

INAUGURAL LECTURE BY PROF. GREGG, M. A., AT THE OPENING OF KNOX COLLEGE, 24th OCTOBER 1872.

APoloGETICS.

Having been called, gentlemen, to occupy the chair of Apologetics in Knox College, I shall endeavour in this introductory lecture to state and define the position which the Christian Apologist may be fairly expected to establish and defend; to give an outline of what seems to me the best method to adopt in conducting the argument; and to indicate the spirit and temper of mind, with which we should prosecute this department of study.

The term *Apologetics*, I may observe, at the outset, may be defined as the science or art of defending the revealed theology. It is derived from the Greek word *Apologetos*, which is translated "defence" in Paul's address to the Jews (Acts 22) "Men, brethren, and fathers, hear my defence which I make now unto you, and which is elsewhere translated 'answer' as in 1 Peter 3-15 'Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.' In the earlier centuries the name *Apologetica* was given to defences which were made of the Christian faith against various assailants. Thus we have the *Apologetica* of Justin Martyr, addressed to the Emperor, Princes, and Senate of Rome, and the *Apologetica* of Tertullian, addressed to the chief magistrates of Africa.

The sphere of Apologetics is clearly distinguishable from that of *Polemics*. The region of *Polemics* lies within the limits which it is the part of the Apologist to defend from outside assailants. Polemical controversies are carried on among professing Christians, the one with the other. The Apologist contends with those who reject revealed religion—with infidels, with Deists, with Pantheists, with Atheists. *Polemics* dispute with each other on such topics as the Divine decrees, predestination, election, the nature and extent of the atonement, the perseverance of the saints, and the nature, use, and efficacy of the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The Apologist takes his stand on the walls which enclose the theological arena, feels a friend and concern for all who are within, keeps an anxious outlook on the forces of infidelity and scepticism, and endeavours to repel them.

Taking this position and having such objects in view, the Christian Apologist has simply to defend the great fundamental facts and doctrines of revealed theology. Is there satisfactory evidence that God has in a supernatural manner revealed to man his character, his will, the way of salvation and eternal life? Has the eternal Son of God become incarnate? Has the Lord Jesus Christ, as our Redeemer, obeyed the law, suffered and died in our room, risen from the dead, and ascended up on high? Did he personally and by his accredited apostles and servants, teach that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish but have eternal life? The affirmative of such questions as these the Christian Apologist is bound to maintain. It may be added that in undertaking to prove and defend such facts and doctrines as those referred to, the Christian Apologist is, of course, bound to maintain, at the same time, the great principles of Natural Theology which are taken for granted in revealed theology.

In contending, however, with those who who reject supernatural revelation, the Christian Apologist cannot fairly be expected to establish the divine inspiration of the sixty-six different treatises which constitute the canonical Scriptures of the old and new testament—called canonical because the Christian church receives them as the rule of faith and life. This is a matter which systematic Theologians, and polemics may settle among themselves, and which they ought to settle, for it is a matter of the utmost importance. But the infidel has no right to ask the Apologist to settle it. All the latter can be fairly expected to do is to furnish satisfactory evidence that God has, in a supernatural manner, revealed himself to men, and that a way of salvation has been wrought out through the incarnation, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is quite true that, as a matter of fact, Christian Apologists frequently deal with the question of the Inspiration of the Sacred Scriptures, and to this subject I intend to direct your attention during the season. But I am now anxious that you should clearly understand that we are not fairly bound to discuss this subject in contending with infidels. There may be a supernatural revelation without any record of it whatever. There may have been supernatural events, without any inspired accounts of them. In point of fact supernatural revelations were made to Enoch, to Noah, to Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob, centuries before they were recorded by Moses. In like manner a generation passed away before the words and miracles of Christ were recorded by evangelists and apostles. Evidently, therefore, the questions of supernatural revelation, and supernatural events are independent of questions respecting the inspiration of particular written records of them. It is quite enough that in any way the Christian Apologist can prove the great facts, and doctrines, of revealed theology.

In defining the precise position which the

Christian Apologist is bound to establish and defend. I need scarcely add that as he is not bound to defend the inspiration of the Sacred Scriptures, so neither is he bound to defend the truthfulness of doctrines, or the reality of miracles, the Canonical Scriptures do not record. He is not bound to defend certain doctrines and facts which are recorded in the apocryphal books, gospels, or epistles, or which are handed down by mere tradition. He is, for example, under no necessity of establishing the credibility of such stories as that of Bel and the dragon or that of the miraculous assumption of Mary, as such doctrines as those of the immaculate conception, baptismal regeneration, transubstantiation and the infallibility of the Roman Pontiff. So far from this, it is his duty to protest against the reception of such legends, and dogmas, as tending to expose supernatural theology to scorn and contempt, and to produce, as in part of fact it has very extensively produced, the fruits of infidelity, and scepticism.

You will thus understand that in contending with infidels, the Christian Apologist is not bound to maintain any thing claiming to be supernatural, of which no record is contained in the sixty-six treatises, which constitute the canonical books of Scripture, as he is not bound to maintain the divine inspiration of any or of all these treatises. He is simply bound to maintain the truth of such doctrines and the reality of such facts, as are expressed or implied in the brief but comprehensive declaration that "God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory"—or in the still briefer declaration "that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." For the comfort and edification of Christians he may, and ought to show that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, but for the defence of revealed theology against infidels he is only bound to maintain its great fundamental facts and doctrines.

Having thus briefly defined the precise position which, in dealing with infidels, the Christian Apologist is bound to establish and defend, let me now indicate the plan or method according to which the argument may be satisfactorily conducted. It has already been stated that in supernatural theology the principles of natural theology are assumed, but as these are questioned by Positivists, Atheists and Pantheists, it will be proper to commence with a statement and defence of the principles of Natural Theology. Revealed Theology comprehends the fourfold division of theology proper (the doctrines respecting God) Anthropology (the doctrines respecting man) Soteriology (the doctrine respecting the Redeemer), and Eschatology (the doctrines respecting the future state of existence.) Natural Theology may, I think, include three of these divisions, or Soteriology being omitted, inasmuch as nature sheds no light on the doctrine of a Redeemer, except on the fact that a Redeemer is needed.

The order and manner in which I think it will be best to treat the other divisions is the following *Natural Anthropology*, (the doctrines concerning man, so far as discernable by reason, and so far as they bear on his relation to God) ought I think to be first discussed. In this connection, such questions ought to be considered as the following—Do we know of our own existence as beings capable of feeling, thinking, and reasoning? Do we know or legitimately believe in the existence of an external material world? Can each man legitimately infer, from observing the actions of other men, that they have capacities of feeling, thinking and reasoning, like his own? Are men placed under some sort of natural government according to which their happiness and misery are dependent on their own conduct? Does man possess the capacity of distinguishing between right and wrong, and is conscience to entitled supremacy over all the other faculties? Is man placed under some sort of moral government according to which he is rewarded or punished according as his dispositions, and conduct, are virtuous or vicious? What is the light which science sheds on the questions of man's origin and antiquity? The discussion of these questions will bring us face to face with some of those philosophical and scientific theories, according to which it is held not merely that man's existence is derived from the lower animals, but that he is incapable of knowing even as much as is plainly known by them, his own existence, and the existence of an external world; and of course that he is utterly incapable of knowing the existence or apprehending the character of God.

After discussing such questions as these in connection with *Natural Anthropology*, the next subject to be considered will be *Natural Theology proper*. Here the great question for consideration is the existence and character of God. Are the invisible things of God discoverable from the things which are made? As we reason from the actions and works of our fellowmen to the existence in them of minds endowed with faculties and powers like our own, can we in like manner from the movements, order and adaptation of the different parts of the universe infer the existence of a great being possessed of wisdom and intelligence, commensurate to the production and preservation of so wondrous a mechanism? Can we rise from the consideration of our own spiritual character to the spirituality of God? Do the heavens declare the glory of the Lord, and does the firmament show forth his handy-works? Can we in the disposition and organization of matter, in the constitution of our minds, in the mutual adaptation of the mental and material worlds find evidence of a wisdom which is at least inconceivably great? Can we from the existence and supremacy of conscience, and the moral government under which we are placed rise to the legitimate conviction that he who made and rules the world is holy, just, and good? Are there any *a priori* arguments which in addition to, or independent of the *a posteriori* prove or confirm the doctrines of the existence and character of God? The discussion of these questions will lead us to consider some of the leading atheistic, or pantheistic theories, according to which the existence of a real personal God is denied, or at all events the knowledge of his existence held to be impossible.

The next subject which will fall to be

considered under the head of Natural Theology is *Natural Eschatology*, or the doctrines of a future state of existence. Does death terminate our life? When our bodies are dissolved into dust do our spirits cease to exist? Is there no more thinking or feeling—no more hope or fear, or joy, or sorrow? Beneath the clay that covers our mouldering dust, are our virtues and vices for ever entombed? Is death an eternal sleep? Or is there on the other hand a future state of existence—of reward and punishment? Do not the analogies of nature, the reviving life of spring, the stalk growing up from the rotting seed, the butterfly bursting from the torpid chrysalis—do not our longings after immortality and our capacities for something higher and nobler than we experience in this life—do not the imperfect development of a moral administration in this life, and the dictates of our consciences, conspire to form at least a strong presumption that the whole drama of human existence does not terminate when the curtain of death drops upon the stage, but that there is yet another scene, where we shall enter on a new career—where our aspirations shall be realized and our capacities find their counter part employment—where virtue and vice shall be more fully rewarded and punished, and where the rectitude of God's moral administration shall be more fully unfolded? These are the questions which will fall to be discussed under the head of Natural Eschatology.

In discussing the three subjects which have now been indicated it will become abundantly manifest that, however valuable the information which Natural Theology furnishes, it fails to afford sufficient guidance in regard to the great questions which relate to God, to ourselves, and to our future destiny. Before leaving therefore the subject of Natural Theology, it will be proper for us to consider its imperfections, and not merely to state these, as they are evident from the nature of the case, but as they are illustrated by the moral and religious state and character of the nations that have been wholly or almost wholly, left to the unassisted light of reason in constructing systems of ethics and theology. A review and illustration of the imperfections of natural theology, will I trust convince us of the necessity of a supernatural revelation, while the positive teachings of natural theology, will, I think, convince us of the possibility of a supernatural theology—of supernatural revelations, and supernatural facts, for if the existence of a real living personal God be established, it is absurd to suppose that he cannot reveal himself more fully to men than he has done and by means different from the ordinary teachings of nature, or that he cannot interpose in a miraculous or supernatural way to rectify the abnormal condition into which sin has brought the human family. Thus the imperfections of Natural Theology (on the one hand) and its positive teaching (on the other) will prepare us for the fair and candid consideration of the evidences of that system of theology which is contained in the canonical Scriptures, and which claims to be supernatural.

When we proceed to consider the evidences of revealed Theology, I think it will be best to arrange them under two great divisions, according to the sources from which they are derived. In dealing with all kinds of testimonies, facts and doctrines, we of course make use of our judgment and reason, of our conscience and feelings. These are the instruments and tests by the use of which each man must decide on the various kinds of evidence and on the character of the Theology which claims to be supernatural. It is according as our minds our consciences, and our dispositions and feelings are affected by external testimonies, facts or doctrines, that we are warranted in judging of their character and credibility. Now the external testimonies, facts, and doctrines which our minds, hearts and consciences are called to decide on, are presented to us either, first, from within, or second, from without the pages of the canonical books of Scripture. They may thus be ranged under the two great divisions of *intra-canonical* and *extra-canonical*, or, which is the same thing, the *intra-Scriptural* and the *extra-Scriptural*—the first comprising the various kinds of evidence drawn from the Scriptures themselves, and the second comprising the various kinds of collateral and confirmatory evidence drawn from extra Scriptural sources, as for example, from the testimonies of Jews, Pagans, Infidels and Christian writers from ancient monuments, and catacombs, from the continuous observance of Circumcision and the Passover, of Baptism and the Supper, of the Jewish Sabbath and the Lord's day, and from the observed fruits of religion in men's hearts and lives. I prefer the words *intra-canonical* and *extra-canonical*, or *intra-Scriptural* and *extra-Scriptural*, to the words *internal* and *external*, because of the indefiniteness and varied use of the latter. When the words *internal* and *external* are used in connection with the Christian evidences, they are sometimes used to distinguish inward experience from external testimony, sometimes to distinguish the supernatural revelation itself from the miracles and testimonies which accredit it, e.g., Miracles and Prophecy, and sometimes in the sense of *intra-Scriptural* and *extra-Scriptural*.

On the *intra-Scriptural* department of evidence we shall first enter. This department of evidence is the simplest and most satisfactory. It is the most accessible and the most intelligible. It is that which chiefly convinces the reason, satisfies the conscience, and affects the hearts of the great masses of men. The multitudes may not be able to analyze this evidence, or exactly to estimate the force of its various parts, but they feel its power in the reading and hearing of the word, and they are legitimately convinced by it. When carefully studied it will be found to embrace such particular points as the following: the simplicity, frankness, and candour particularly of the sacred writers, the consistency of each writer with himself, and with all the others, the undersigned coincidences between different parts of the sacred writings, as between the Epistles of Paul and the Acts of the Apostles; the sublimity of the doctrine contained in the Scriptures, the purity of the morality they teach, the character and design of the miracles recorded, the unity, consistency, and high moral tone of the Prophecies, and the harmony of these with recorded history.

particularly in the life and history of Christ, the recorded experiences of God's people, the wonderful accounts given of the person, work, words and character of Christ, the remarkable silence also of the Scriptures on topics irrelevant to the grand subjects of which they profess to treat, and the introduction of which might distract attention from the topics of chief concern.

In the consideration of these and kindred points we shall doubtless find difficulties which may puzzle and perplex. There are difficulties in the Scriptures apparent even to senses, discrepancies and contradictions, and apparent countermeasures given to violations of moral law. These have been eagerly laid hold of and criticised by infidel writers, of earlier and later times, with a view to shake our confidence and merely in the divine inspiration of all parts of Scripture, but in all the supernatural revelations and facts it records. It will therefore be necessary for us to examine the apparent difficulties, and I trust we shall find that they are not insuperable and that they are by no means such as seriously to discredit the great system of revealed Theology.

The *extra-Scriptural* confirmation of the evidences found in the Scriptures themselves will next be considered. Here a wide field will be opened for investigation. What light do history, mythology, tradition, architecture and science reflect on the Mosiac account of the origin of man, the unity of the human species, the Noachian deluge, and the exodus from Egypt? What confirmation of the history of the Israelites and other ancient nations may be found in the monumental remains of Egypt and Assyria, of Chaldea and Moab? What are the testimonies to the truth of the New Testament history which may be found in the writings of Jews like Josephus and Philo, of heathens like Tacitus, Suetonius and Pliny, of infidels like Lactantius, Porphyry, Celsus, Hierocles and Celsus, as well as of the early Christian fathers? What confirmation of the facts and doctrines of revealed Theology may be drawn from the Catacombs of Rome, and the inscriptions therein contained? What is the *extra-Scriptural* evidence by which it can be shown that long before the time of Christ predictions had been made respecting him, and that these have been fulfilled, and also that other prophecies respecting nations, countries, cities, churches were given and afterwards verified by facts? What confirmation of the truthfulness of the sacred Scriptures can be derived from researches in ethnology, in geography and in the languages, manners and customs of Eastern lands? What is the confirmatory evidence which is furnished by their genuine effects on the morality and condition of nations, communities, families, individuals, by the religion which claims to be supernatural?

I trust the results of these inquiries, taken in connection with the results of our examination of the Scriptures themselves will be found quite sufficient to convince us, if not in the first place of the divine inspiration of every word and sentence of the sacred volume, at all events, of the general truthfulness of the whole, and particularly of the record of the great fundamental facts and doctrines on which our faith and hopes are based, and, further, to convince us that there are no objections founded on metaphysical speculations, on physical science, on historical researches, or on the destructive criticism which has been applied to the canonical writings, which are at all sufficient sensibly to counterbalance the overwhelming weight of evidence which proves that the eternal Son of God assumed our nature, obeyed the law, died for our sins, rose triumphant from the grave, ascended up on high, and that eternal life belongs to those who believe in His name.

When this point is reached, our controversy with infidels will be virtually closed. It will be proper, however, as has already been stated, that we proceed a step farther for the comfort and edification of believers, and particularly that we discuss the question of the *divine inspiration* of the Canonical Scriptures. In maintaining their inspiration it will not be necessary for us to show the perfect accuracy of the different versions and translations of the inspired volume; although it will be satisfactory to know that for all practical purposes these are sufficiently correct, and that this is particularly the case with our English translation. Neither will it be necessary for us to show that every word or letter of the Greek and Hebrew Scripture, as we now have them in our hands, was divinely inspired. We admit that some few words and sentences have been omitted, altered, or interpolated. The question we have to discuss is whether the original Scriptures as they came from the Pen of Apostles, Prophets, and Evangelists, were written by them as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, and I trust we shall be able to prove that all Scripture, whether of the New or of the Old Testament was given by inspiration of God. Just as the giant oak which rooted on the mountain's side, has braved a thousand storms, may be moved to be the work of God, although here and there a branch or twig may be twisted or broken, or although schoolboys may have inscribed their names on its bark, so, I think, we may prove that the Bible—the tree of life—is God's work, although here and there a sentence has been mutilated, or the Schoolmen have introduced their glosses into the sacred text.

Having thus sketched the outlines of the course along which I shall endeavour, gentlemen, to guide you in the study of Apologetics, let me now in a few sentences, indicate the spirit and temper of mind in which we should enter on and prosecute this department of study. Let me say to you then in the first place, that this subject demands the most earnest attention we can possibly give to it. It has in past times engaged the most earnest attention of the wisest and best of men, who have exhausted upon it the resources of keenest intellect, and most extensive learning. It still attracts to its discussion minds of the highest order. Great statesmen, men of rank and title, men of science and philosophy, as well as learned theologians, are giving to it their earnest thoughtful attention. It is worthy of the most careful study. The religion whose divine origin it is ours to defend is the great promoter of virtue and happiness among men. It tames our passions and sanctifies our affections; it dignifies and ennobles our nature; it gives

peace to our troubled consciences, and exalts our guilty fears. It indicates the chamber of sickness with beams of celestial light, and beyond the shadows of the dark valley points to the bright realms of the eternal day. Let men's confidence in Christianity be destroyed and the highest incentives to virtue, and the purest sources of happiness are at the same time annihilated. Our chief interests for time and eternity depend on the settlement of the question, is revealed theology a fact or a fiction? The question is thus worthy of the earnest attention of all.

Aspiring as you gentlemen, are to the office of the sacred ministry of the Gospel, it is especially incumbent on you to give heed to this study that you may be able to deliver your message with greater confidence and be able when occasion demands it to repel the assaults of the adversary; and also that you may be able to resolve the doubts of earnest enquirers who may seek your guidance. It may happen, and probably will happen, that in the course of your ministry you will be asked for counsel again and again by men of thoughtful honest minds, who have become perplexed by conclusions unwarrantably drawn from physical science, from historical researches, from critical examination of the sacred text, from *a priori* speculations as to what a supernatural revelation should unfold, and the manner in which it ought to be made, on from apparent inconsistencies and incongruities in the doctrines and precepts of the Word of God, and should it stimulate your most earnest efforts to master the subject of Apologetics that you may be able, by God's blessing, to satisfy such enquirers and to guide them in the way of truth.

Let me further say to you that in prosecuting this department of study you should endeavour to prosecute it with a frank and candid spirit, with a conscientious desire to welcome truth from every quarter, to deal fairly with every objection. Candour and truth are cardinal virtues in the religion we defend, and its triumph cannot be achieved at the expense of these. There are systems of religion which cannot be upheld but by craft and cunning and that cannot bear the light of truth. It is otherwise with the religion whose claims we maintain. It has no secrets to conceal from the light of day. It has no impostures to be detected by the advancing light of science and philosophy. Perverted system of Christianity may need forged testimonies, lying legends and false traditions, to give countenance to their errors; and then upholders may well tremble in the presence of searching enquiry. But Christianity itself has nothing to lose, but everything to gain from the results of genuine research. So it has been in the past, and so we are confident it will be in the future. Let us therefore exhibit no sensitiveness because of the progress of science and philosophy, but rather welcome these triumphs, assured that however their bearing may be for a time misinterpreted, they will all ultimately serve to confirm and illustrate the truth of our holy religion.

I shall only further say that in prosecuting the study of Apologetics we should not fail to pray for the guidance of God's Holy Spirit. God can hear prayer. Our Father in heaven is not powerless to do what earthly parents are able to do. They hear their children's prayers and instruct and guide them. Shall we hesitate to believe that if men be genuine know how to give good gifts to their children, much more will our Father, who is in heaven, give his holy Spirit to them who ask? He can hear prayer, has promised to hear it has heard and answered it. In our study of Apologetics therefore as in all our studies, let us pray for the illumination of the Holy Spirit, who can guide us into all truth, and enable us to realize its saving power.

The Archbishop of Canterbury is afraid that the Hindus may heathenize England. The Indian "Mirror," speaking without any knowledge of the Archbishop's misgivings, avows its fear that the English will heathenize Hindustan. The higher schools of India are under the charge of the English Government, and the influences which are at work in them are, if we may trust the "Mirror," not such as to encourage the hope of the speedy conversion of the Hindus to Christianity.

It is a notorious fact that young men, fresh from college, impudently parade their materialism and infidelity before their half-educated comrades, and pooh pooh the sacred truths of religion and morality. Nothing is more disgusting than the offrontery and conceit with which our B.As. and M.As. scoff at God, immortality, and conscience. We confess we were shocked the other day to hear a learned Babu argue that to marry one's widow mother is not a sin, but simply unexpedient. How painful it must be to native parents—whether Hindu, Mohammedan, Christian, or Brahmo—to find that their young hopefuls, after receiving the highest education, have lost their faith in morality and regard conscience as a delusion. We hope the Syndicate will introduce such books in the University course, and the education department will adopt such other arrangements as may elevate the moral tone of native youths. We are really very anxious that the morals of the rising generation should be carefully looked after, and the country spared the terrible scourge of an increasing body of enlightened materialists and unbelievers.

We think this a very fair retort upon the Archbishop of Canterbury—the fairer because it is not intended. If the English Government is exporting nationalism and infidelity to India, it is quite time that the English clergy made the discovery that the danger to Christianity, arising from the presence of a few Hindus in London is trifling compared with the influences which are at work in its own Universities, at home and abroad.