

bably, there never was much enthusiasm among the masses, in any case. The suddenness was not in the production of the various languages, but in the unexpected discovery of their differences when the workmen began to be drawn from populations that had long been remote from each other.

If not sudden, neither is there any reason to suppose that the confusion of tongues was miraculous, in the popular sense of that term. It is true that God is represented as doing it. But then the natural is God's doing as well as the supernatural. And the statement here made would be perfectly true even if we suppose that the diversity of tongues at Babel was brought about in entire accordance with the laws that philological science has found to govern the development of languages everywhere else.

Should it still seem strange to any that, if this be so, no indication of it should appear in the story as told in Genesis, then let it be borne in mind that the Oriental mode of thought took little account of secondary causes. The Semitic mind is never scientific, but it is always ardently religious, and has no difficulty in seeing God's hand in every incident that happens, however commonplace or trivial it may be in itself. Least of all does it hesitate to trace the hand of God in the tragic calamities that so frequently follow human crime or in the humiliating disappointments that attend on human folly. We are apt to pride ourselves, perhaps unduly, on our more scientific attitude of mind. The Orientals had at least some compensation for the want of it.

Another thing, too, has to be borne in mind as we read this and similar passages in the Old Testament, arising from the same readiness to discern God everywhere, and that is, the poetic touch which it necessarily gives to all history, however prosaic this may seem to be in other respects. Of course, in the ordinary sense, this passage is not poetry. It lacks wholly the poetic form. And yet there is no other word which so fitly describes that faculty of the writer whereby he reveals to us in a few phrases the inner meaning of great movements