to visit all the stations in the Tamsui district, beginning at Pat-li-hun on May 8 and finishing with Sin-Tiam on Sabbath, July 6. I was at the chapels and held services chiefly on Sabbaths, but at a few of them I had meetings on week days. When practicable, which was at most places, we celebrated the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, the members communing varying, in some cases being only a few, in others twenty and up to forty.

Towards the end of June, I also made the round of our southern stations in the Tek-chham district. At Ang-mng-kang, one of the walls of the chapel built of sun-dried bricks has partly fallen down, rain having leaked down into it from the roof. Also the roof of one of the smaller apartments in the preacher's rooms has fallen in. These will have to be repaired, if possible, before the typhoon season comes on.

At the chapel in Tek-chham City on the forenoon of Sabbath, June 29, there was a good congregation of from sixty to seventy regular hearers besides outsiders. Divine service being over, after an interval we partook of the communion, about twenty sitting down to the table.

The preachers from two of these stations were at the time of my visit at Tamsui for a period of drill, but in the evenings I spent at the chapels a few gathered, to whom I had the opportunity of speaking. Also at wayside rice shops and halting places, I generally find there is an open door for making known to the bystanders more or less about our calling and message of peace to men.

On return I found the mission premises much quieter than when I left, and no wonder, because I had been accustomed to being present at continuous nightly meetings after the work of the day, when preachers and their wives, students and children of converts being drilled by Dr. Mackay filled Oxford College Hall to its utmost seating capacity, and engaged in their different exercises, singing, speaking from the platform, reciting, reading, etc. After six months of such work, the time having come to dismiss them, they had dispersed, and Dr. Mackay himself is away in the country.

These meetings during the past months, as many such in the same hall, will be long remembered by all who attended them, and I wish that some friends of the Church from Canada could have been present to have their hearts cheered and encouraged by seeing what diligent training, combined with faithful teaching of Bible truth, is able to accomplish. Yours respectfully,

JOHN JAMIESON.

Tamsui, July 9, 1890.

THE EVOLUTION IN THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SUPERNATURAL.*

Christian Apologetics has for its function to vindicate the divinity of the Christian religion. Christianity has its centre and foundation in Jesus Christ. It is a divine religion if He is a divine person. Jesus Christ is set forth as the culmination of a lengthened series of revelations from God. By divers portions and in divers manners, His word was spoken of old time, but when the fullness of the time came, the Word became flesh and dwelt among men. If Jesus Christ is a divine person, then the Old and New Testaments are the record of a divine revelation. Hence the vindication of Christianity is the vindication of the divine character of Jesus Christ, its foundation, and of the Scriptures which testify of Him. Moreover, the reality of the Christian religion presupposes the existence of God, a self-revealing being, and cannot be contradictory to any disclosures He may have made apart from Christianity, or the preparation for it in the Bible. Hence the vindication of Christianity either includes or presupposes the establishment of the discoveries God has made of Himself to man in the natural exercise of his faculties, and from natural objects and events. These constitute the sphere of natural theology. The Christian religion gathers into itself all that is true of natural religion, and consequently cannot disregard external nature or the constitution of man as sources of truth concerning divine things.

The revelation, which nature and the Bible contain, is justly called divine, not simply because God is the author of it, but also because He is essentially the substance of it, the One whom it makes known. Nature is a source of religion, because God reveals Himself in it, and for that reason alone. In the lessons it teaches to the receptive mind, it gives indications of His being and character. Scripture is the record of a special history, in which all the earlier agents of revelation, as well as the only begotten Son, declared God. Its doctrines and morals both are a disclosure of the person of God. Despite charges of vagueness and generality, the statement is at once comprehensive and exact, that "the Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man." This duty also embraces knowledge concerning God, since it connects itself with His revealed will. Christianity has a ground for continued existence, simply as it realizes the promise of God to manifest Himself in the hearts of believers. The revelation on which the Christian religion rests, and which apologetics has to vindicate, is alike in nature and Scripture, one in which the Revealer is identical with what is revealed. Apologetics, then, has to establish that the foundation of Christianity is a self-revelation of God. The character of that revelation will guarantee its truth, its authority, and its adequacy.

The self-manifestation of God implies that man has an intelligence capable of apprehending Him. Hence a power of cognizing the divine must be assumed. This does not imply that previous to, or independent of all experience, man possesses a thoroughly developed idea of God, which can be used as a touchstone to test the reality of professed manifestations. It does imply, however, that when the thought of the supernatural rises into consciousness on occasion of appropriate experience, it springs out of the depths of the mind itself. Beholding the attributes displayed in His works, it is able to recognize that these are attributes of a Divine Being, and in this recognition to rise to a more adequate conception of His character. The actual discernment of God, in nature or Scripture, is the highest assurance that man possesses the power to discern Him, just as by actually looking at the sun we may know assuredly that we can see its light, an assurance that would not be shaken, though some should refuse to look, or others insist on looking with their eyes shut. If the examination of the facts of Christianity, and the grounds on which it rests, convinces the candid mind that the excellencies of God are displayed in it, then the function of apologetics is accomplished. The evidences of natural and revealed religion are really a setting forth of the different ways in which God has manifested Himself. God manifests Himself by the display of His attributes. Accordingly a possible classification of the different lines of Christian evidences would be to arrange them in groups corresponding to the divine attributes pre-eminently displayed in each. The various branches of evidence are so many manifestations of divine agency in the things of which we can take knowledge. It is not necessary that they should exhaust all the attributes of God, or, indeed, bear witness to any save such as in some measure may be possessed by creatures. When these are displayed with a fullness and perfection not found in any creature, they must be ascribed to God. Apologetics seeks to show in every subject it embraces, that God is embodying some traits of his character. If there is a Supreme Being, Creator and Governor of all, it is no more than reasonable to expect that the invisible things of Him may be understood by the things which He has made and done. Hence the contents of the universe throughout all time may be expected to show forth the agency of Him to whom it is due.

The order of these various manifestations may be called an evolution, if they are found to bear witness to an agency, continuous, progressive, and gradually attaining fuller development, so as to reveal new features and deepen the definiteness of those already revealed. The idea of evolution is one that has but recently risen over the mental horizon. Applied as a theory under which the facts of biology might be brought, it

has been successively extended to other subjects, until now it claims to embrace the phenomena and genesis of the entire universe. According to this theory, everything commences in a rudimentary condition, and passes through a series of states, each slightly varied from and slightly more developed than the preceding, until a precise and determinate form is reached. In some of its applications evolution is not at variance with the existence and providential oversight of God. As a matter of fact, however, it is prevailingly presented in an atheistic form, as a theory which furnishes a substitute for a Supreme Being. When so presented it labours under the fatal defect of continually assuming uncaused results. If there be no God, no one to impart His own efficiency, then whenever a higher product is evolved out of something lower, that part of the product which is over and above the efficiency of what produces it, is an effect which has no cause whatever. If, however, the operation of God is discernible in all created existence, and is even a necessity of thought in order to explain it, then any reality that may be asserted of evolution is simply an evolution in the manifestation of the supernatural. This is the necessary basis on which all theories concerning the facts of existence must proceed in order to have self-consistency. The facts of existence not only supply us with a series of manifestations of a supernatural being; when rightly interpreted they make known an orderly progress and increasing development in these manifestations—an evolution. By this is not meant that supernatural qualities come into fuller being from time to time in the history of the world, or attain a fuller self-consciousness, as if the supernatural gradually became clothed with greater divinity, or gradually came to the full consciousness of that divinity. But it may be maintained that the history of the world is an increasing disclosure of God through His attributes, so that as time advances those previously displayed become more distinct and fresh ones rise in its prominence. Thus the evidences of natural and revealed religion may be grouped, not simply under the various divine attributes, but also in an orderly sequence, corresponding to the actual order in which these attributes appear. The supernatural comes with increasing fullness into the sphere of nature. The entire phenomena of inanimate nature, the existence of life and of human reason, and the facts of what is specially denominated revelation bear witness to an increasing orderly development in the manifestation of the divine character. Even those who deny the possibility of knowing anything supernatural generally acknowledge that the phenomena of being, as known to us, bear witness to a Being above and behind them. Spencer, the apostle of modern agnosticism, is constrained to postulate an infinite and eternal energy from which all things proceed. To characterize what can be thus described as absolutely unknown seems a contradiction in terms. Moreover, the acknowledgment of so much as this is not logically consistent with the denial, that further manifestations are possible from the same source. It is impossible to arrange all the phenomena in which evidences of God may be traced, strictly according to their appearance in time. Certain broadly-marked periods, however, can be detected, whose historical order is known. By means of these can be ascertained whether, from stage to stage, there is such an increase in the manifestation of supernatural agency and such an orderly progress as may be designated an evolution. Three such periods are marked by the beginning of external nature, the appearance of man and those special occurrences professedly looking forward to, and connected with the coming of Jesus Christ. Science and the Bible both declare that these three stand in successive order. No one doubts that the external world had been gradually shaping itself, in accordance with the laws of nature, into its present form before the appearance of man. Equally without doubt it is that man had lived ages on the earth when One appeared from whom history took a new beginning. These successive periods require to be interrogated, to ascertain what disclosures they make of supernatural agency connected with them.

We ask first, what manifestation of a divine Being is to be found in external nature, as it was before the appearance of man. Placing ourselves in thought, at the very threshold of the existence of matter, does any supernatural agency appear? It is difficult to form a conception of what that condition was. We must think away all entering into our idea of external nature from its connection with man. We must think away all the character it possesses from its adaptation to the needs of life, animal or vegetable. We must think away all orderliness or exactness of form. But when we reach back to the primitive formless void, we find existence. This demands a cause, and declares itself to be the product of a power which created it. The supernatural commences to be declared as a power, through which the natural comes into being, and by which all things are upheld. Any attempt to evade the evidence of a supernatural power, continuous from the dawn of creation, must spring from a denial, either that a beginning of existence demands a cause, or that there ever has been such a beginning as creation implies. That every event must have a cause can be denied only by doing violence to human reason. A cause is not simply a phenomenal antecedent, invariably and unconditionally present, nor yet the substance of the effect existing in an earlier form. If the idea were thus limited, its universality might plausibly be denied, or at least made a question for further investigation. But besides being a substantial existence, preceding and connected with its effect, a real cause gives forth an efficacy adequate to the production of that effect. Thus understood, the judgment that every effect has a cause is a necessary native principle of the mind, neither the offspring of experience nor a deduction from any higher principle. Even those who seek to deny the validity of this judgment cannot and do not deny that it is a necessity of thought. They set themselves to explain why men universally think it. The explanations involve in some form or other an appeal to the fact that this causal connection has always been found in experience. This, however, is insufficient, because experience, no matter how wide and uncontradicted, can tell us only what is, never what must be. The judgment is in fact the indispensable condition of all experience, so that its necessity is involved in the existence of reason itself. Unless this judgment be acknowledged as valid, the mind is self-contradictory, its utterances are untrustworthy, and the only logical resting-place is an absolute scepticism about everything which no man in his right reason ever consistently carried out.

(To be continued.)

*Inaugural lecture by Rev. Professor R. Y. Thompson, B.D., at the opening of the present session of Knox College.