

plants, rather than a blooming garden of the Lord where each plant occupies its proper place, and it is seen in all the beauty of its true proportions.

God's gracious purpose towards man was perfect from the first, but the *revelation* of that purpose became clearer and fuller, it was evolved and grew in connection with the history of our race, it broadens like a river till it swells out into the great ocean of God's love manifested in His own Son dying for sinners. In *nature* we are familiar with this principle, for all growth there is from living seeds, and these germs unfold into all the life and beauty we everywhere see. So is it also with revealed truth, there is a growth from a vital germ. A gradual unfolding of a Divine purpose; a progress of doctrine, from a central principal, all coming out into clearer and fuller manifestations. Hence the earlier books of the bible differ greatly from the later, not merely in style, but also in fulness of utterance, for there is a sustained advance in thought, a growth obvious to all, the germ of the one becomes the living tree of the other, the plant leafs out into blossom and fruit, the dim outline of the picture is filled in, and the morning broadens into the perfect day. What a freshness it brings into the mind of an earnest student, when he for the first time discovers the progress of revelation from those imperfect and elementary conceptions of God and of morality in the Old Testament to the full and perfect teaching of Jesus Christ in the Gospels. Instead of being shocked when such an obvious fact as this is stated, we should be prepared to find in the earlier scriptures partial conceptions of God's nature, defective views of His Spirit and dealings in the Old Testament. The God who reveals Himself there stooped to our low level of moral apprehension in order to lift us up, and acted on the principle which Christ observed, and revealed truth as His Church and people were able to bear it.

Take the first utterance of the bible—"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," and compare this with the last—"Surely I come quickly, even so come Lord Jesus," and see what an advance there is from dead matter to His own living presence. Or take the first promise of Christ—"The seed of the woman" and compare this with the statement "God so loved the world," etc., "The blood