

generation set its own standard, according to its conception of right and wrong, in other words, according to its degree of spiritual development. A proper appreciation of this fact in former times would have saved Christian teachers from the reproach of treating the Bible, as it has too frequently been treated, "as one revelation of equal breadth and brightness."

The process of the gradual revelation of truth during successive ages of the world may be compared to the process of the gradual development of vegetation during successive seasons of the year. In early spring-time, we behold the germs of plants appear as little shoots above the surface of the earth. That is the fullest revelation God can give us of himself in plant-life at that season of the year, in harmony with his laws of operation. Later on, we see the buds expand and burst. That is the fullest revelation possible at that stage of growth. Later still, we see the flowers unfold, filling the air on every side with fragrance. That is the fullest revelation possible at that period of development.

In like manner, as has been shown from germ and bud and flower, the process of the gradual development of divine truth might also be illustrated from root and trunk and tree, from blade and ear and full corn in the ear. As the development of vegetation takes place in harmony with the laws of progress belonging to the realm of matter, so the development of truth takes place in harmony with the laws of progress belonging to the realm of mind. Spiritual revelation, therefore, was gradual and progressive, because no other process was consistent with the laws of spiritual development. In harmony with his method of operation, the Deity could not reveal his truth to man in any other way.

The development of a plant, of course, is from a rudimental or embryonic seed; the development of a doctrine is from a rudimental or elementary idea. In the one case, the development is the unfolding of a material germ; in the other case, it is the unfolding of a spiritual essence. Although the substances are different, the process of unfolding in each instance is analogous. By the development of truth, therefore, it is meant that its meaning unfolds or unrolls itself in the course of its history