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NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

DOGMA AND SCIENCE :

A Lecture

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BY

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S Y L L A B U S.

Impressions and Sensations.

Our Reflective and Reasoning Faculties.

Imagination, Intellect, and Reason.

Ignorance of the Causes of the Phenomena of Nature
the only source of Dogmatism.

Science and its aim.

Difference between Dogma and Science.

Dogmatism is as pernicious in Science as in Ethics.

Dogmatic mode of persuasion.—Hudibras.

“Inherited Sin” treated Dogmatically and Scientifically.

“Grace” in its religious working, and as a stimulus
of our intellectual faculty.

Dogma in Astronomy, Geology, and Geography.

Dogma in dates.

Dogma, a proof of man’s greatest fallibility.

Dogma and Science in their historical development.
War and bloodshed ; progress and peace.

Science combined with Art, and their mission.

How far Dogma and Science may work together.

Conclusion.

DOGMA AND SCIENCE.

“**H**ABENT sua fata libelli,”—not only books, essays, and lectures, but often sudden flights of thought have all their own origin. You must kindly attribute this lecture, “On Dogma and Science,” to the second instalment of the Archbishop of Canterbury’s charge to the clergy of his diocese. The conflict between “Dogma and Science” was stated in that charge with a frankness and courage which testify to the high scientific standing of the very highest authority in dogmatic matters. I have often taken occasion from this platform to exult in the progressive movement throughout the world in general, in spite of some gloomy phenomena that appeared here and there, and seemed to imply that the wheel of time had been stopped, or was even to be turned backwards. We are steadily advancing; if only every idealistic or realistic pioneer of our times will put his shoulder to the wheel, we are sure to rescue humanity from the mire of inherited prejudices and musty incredibilities.

From time immemorial man’s intellectual powers have been continually directed towards answering three grand questions that must have impressed the conscious mind of humanity with mystic and mysterious force. Where from? What for? And where to? To a more or less direct attempt to answer these three questions all the religious and scientific efforts of humanity, from the times of Vaiwasvata down to John Stuart Mill, may be traced. We find this in the ‘Tanjura’ in 225 folio volumes, in the Greek philosophers, the writings of the Fathers, and the mass of scholastic effusions of the Middle Ages. It is no less evident in Bacon’s first scientific revelations, in the works of Leibnitz, Hume, Locke, Kant, Schelling, and Hegel, and in innumerable books, pamphlets, and essays, written and printed. The millions of sermons, whether dull or lively, that have

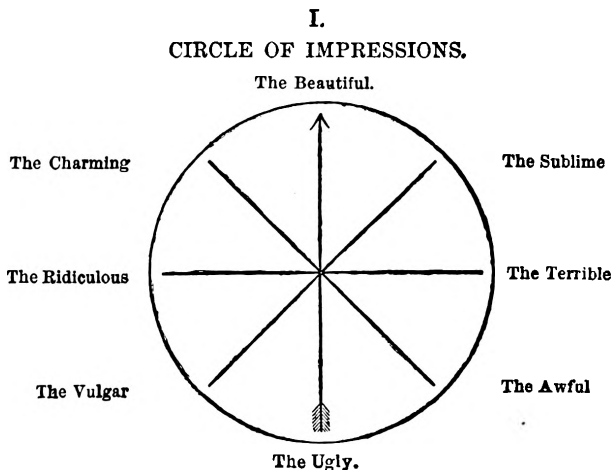
been preached, the numberless lectures that have been delivered in universities, in colleges, and on platforms, may all be reduced to an endeavour to find answers to the three questions, which in reality form the basis of man's whole bodily and mental activity.

This universal sameness or oneness is of the utmost importance to the student of history. We need not fear that the unbiassed knowledge of the different answers that have been given in time, according to the available elements of our mental culture, will in any way endanger the sanctity of ethics or the onward progressive striving of humanity. On the contrary, the more we make ourselves acquainted with the slow and gradual struggle of dogmatism and science, the more we surround ourselves with the bright halo of inquiry; the more we stand on the basis of a well-tutored consciousness of the past, the more we are able to approach truth by means of firm conviction; and the less we are enveloped in symbolism, mysticism, or any other incomprehensibility, the higher will be our real moral standpoint. The forms in which ethics are given may change, just as the answers given to the three questions have varied and will vary, but the primitive essences of ethics and science have never changed, do not change, and cannot change.

Man has grown out of this earth; "he is but a detached radius of this globe," as I have often said, and his language and mode of thinking have developed into shape and form with his increasing consciousness. Not the "fear of God," but the love and consciousness of God, is the beginning of all wisdom. The fear of God led to a variety of idolatries and *dogmatic* monstrosities; whilst the love and consciousness of God, as He manifests Himself from eternity to eternity in the phenomena of nature, led to inquiry and science. This assertion in itself may serve as a starting-point to enable us to include the whole range of our possible impressions from the phenomena of nature in a systematic circle, followed by a corresponding circle of sensations, leading to a third circle of consciousness, and a fourth symbolic of the three others.

All our outward impressions may be reduced to the following elements:—

Beauty is the positive pole, and ugliness the negative. Beauty is flanked by the sublime and charming, whilst the ugly, in strict opposition to beauty, is encompassed by the vulgar and awful. On the line dividing the

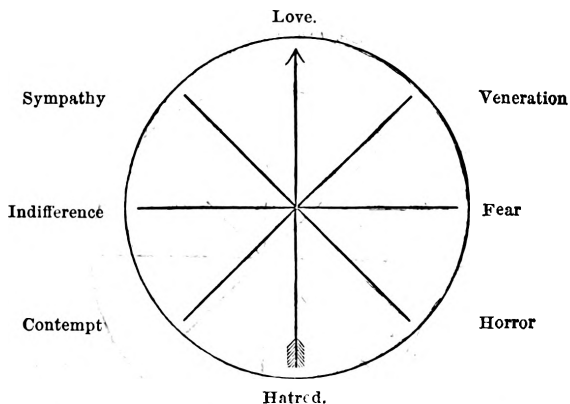


circle stand the RIDICULOUS and the TERRIBLE. All other possible impressions are mere combinations of these six elements striving towards the positive or negative poles of the Beautiful or the Ugly. Impressions can only be conveyed through our senses to our mind, the operations of which are three-fold: emotional, affecting our imagination; reflective, exciting our intellect; and sifting, combining, and systematising, as the functions of our reason.

In placing the sensations engendered by the possible impressions of outward phenomena on our mind in a systematic circle, we find that beauty engenders love, the positive pole of all our mental and bodily powers, whilst ugliness produces its negative pole, hatred. Love is flanked by sympathy and veneration, whilst hatred oscillates between contempt and horror. On the line dividing this circle we have INDIFFERENCE and FEAR. Whatever our sensations may be, however complicated they may appear, they are but combinations of these six sensations, caused by the corresponding six impres-

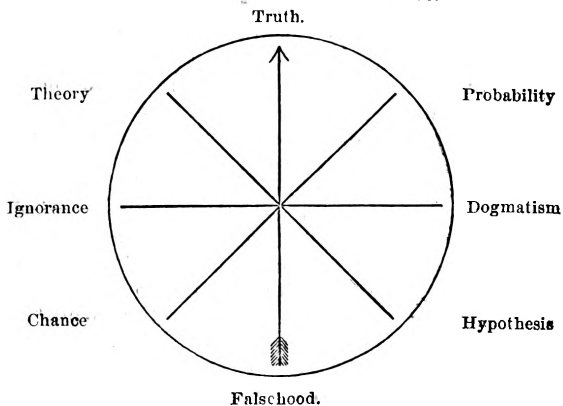
sions, striving towards the positive or negative poles of Love o: Hatred.

II.
CIRCLE OF SENSATIONS.



These two circles led in time to a third, the circle of Consciousness with its positive pole Truth, flanked by

III.
CIRCLE OF CONSCIOUSNESS.



Probability and Theory, and its negative pole Falsehood, flanked by "the fool's paradise," Chance and Hypothesis.

On the stern line dividing the two opposite elements are IGNORANCE and DOGMATISM, engendered by a mixture of ridiculous and terrible impressions, producing the corresponding sensations of indifference and fear. I have endeavoured to trace clearly through the circles of impressions, sensations, and consciousness the origin of Dogmatism in fear.

For those who are inclined to look upon the spiritual world from a more realistic point of view, I have a fourth circle, that of Primary and complementary colours, which may serve to symbolically confirm the three previous circles.

White is the combination of all colours, and, like Beauty, Love, and Truth, in the spheres of impressions, sensations, and consciousness, the positive pole; whilst black, as the absence of all colour, is, like Ugliness, Hatred, and Falsehood, the *negative* pole. Corresponding to the impression of the Sublime, Veneration, and Probability is blue, filling us with the feeling of the infinite. Green has an indisputably charming influence, inviting us to repose. Who has not felt its power on a lovely plain covered with bright grass? Orange, the colour of destructive fire, corresponds to the terrible, producing fear and dogmatism; and purple to the awful. Tyrants and cardinals have generally clad themselves in purple. Yellow is the representative of indifference and the ridiculous, it is the jaundiced colour of ignorance; whilst red is the very essence of vulgarity. Children and savages delight in its loud hues, whilst bulls, with better æsthetical taste, are filled with rage at the very sight of it.

It will rest with Dogmatism whether it will try to leave the lower regions of these circles, and give up its twin-brother or sister, Ignorance, and rise through a correct appreciation of the impressions of the beautiful, the charming, and the sublime, to build its future on sympathy, veneration, and love. In fostering probabilities through theories it may reach the serene regions of Truth, and, standing hand in hand with Science, attain the most glorious aim of humanity, endowed with activity of mind by the infinite Creator.

The more we study, and the more we inquire into the formation of ancient creeds, the more firmly we shall

become convinced that these circles exhaustively place before us the origin and elements of our sensations and consciousness through the outer-impressions of the phenomena of nature.

The more ignorant we were of these impressions and their causes, the less we were able to group them or to reduce them to an intelligible system the more we dogmatised. Starting with stupid fear in their minds, produced by the terrible, men were led to a ridiculous indifference with regard to everything charming, sublime, and beautiful. They discarded all higher feelings of sympathy, veneration, and love, derided probabilities and theories even when based on facts, and clung to self-concocted hypotheses. They appealed to the mighty powers of chance, predestination, or fatalism, or fancied they could see inconsistency and variability in the laws of nature; they worshipped incredible falsehoods as truths, and barred the way of progress and inquiry as mischievous and sinful. No honest student of Universal History can grow angry when he considers these childish efforts of humanity, for he must know to conviction, that as little as the creative elements of inorganic and organic material nature could have developed at once into the highest forms, our intellectual progress could have possibly attained either beauty, love, or truth without a slow and gradually progressive development.

To further this progressive development is the province of science. Whether we look to the scientific attempts of the Brahmins and Egyptian priests, to the ethic efforts of the Hebrew prophets, to the different systems of the Greek philosophers, or to the teachers of pure Christianity, we everywhere see men of science impressed by the beautiful, charming, and sublime in God's creation. They contemplate the smallest pebble, the tissue and colours of flowers, the solar systems, comets, meteors, glaciers, and volcanoes with equal reverence inspired by the sensations of love, sympathy, and veneration. They seek to find out the law of probability, and build up theories, striving after truth, so far as our limited faculties may grasp it, but, if they are true scientific men, never dogmatising. The greatest gain of learning and study is the glorious and humble consciousness that we know so little.

I do not mean to assert by this, that all is vanity in the old Hebrew sense, which must check all mental and bodily activity,—this uncertainty of knowledge should exite our mental activity, so that we may add day by day an atom to our previous knowledge. The sum total of human knowledge has resulted from the efforts of single individuals to add their little mite to a grand total, which is increased even by the very smallest contribution of ideas.

The task of science, through its very aim, is extremely arduous. Men abhor nothing more than the trouble of reasoning, especially if business goes on briskly without reasoning. Why should men give up their prejudices, their comfortable social intercourse, and the noisy din of parties, for some ideal "terra incognita"—of which they know as little as of the North Pole, after so many expeditions? What is the use of sacrificing an inherited notion of ignorance to some universal, unalterable principle, especially if such principles demand study, cool hours of reflection, an honest application to never ceasing inquiry, with the constant conviction that, after all, absolute and real truth will not be attained. Besides can that be false which has filled thousands and thousands of nice little and big books with weighty words? Could anything capable of lightening the purses of some 25,000,000 human beings to the extent of not less than 30,000,000 pounds sterling, during the last forty years, be either wrong or false? Is there any clearer proof of the genuineness of the supply than the briskness of the demand? The scantily aided men of science are obliged to listen to such arguments, and are expected to crouch in devout annihilation—before what? Before the golden Nundi, or golden Apis, or golden calf that is everlastingly raised before the ignorant masses to be worshipped in humble submission. False principles that pay, are undoubtedly better than truth that does not pay. "Hinc illæ lacrymæ!" How titanic were and are the efforts of science in the face of such a phenomenon. Bare and naked, only veiled in scepticism and doubt, house and homeless—an outcast from the masses, laughed at, mocked, derided, abused, cursed, trampled under foot, baffled in its own efforts, contradicted, distorted, crucified, and burned often by its own votaries. Science has gone onward to truth step by step.

Here a mighty bastion of dim hypotheses has been stormed,—there a huge castle of ignorance has been taken. It has demolished miles and miles of Chinese walls built up of huge stones of chance, of bigoted surmises, cemented together with the chalk and mortar of scarcely destructible mysticism, decorated with symbolic niceties, the more confused and muddled the better, and yet science is neither tired out, nor vanquished. How many falsehoods, that were once raised on the pedestal of truth, have been hurled into the dust by Science, unaided by State support, by voluntary contributions, collections, and extorted monetary help in one shape or another? Facts had to be detached from myths; myths had to be traced to their dim origin. Different authors of different periods, in different languages, had to be studied; an infinite variety of methods and forms of thinking, seeing, and arguing at different times under different influences, with totally different dialectics, had to be gone through; order had to be traced, laws had to be found out, groups had to be created, analogies to be drawn, and differences to be established, in order to attain what science *has* attained. And Science has had to do all this without flourish; it has always tried the shortest, the clearest way—but this shortest and clearest way is also the most difficult, the steepest, the least inviting and comfortable.

Lactantius, one of the fathers, called the Christian Cicero, who was not yet altogether blinded by dogmatism, having lived so much nearer to the foundation of Christianity, says: "Pure and naked truth is so much the clearer, because it has ornaments enough of its own; and therefore, when it is daubed over with external additional ornaments, it is corrupted by them; so that a lie is therefore pleasing, because it appears in the shape that is not its own." What would Lactantius have said to all the dogmas as additional ornaments with which Christ's simple ethics have been daubed over? In discussing only one single phenomenon, its origin, cause, or effect, science strives to make use of all our mental powers to correct the phantoms of our imagination. Our sensations are combined, divided, and traced by the unbiassed power of our intellect, which turns them over

in our memory, enters and registers them, draws balances, and collects axioms, theorems, experiments, and observations. When our mind with its threefold functions has imagined, reflected, and reasoned, collected its materials from all quarters of the globe, from all ages, then only it can come to some probable conclusion based on some probable premisses.

Whilst probability is the starting point of the scientific inquirer, leading to theory and truth, the starting point of dogmatism, whether in science or ethics, is ignorance. The dogmatist also uses the three functions of our mind, but in an inverted ratio. He uses reason and intellect to prove the outgrowths of an ignorant, terrified, overawed imagination to be facts. The man of science has continually to fight against wild hypotheses, based on chance and falsehood, that have been sustained, fostered, and promoted by ignorance, often for thousands of years. The man of science has to use his intellect to combat mysticism, and to exert his reason to show that the probable only is possible, if based on a succession of causes producing the same effects.

The dogmatists arose in the childhood of humanity, and became, with their fairy tales, the nurses of mankind. Humanity, in the meantime, has gone through its boyhood, youth, and manhood, and is approaching more and more the bright, passionless, serene, and moral age of wisdom, yet the dogmatic nurses, with wrinkled faces, still repeat the same nursery-tales. Here and there they try to disguise them with affectedly scientific interpolations made to fit their little myths and legends. No one could venture to assert that our scientific reasoning has not sprung from these nursery-tales, just as the human form has developed from a scarcely microscopically visible embryo; but the embryo must not assume the judge's ermine and wig, and attempt to teach the learned grown-up man that he is still an embryo and nothing else. The embryos should not continually make use of the outgrowths of the awful, the vulgar, the false, and the ugly, which have fostered horror, contempt, and hatred, to contradict science, abuse science, abhor science as only an embryo in intellect could do. Let them not—

“Decide all controversy by
 Infallible artillery ;
 And prove their doctrine orthodox
 By apostolic blows and knocks ;”

for they are still where the pious arguers of Hudibras were. “They still talk of the talking serpent; they know the seat of Paradise to an inch, how sin came into the world, and what it is ;” and that in fact we, the fairest creatures of the Creator, endowed with intellect and reason, are but wretches conceived in wrath and sin. It would be considered most unfair to any well-bred gentleman continually to tell him that all he said or wrote was utter nonsense. Yet this is what some people are really doing when they abuse the fairest creation of God as the most abject of His performances. What would an artist think of a person who entered his studio and there proclaimed all his works daubs, all his statues terrible monsters? Yet men have built up on such ideas whole systems of ethics, amongst the Indians, Egyptians, Persians, and Hebrews. First God is said to create, then He is said to tempt and seduce, if not directly, indirectly, and then He is supposed to allow humanity to continue to be conceived in sin and wrath. This is anything but an excellent basis for the evolution of a glorious system of ethics. What do we really mean by an inherited sin? In one of my former lectures I had the pleasure of tracing before you “the Origin and Nature of the Devil,” and the closer we looked at him, the more we lifted him out of the regions of hypothesis, chance, and falsehood, the more we gazed by the dim lamp of probability, the torch of scientific theory, and the bright rays of truth, into his stupid face, the more he vanished into the past as a phantom of our terrified, untutored childhood. Permit me, now, to treat, with every regard and reverence for inherited prejudices, the inherited sin, first dogmatically, and then scientifically.

A society based on the assumption that our animal passions are the consequence of an Indian, Assyrian, Egyptian, and Hebrew myth, must look on every one as a creature of sin and wrath. That such an assumption must create an immense amount of uncharitableness, it is not difficult to imagine. The little innocent child to

whom such notions are taught, must become altogether bewildered. Of course he is accustomed to look upon this horrible inheritance with a kind of mystic fear; he spills some milk, and sees in this fact the consequences of a frightful legacy; he breaks a tumbler or smashes a wine-bottle, and is punished, to drive out of him the original sin. The child thus grows by degrees stubborn, and begins to fear and tremble; fear and trembling produce hypocrisy and falsehood, and, under these impressions and sensations, hatred instead of love is fostered in his little heart. Into what monsters even tender women may be transformed by such pious assumptions could be seen not long since in the pages of the highly-religious *Guardian*, where a widow lady advertised for a person experienced in the art of whipping, and able to administer a severe flogging with a new birch-rod on the tender bodies of her fatherless children, aged nine and ten respectively. Bulgarian atrocities are exciting our horror and indignation, whilst in our enlightened Christian country the birch-rod is looked upon as the only means of educating! With terrible anxiety to get rid of an inheritance that has cost so many bitter tears, and has tormented his childhood, the growing human plant or creature enters school. Here he meets again with nothing but inherited wickedness; he has a head-ache and does not know his Latin verb. What else could this be but the inherited sin! He grows angry at the ruffianism of the elder schoolboys, gets involved in quarrels, and fights, and is thrashed and beaten in order that he may be purged of the remnants of his inherited sin. At last he becomes a young man; life lies before him with all its temptations and seductions; the inherited sin does not forsake him, it clings to him like an unseen but ever present demon; he wastes his time in bad company, saves himself at last by becoming a dreamy hypocrite, renouncing the Devil and his temptations, and in his turn has children, and thinks nothing can be better than to frighten the inherited sin out of them in the way suggested by our widow lady. It is this terrible dogma that leads to morbid longings and carnal criminalities; that peoples our workhouses, creates drunkards and criminals, pauperism and over-population. At the very dawn of man's growing con-

sciousness, when still ignorant of his nature, he concocted this "inherited-sin dogma," and degraded his own position as God's fairest creature. This dogma gave rise to mystic explanations, incantations, allegories, arbitrary commentaries, Jewish, Mahometan, and Christian formularies in theology; in philosophy it led to fantastic explanations and meaningless dialectics, and in natural sciences to a systematising parallelism.

We see in all these efforts nothing but the tendency to improve and enlighten man; the means are, however, now obsolete, having led by degrees to a scientific treatment of this grand mystery—the inherited sin. We began to study the component parts of man, and built up on experience physiology; we tried to assign a cause to man's false reasoning, and we embarked on the study of psychology and the functions of the brain; we endeavoured to discover the cause of man's passion for marriage and the possession of children, and found ourselves launched into political economy and 'Malthus on Population.' We wanted to learn whether man was exempt from the laws of creation, and found him to be the same outgrowth of the cosmical forces as the smallest crystallisation or the most insignificant cellule. We have thus gained a rational consciousness of our calling, and can regulate our passions. Through education we attempt to diminish poverty, to free our workhouses from superfluous inmates, and to place society on a firm scientific footing of comfort and happiness.

The same change has befallen the dogma of "Grace." The amount of inordinate pride this little word in all its humility has created, is almost incredible. The Brahman by his very birth was endowed with a special divine grace. Only he could understand how God's breath condensed and formed sounds, how these sounds were turned into letters, the letters into syllables, the syllables into words, the words into sentences, and the sentences into periods. The same special grace was claimed by the priests of Buddha, by the Magi, the initiated Egyptian hierophants, the Hebrew prophets, and the Romish clergy. They only knew through special grace what suited humanity; how society could exist; what ought to be believed and what not; they often distorted all the principles of right and wrong,

and peopled heaven and earth with phantoms. They could hear the grass grow, could transfer their inherited grace to others, remit sins, and use humanity as one big flock of sheep, of which they pretended to be the only appointed shepherds, distributing the pastures, and excluding any reasoning thinking sheep as a black sheep from the universal fold. But "grace," in a scientific sense, has worked perfect marvels. Without faith in man's real inborn grace, manifesting itself in intellect and reason, Christianity would have sunk into a kind of heathenish idolatry; the Reformation could never have dispersed the dark and oppressive shadows of the Middle Ages; the gates of our modern times would not have been torn open by the immortal thinkers of England, always a grand and mighty country in the realms of free thought, in spite of the efforts of obscurantists and bigots. The Germans could never have followed up the English philosophers and established on their principles that mighty fabric of progressive inquiry in philology, biology, chemistry, and cosmology that now places them intellectually in the van of all other nations. Had the grace of our intellectual consciousness not touched us, we should still be writing learned books "on the number of angels that might dance on the tip of a needle," or on the all-important question "whether a man in a regenerated state commits sin." We should still study the fifty-three folio volumes by Bolland, a most learned Jesuit, whose work contains the lives of more than 25,000 confessors, martyrs, ascetics, and self-tormentors. We should pore over Father Jocelyn's 'Life of St. Patrick,' in 146 chapters, and learn how the Saint conferred beauty on an old man and increased his stature; how he miraculously fed 14,000 men (probably on nothing); how he changed flesh-meat into fishes; how the tooth of St. Patrick shone in the river; how he converted certain cheeses into stone; how St. Patrick's goat, stolen and eaten by a thief, bleated in the thief's stomach, and other similarly incontrovertible facts and truths. Prior to the Reformation the literature of enlightened Europe consisted of Psalters, canticles, miracles, tales, legends, numberless Hours of devotion, chronicles full of incredible deeds, and some sharply satirical works foreboding the coming

change. After the Reformation, philosophical and political books were printed, and we had 'News from Hell' (1536), proving the impossibility of its geographical position, as there was no above or below. Works appeared against "The power of the Clergy," on 'The Enormities of the Clergy,' on 'The Beginning and Ending of Popery' (1546), on 'The Practices of the Inquisition,' and on 'The Discovery of the Inquisition.' Now we analyse the rays of the sun, and leave discussions on unintelligible matters to men who are mere "survivals" of the Middle Ages amongst us.

Bernhard, of Clairvaux, who repudiated the dogma of the "Immaculate Conception," and preached in favour of the Crusade of 1146, though he tried to hinder the merciless and sanguinary crusades against the Jews, in which he did not succeed, says that: "Faith is a presentiment of some not yet discovered truth, and is based on authority and revelation, whilst our inner vision (contemplatio) is the certain, and, at the same time, clear cognition of the invisible." Buddhists and Brahmans have given utterance to an abundance of equally obscure and unintelligible sentences. This is the mighty charm of the so-called "supernatural;" it enlists interest, and is the more cherished, the less it is understood. It was the presentiment of truth, wrapped in authority and revelation, that proclaimed the earth to have sprung ready made from a cosmical egg; what hen, however, laid the egg, neither authority nor revelation told us. It was the presentiment of truth, based on authority and revelation, that made the earth a square, resting on pillars, firmly fixed on a foundation, and the sun revolve round this flat square, which was studded with mountains to serve as footstools for the Deity. It was again the presentiment of truth, based on authority and revelation, that decreed how the world had been created in six days. Our inner vision, however, after having studied geology, has come to a totally different cognition of the now visible strata of the earth's crust, and has built up, in going backwards, the slow formation of our earth, which is not square, but globular, which does not rest on pillars, is not fixed, and therefore a very uncomfortable footstool, unless the Deity revolves with it at the rate of about 1,220 miles per

minute; an idea which is far from respectful to the Creator of more than 20,374,000 visible stars; amongst which our earth is one of the least significant planets. The inner vision and cognition of the perceptible and visible, having so gloriously failed us, in spite of authority and revelation, we certainly need not trouble ourselves much with the certain and clear cognition of the invisible arrived at by Bernhard of Clairvaux, who is now a canonised saint of the Roman Church.

The most objectionable confusion was created by dogmatists in dates. Now, a date is certainly nothing particularly important, except to small-minded individuals, who think that if they know the date of the birth of some king, or the dates of battles, or other incidents, they know history, as though history were but a chronological register of dry facts. Dates are important to ascertain certain incidents, especially in legal matters, but who is to fix dates for the creation of the world, the growth of the Assyrian Empire, the production of the Vedas, or the age in which the laws of Manû were compiled, and astronomy was brought into a system? Who can date the age, which must have preceded the 331 Kings of Manetho, the age in which Atalanta formed part of the Eastern Continents, and mammoths and elks roamed through the earth, whilst palm-trees, sigillaria, stigmara, &c., grew to a height of 120 to 150 feet on our island? All these phenomena could not have happened during the short lapse of 5,376 years, as some dogmatists assume, teach, and piously believe, if we read history backwards and consider how slowly we advance in spite of telegraphic wires and steam engines. For the merely natural development of languages, works of art, stone constructions, sculpture, tile-making, and the formation of languages much more time is required than dogmatists are willing to allow. This obstinacy in dealing with dates has its pernicious influence. It helps people to falsify facts as to time, by degrees also as to space, and finally, as to their mode and possibility of having happened at all. Nothing is so pitiful as to see men of learning twisting facts in order not to sin against the chronology of Rabbi Hillel or Bishop Usher. If dates are dogmas, they only serve,

like all other dogmas, to prove the utter fallibility of man. Thus it was asserted that the sun moves and the earth stands; that there are no antipodes. Every one who dared to doubt these dogmatic assertions was branded as a perverter of *truth*, an infidel, and a "godless wretch." Dogmatists ought to be contented with the innumerable disenchantments and disappointments they have had to suffer.

To remedy this fallibility they have invented a new dogma in opposition to all experience of sound reason and common sense, the dogma of the Infallibility of a human Being. That there should be people who cling to the infallibility of some small sectarian preacher, and oppose with inordinate vehemence the infallibility of the Pope, is not surprising. Such persons see themselves wronged in their own infallible understanding of what they assume to be essential dogmas, and fear they might see themselves outdone; they are angry that a chosen high priest should do what the unchosen crowd of talkers on holy matters do for themselves.

There can be no doubt that a narrow-minded dogmatism has blighted for thousands of years all our better progressive efforts. Like the Colorado beetle it has eaten away the very best roots of our mental seeds. It crept slowly and gradually into Christianity—that bright doctrine of mutual love; it has undermined those precepts which were as little dogmatic for the welfare of our souls as the prescriptions of a physician for the health of our bodies. Christianity, according to Dr. Barlow, had no other laws but such "as politicians would allow to be needful for the peace of the State; as Epicurean philosophers recommend for the tranquillity of our minds, and pleasures of our lives; such as reason dictates, and daily shows conducive to our welfare in all respects; which, consequently, were there no law enacting them, we should in wisdom choose to observe, and voluntarily impose them on ourselves; confessing them to be fit matters of law, as most advantageous and requisite to the good, general and particular, of mankind."

These are truly Christian words. For Christianity in its beginning was as free from dogmas as the rays of the sun, the formation of the earth, or the eternal laws of

nature. Christ taught us one grand law—love, founded on beauty, leading to truth, that holds us as self-conscious beings together in one brotherhood, just as the law of attraction holds the universe eternally united. Historically both dogma and science had their growth and decay—with this difference—that dogmas grew to might and activity in the dark ages, when no science was possible. In 325, A.D., the Trinitarian dogma was borrowed from Indians and Egyptians; 346, A.D. some ritualistic innovations, such as the worship of relics, were adopted from the Buddhists; the worship of images was taken from the Indians and Egyptians; asceticism, self-abnegation and self-torture from Brahmans and Buddhists; Jubilees from Romans and Egyptians; the Confession from Plato. Transubstantiation came from the Egyptians in 1215 at the Council of Lateran under Pope Innocent III. The worship of Mary is to be traced to the Assyrians and Babylonians, for it was a revival of the worship of Alilatt, Astarte, or Astaroth. Processions were taken from Indians, Romans, and Egyptians. The incarnation, resurrection, descent to hell and ascension into heaven, are dogmas of Brahmanic and Buddhistic origin. St. Jerome tells us that “we ought to worship where the feet of our Lord stood,” chiefly meaning his last footsteps, when he mounted up to heaven; the print of which, say Sulpicius Severus and Paulinus remains to this day. This was, however, exactly the case with Buddha, the ninth incarnation of the second person of the Indian Trinity, who ascended into heaven from Peak Adam, on the Island of Ceylon, and who there left his extremely large footprints, casts of which we possess in our British Museum. It was dogmatism that led the Romish Church to the establishment of the Inquisition under Popes Innocent III., and Gregory IX., in the 13th century after Christ. The Inquisition and its sanguinary crimes afford the historian clear proofs that dogmatism and fanaticism will lead men to wild atrocities, whether committed by learned Christian priests and judges in the sixteenth century against Protestants, or by Protestants against Dissenters in the seventeenth century, or by Radicals against Royalists in the eighteenth century, or by Mahometans against

Bulgarians in the nineteenth century, or by Russians against Poles in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Bloodshed and murder follow in the track of all those who base the welfare of humanity on dry, unintelligible dogmas. The dogma can only begin where knowledge ceases, and no mystic, symbolic, allegorical, parabolical, metaphorical, metonymical, hypostatical, and anagogical verbiage can turn *nonsense* into *sense*, the *unseen* into the *seen*, the *invisible* into the *visible*, or the *unknown* into the *known*. Bloodshed and war will always be the outgrowths of dogmatic fanaticism. For any wilful assertion, based on ignorance, must necessarily lead to falsehood, and the mighty endeavour to impose incredibilities by force and violence on those whom we cannot persuade by means of arguments and sound reasoning. The dogma can only exist in annihilating our independent judgment; whilst science can only prosper in trying to prove even those intuitions, which hypothetically approach probabilities. But the scientific men of all ages and times have willingly given up their most cherished prejudices, as soon as better reasons have been adduced for the assumption of different theories. Spinoza's "Substance" had to yield to Fichte's "Ego," Shelling's "Subject-object," to Hegel's "World's soul" (*Weltseele*), this to Schoppenhauer's "Will," and this to Hartmann's "Unconsciousness," or Agnosticism. We in England must turn back, if we seek to study the reasonable grounds on which the Christianity of the future was established by those glorious prelates of the English Church, Hooker, Chillingworth, Hale and Tillotson, who all tried to find for Christianity a firm basis in sound reason. They were seconded in their efforts by the immortal writers of the 17th and 18th centuries. The third Earl of Shaftesbury would have heard with amazement the assertion made by one of his descendants that we wanted 500 Spurgeons for London alone to oppose some of our most enlightened preachers. Such names as Collins, Tyn-dall, Wolleston, Chubb, and Bolingbroke, and the principles they represent are familiar even to the students in German Ladies' Schools, whilst with us they are altogether passed over in silence, none of these titans of free-thinking being so much as mentioned in a primer, which

is to serve our boys as a school-book. These writers more than 150 years ago felt that dogmatism ought to unite with science and art, with truth and beauty to rouse in us all our higher faculties. The strains of harmonies on the wings of sound, the chisels of sculptors, the pencils and paint-brushes of the painters, the productions of the architects, were all at the disposal of the holy cause—but when and under what circumstances?—When the divine light of freer thinking vivified the brains of humanity. Ecclesiastics of whatever denomination, who inveigh against our progressive Free-thinking, encourage falsehood and immorality; for nothing can be more immoral than the concealment or withholding of truth. In order to preserve some obsolete incredibilities, as little necessary to the genuine morality of man as the wearing of a coloured chasuble, with or without an embroidered gilt cross at the back, dogmatists are prone to persecute the most moral men, if they differ from them on unintelligible, speculative, or symbolic points, and force the respectable to play the hypocrite. Against whom do the preachers of the gospel of love show more inveterate hatred and uncharitableness than against their very best men, if these wish to use their rights as true Protestants? Need I quote facts? Are not the persecutions of the Essayists and Reviewers, of Bishop Colenso, and others fresh in our memories? It is the very nature of Protestantism to be progressive, else it would have even less *raison d'être* than Romanism. From the period of the establishment of the Reformation the minds of men, now advancing and then retrograding in certain countries, at certain times, have become intellectually more and more enlightened. Our increased love of natural and historical sciences, a neglect of metaphysics, and a growing fervour for genuine art are laudable Signs of our Times. What the Primate of England has been pleased to call “the seething thoughts of this anxious age” are but the visible efforts of the progressive development of humanity, to leave the wilderness of mysticism and dogmatism, and to seek goodness, beauty and truth, no more in formulæ and assertions contradicting the very first principles of our commonest common sense, but in science and art, leading to the purest morality.

It remains to be seen whether the dogmatists will play the part of the merchant's honest old clerk, who wrote a remarkably fine hand, and who thought so highly of it that, under the idea that calligraphy must sooner or later supersede the press, he wrote out an entire copy of the Bible for fear the sacred volume should ever get out of print. Dogmatism is calligraphy, science is print. Print will no more be superseded by calligraphy. Let the priest give up his eternal looking backwards; let him look courageously forward. Let him vie with the layman in all the branches of our modern knowledge; let him study comparative philology, comparative mythology, the growth of dogmas at various times amongst various nations. Let him not be ashamed to confess that the borrowed symbolic plumage has nothing to do with the inner soul of Christian ethics, and he will stand firm as a rock. Let him strive to act on our reflective and reasoning faculties, and exciting us to deeds of beauty and truthfulness, be again what he ought to be—a conscientious teacher of humanity, who does not tremble before every glimmer of light, but can boldly face the sun of scientific truth and the glorious beauties of art.

In one shape or another teachers will always be wanted, and it should be far more comforting to our teachers fearlessly to work on our higher intellectual faculties, through love, than to mourn over our wicked nature, and continually try to impress the emotional element in us through fear, or promises of "sweetmeats and sugar-plums" in another world. Truth ought not to be represented as attainable without any trouble by mere inspiration; nothing useful or practical being done, whilst the advent of such inspiration is waited for, nor should any unnatural thought, that may have been thrown out in ignorant ages, be mistaken for the result of such inspiration.

Let our instructors teach men and women to rely upon their mental culture, and not on guardian angels, incense, candles, or coloured chasubles bright with the green of hope, or dipped in the white of dearly beloved innocence, the red of heavenly love, the blue of holy constancy, the orange of glorious beatitude, or the purple of supernatural dignity, all enveloped in the thick black cloak of superstition and ignorance. Let

them work as men on men, and not as emotional women on women; let them take an example from our strong-minded women, who do study and do know. That which they would then lose as dogmatists, they would gain as influential leaders of our ideal better nature; for our age is a practical age. We want men of higher sentiment, for without them we might altogether sink into wretched materialism, and become mere calculating, buying and selling machines, without any higher aspirations, pursuing even science only so far as it pays. We may, however, confidently look forward to a time when humanity will be one great universal priesthood, worshipping in boundless love, truth and beauty, science and art, leading us to the purest ethics.

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