

# THE PRESBYTERIAN QUARTERLY.

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## I. THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL.

THEY to whom the Bible is a sufficient rule of faith have this great question happily settled for themselves. For in the gospel, life and immortality are clearly brought to light. The doctrine is expressly asserted in a multitude of places, and is necessarily implied in the whole moral system which the Bible teaches. But unfortunately there are now many who hold the word of God as not authority. Christendom is infested with schools of evolution and materialism, which attempt to bring this great truth in doubt by their "philosophy, falsely so-called," and which mislead many unstable souls to their own undoing.

To such as will not look at the clear light of Scripture, we propose to offer the inferior light of the natural reason. The sun is immeasurably better than a torch, but a torch may yet save the man who has turned his back on the sun and plunged himself into darkness, from stumbling over a precipice into an unseen gulf. We claim that we are entitled to demand the attention of all such doubters to the rational argument; for as they have set up philosophy against the Bible, mere honesty requires them to listen to philosophy, the true philosophy, namely:

There is certainly probable force in the historical fact that most civilized men of all ages and countries have believed in the immortality of their souls, without the Bible. Even the American Indians have always believed in the Great Spirit, and expected a future existence in the happy hunting grounds. The

## MULLER'S NATURAL RELIGION.

NATURAL RELIGION. The Gifford Lectures delivered before the University of Glasgow in 1888. *By F. Max Müller, K. M.* Pp. 608. London and New York: Longman's, Green & Co., 15 East 16th Street. 1889.

This treatise on Natural Religion contains the first course of lectures in Glasgow University on the Gifford foundation. Lord Gifford the founder of this lectureship was a Scotch lawyer of eminent ability, who resided near Edinburgh. By untiring energy and constant industry he acquired considerable fortune, and for many years he discharged in a most honorable manner the duties of a judge on the Scottish bench. By his will, after making ample provision for his near relatives, he bequeathed the sum of £80 000, or nearly \$400,000, to found lectureships in natural theology in the four Scottish universities. By this bequest, Edinburgh received £25,000; Glasgow and Aberdeen each received £20,000; and St. Andrews fell heir to £15,000.

The main object Lord Gifford had in view in founding these lectureships may be gathered from the following extract from his will: "These bequests are made for the purpose of promoting, advancing, teaching, and diffusing the study of Natural Theology in the widest sense of the term, in other words, the knowledge of God, the infinite, the all, the first and only cause, the one and the sole reality, and the sole existence, the knowledge of his nature and attributes, the knowledge of the relations which man and the whole universe bear to him, the knowledge of the nature and foundation of ethics or morals, and of all obligations and duties arising therefrom."

Lord Gifford further directs that this subject is to be treated by the lecturers "as a natural science without any reference to a professed revelation." The lecturers, too, "are not to be required to submit to any test," nor "to subscribe to any declaration of belief"; and further, "they may belong to any or no denomination." "They may even be skeptics, agnostics, or free-thinkers, provided they be reverent men, true thinkers, and sincere lovers of, and earnest inquirers after, truth."

Professor Max Müller, the celebrated philologist and Sanscrit scholar of Oxford, was chosen to deliver the first course of lectures on the Gifford foundation in Glasgow University, and the result is the book before us, containing twenty lectures. The first of these lectures is full of interest, not only in itself, but as indicating the starting point of the entire course. In this lecture Professor Müller gives some account of Lord Gifford's life and views, together with a sympathetic exposition of the nature and conditions of the munificent bequest of the eminent jurist. It is specially worthy of note here that Professor Müller expresses hearty approval of the terms of the bequest, and that he regards the liberal terms according to which the lecturers are to be chosen, and the mode of treating the subject of Natural Religion, "to be one of the signs of the times, full of promise."

Our author gives us the additional information regarding Lord Gifford "that he deliberately rejected all miracles, whether as a judge for want of evidence, or as a Christian because they seemed to him to be in open conflict with the exalted spirit of Christ's own teaching." Yet he adds: "He always remained a true Christian, trusting more in the great miracle of Christ's life and teaching on earth than in the small miracles ascribed to him by many of his followers." We are

further informed by our learned lecturer that Lord Gifford "was satisfied to accept the traditional forms of public worship as a necessary tribute which every member of a religious as well as political community must pay for the maintenance of order, peace, and charity." Professor Müller, in the spirit of the terms of Lord Gifford's will, insists on "the scientific treatment of religion," and contrasts the slow advance in this field with the rapid progress made in the natural sciences. For this condition of things he blames theologians, and rejoices that Lord Gifford directs that natural theology in these courses of lectures is to "be treated as a strictly natural science, the greatest of all sciences; indeed, in one sense the only science."

In all these introductory explanations there is much to call forth remark, and not a little to provoke criticism. It may be seriously questioned whether a strictly scientific treatment of religion can coolly ignore the miraculous, or assume the negative position in regard to the supernatural claims of Christianity. A sound scientific method must surely take note of all the facts in the case, no matter what the problem may be. It is a fact that the Christian system involves the miracle, and claims to be supernatural in its nature. This fact must either be admitted or refuted; it cannot be simply ignored. Lord Gifford and Professor Müller are unscientific at the very outset of their professed point of view.

Again, to say, as our author does on page 12, "that religion should be treated as a spontaneous and necessary outcome of the mind of man, when brought under the genial influences of surrounding nature," is surely a very inadequate starting point from which to explain all religious phenomena. It is freely admitted—nay, held fast—that man has in his very constitution a religious factor. It is also acknowledged that external nature may have some effect on the development of that religious factor. But we are still bound to maintain that such a product as Christianity cannot be fully accounted for in this way, and without a supernatural revelation. If "the heavens declare the glory of God," his law is needed "to convert the soul, and make the simple wise."

From what has been said it will be seen that the whole discussion is projected on a purely naturalistic plane. To treat natural religion, as such, and as the basis of revealed religion, in this way, is quite proper; but to rob Christianity of its supernatural crown and royal sceptre, and to make it a form of Natural Religion like all the rest, and then to deal with it in a purely naturalistic manner, is a mode of procedure which the Christian apologist must rigorously resist. The able lectures before us are consequently open to serious criticism on this ground. Many of the expressions in Lord Gifford's will are essentially pantheistic in their nature; and pantheism, whether that of Spinoza, Hegel, or the Buddha, is out and out naturalism. Professor Müller makes no effort to hide his warm sympathy with Lord Gifford's aims and views. Consequently, we conclude that Müller's position is entirely unsatisfactory to the Christian theist. But while we pronounce against the method of this treatise based on the terms of the Gifford bequest, we hasten to say that the distinguished lecturer has given us a treatise of much interest and value. There is much that will not be new to those who have read Müller's other works, especially *The Science of Language*, *The Science of Thought*, and the *Hibbert Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion*. Still there is a freshness and maturity in the whole discussion which make the lectures readable indeed.

This course is only an introductory one, paving the way for others which are to treat more fully of the whole subject of natural theology. Three main introductory questions are discussed in this opening course:

1. The definition of Natural Religion.
2. The proper method of its treatment.
3. The materials available for its study.

Four lectures deal with the first questions with titles as follows: "Definition of Religion," "Examination of Definitions," "Positivist Definitions of Religion," "My own Definition of Religion."

Our author first points out the three modes according to which the definition of religion may be framed. The first is the *etymological*. Here Müller, with Cicero and others, prefers to derive "religion" from *relegere*, instead of from *religare*, as Lactantius and others do. The second mode of defining religion is the *historical*. Here the biography of the ideas denoted by the term "religion," is given. The third method of definition is the *dogmatic*. Here we have more or less arbitrary definitions given of what "religion" does or should signify. Müller prefers the *etymological* and *historical* to the *dogmatic*, and in this treatise gives special prominence to the *historical* method of defining religion.

Müller also examines with some care many proposed definitions of religion, as those of Cicero, Goethe, Lavatar, Kant, Caird, Pfeleiderer, Martineau, Schenkel, Newman, Teichmüller, Mill, Spinoza, Schleiermacher, and Hegel. He gives no quarter to the efforts of Positivists to define "religion." Consequently, Wundt, Fuerbach, and especially Gruppe, who makes *selfishness* the source of religion, are severely criticised. He also pays his respects to Darwin, Niebuhr, Bunsen, and Lubbock in this connection.

After pronouncing all these forms of definition more or less defective, he proceeds to give his own, which is as follows:

"Religion consists in the perception of the infinite under such manifestations as are able to influence the moral character of man." In *The Hibbert Lectures* Müller defined religion to consist in "a perception of the infinite." Pfeleiderer criticised this definition with justifiable severity, and now Müller seeks to fortify his definition by expanding it so as to include the moral element relating to the conduct of men. But if his defence is good against Pfeleiderer, still that defence may be open to attack from other quarters. Looking at the definition we note at once that the object of religion is not a personal being, but a pure abstraction—the Infinite. Then we are left utterly in the dark as to what category the "infinite" is to be placed under. Is it to be conceived as *spirit*, as *substance*, as *force*, as *cause*, or how? Müller gives us no information here which clears away the difficulties. Again, no good reason is given for believing that the infinite, or any other mere abstraction, can produce any moral results in man. The infinite, as set forth by Müller, has no moral attributes or qualities; and, this being the case, how can its manifestations influence the moral character of men? Müller takes for granted the very thing which he should have given good reasons for. Thus, once more, we cannot fail to ask how the abstract *infinite* comes to be conceived as in any sense *divine*, unless it be admitted that the human mind already possesses the notion of the divine latent in it. The *infinite* and *divine* are not interchangeable terms, and great confusion marks Müller's discussion as he plays fast and loose between them. Then, too, the way in which Müller conceives of the infinite in

its nature, and of the origin of our idea of the infinite, is open to serious objection, which will be noted in another place; and, finally, even if the infinite in certain of its manifestations can influence the moral character of men, the result would be morality, not religion. Religion includes morality, but morality is not the sum total of religion. Till Müller provides a better definition we prefer the old-fashioned statement that "Religion is a mode of knowing and serving God." (*Modus cognoscendi et colendi Deum.*)

The second great question with which these lectures deal is that of the proper method for the study of Natural Religion. In a general way, six lectures are occupied with this topic, although the discussion at times seems to have considerable latitude. This is specially the case with lectures VI. and VII. In lecture VI. the manifestations of the infinite in nature, in man, and in self, are considered, and in this way the whole field of natural theology is mapped out. The three divisions are: *Physical Religion*, from nature; *Anthropological Religion*, from the human race; and *Psychological Religion*, from the conscious self. These three great divisions Müller proposes to make the subject of future courses of lectures, and in this way the whole field of natural theology will be covered.

In discussing the proper method to pursue, Müller presents the merits of the *theoretical* and *historical* methods respectively, with decided preference for the latter method. He accuses the *theoretical* school of setting out with an ideal conception of what man must have been at the beginning in religion and everything else. He boasts that the *historical* school indulges in no such speculation, but seeks to gather the facts and make legitimate inferences from them. Müller here, as always, is a disciple of the *historical* school. Pursuing the historical line, Müller insists on the value of the comparative method of studying religious problems. Moreover, the true evolution of language, of thought, of morals, and of religion, is in this way to be discovered, according to Müller.

There is not a little that is interesting in these lectures, and not much objection need be made to our author's estimate of the value of the historical method of studying religious questions. History has its place and value, as all must admit, yet we are inclined to think that Müller does not give proper value to the theoretic method. Both have their place and great value. History may lead to the formulating of theory, and theory is to be tested by means of historic fact. Müller, perhaps more than once, is open to the charge of neglecting his favorite method, and following the theoretic. Then, too, history goes back only a little way, and for prehistoric periods the theoretic method has much value.

The remaining ten lectures are devoted to the discussion of the third and chief question of this course of lectures. This raises the important question as to "the materials for the study of Natural Religion." Müller arranges these materials in a very orderly way under four heads: *Language, Myths, Customs and Laws*, and *Sacred Books*.

Dealing with the first of these, Müller is on his favorite ground, and gives us, in several lectures, the substance of his views as set forth in his treatises on *The Science of Language* and *The Science of Thought*. Here he gives a good outline of the origin and growth of language, and maintains with great ability the Asiatic origin of the Aryan languages. He also holds that language is necessary to thought, but by thought he means the forming of distinct *concepts*, as distinguished from the reception or formation of sense *percepts*. "Language," he says (p. 356), "is not,

as is commonly supposed, thought *plus* sound, but what we call thought is really language *minus* sound." He adds: "We *think in words*," meaning by this that general names are necessary to the formation of concepts or general notions. In regard to the *origin* of concepts, he holds that their genesis is to be found "in our consciousness of our own repeated acts as one continuous action" (p. 373). Then, in the growth of language and thought, "they develop side by side, and are necessary to each other," as Noiré has so ably shown.

Now the bearing of this linguistic exposition on the question of the materials of Natural Religion is, according to Müller, pertinent and important. Language is necessary to thought, names to concepts. Hence, the origin and nature of religious ideas may be discovered, in part at least, in the names or titles given to deity. Language becomes the basis of mythology, and afterwards mythology affords the foundation of religion, and this through various stages of *animism*, *anthropomorphism*, etc. But the whole discussion cannot be regarded as at all satisfactory. To pass by many obvious criticisms, it need only be remarked that the religious theory here has no more value than the linguistic theory upon which it rests, and that Müller reduces the idea of the object of religion to a mere concept. If Müller's theory as to the relation between language and thought fails, his whole doctrine falls to pieces; and if the notion of deity be a deliverance of man's rational nature, and not a concept of the understanding, Müller's whole reasoning comes entirely short of its mark. Without pronouncing on the former position, we are sure that Müller's theory is defective at the latter point.

The second class of materials for the study of Natural Religion is *mythology*, and the three lectures devoted to this subject are amongst the most interesting in the whole book. Müller divides comparative mythology into three branches: *Etymological*, *analogical*, and *psychological*. The first deals with names and stories of the gods, the second compares myths which seem to spring from a common root, and the third deals with universal myths, and seeks to discover their inner relations. Each of these branches, according to Müller, affords fruitful material for the study of Natural Religion.

Little fault need be found with a great deal that our author sets forth in these lectures, yet it is not easy to see how it bears very directly upon the question of the origin and growth of religion. Mythology implies the existence of religion, and that men already have the notion of the divine, and instead of mythology being a stage in the upward growth of religious ideas, a strong case can be made out for the view that pagan mythologies are degenerations from a purer religious belief, which once prevailed among men. This consideration bears hard against Müller's theory.

The third class of materials for the study of Natural Religion consists in "customs and laws." Only a single brief lecture is devoted to this subject, and it is evident that the lecturer is not by any means as much at home in archæology as in linguistics and mythology. Various religious rites, ceremonies, such as festivals, sacrifices, and religious worship of different forms, are hurriedly described. The lecturer here clearly fails to show how customs and laws at first non-religious came to possess a religious character, and so to account for the origin of religion.

In like manner a single lecture is given to the fourth class of materials for the study of Natural Religion. He here deals with *sacred books*, and finds five centres where such books originated: India, Persia, China, Palestine, and Arabia. These

sacred books represent eight religions altogether. Of necessity, no adequate treatment of a theme which needs many volumes to discuss could be made in a single lecture, and it should not have been attempted. We must enter our protest against the placing of the sacred books of Christianity along with other sacred books as if they were all of the same essential nature. Here, again, Müller's persistent naturalism, already noted, comes out. He ignores the claims which the Scriptures themselves make to be or contain a revelation from God, and he seems to be better acquainted with the Vedas than with the Bible.

There are a few points of a general nature with which we close this imperfect review of a book of much ability:

1. Serious fault must be found with Müller's *psychological* doctrine. The fundamental error of our author here is that he has fallen into the snares of empiricism in regard to the theory of knowledge. Hence, we find him deriving all our knowledge directly or indirectly through the senses, overlooking entirely the fact that, while sense experience may be the *occasion* of the acquisition of knowledge, yet to all our knowledge, the mind itself brings an element which does not arise from experience, but is a necessary prerequisite to the possibility of the acquisition of any factors of knowledge. So when Müller deals with the infinite, he is practically helpless, and can only say, as he does, in the *Hilbert Lectures*, that the infinite is present to the senses in all our experiences of the finite. In like manner, when he deals with the origin of religious ideas, he is even more helpless, and can only say that in early times tangible, semi-tangible and intangible objects in nature supplied the germ of fetiches, semi-deities, and deities, respectively, and can give no account whatever of how the mind came to possess the idea of the divine, or of deity at all.

2. Müller's *metaphysical* doctrines are equally defective. This is especially the case with his doctrine of *the infinite*. His notion of the infinite is entirely defective. Turn the matter as we may, the infinite with which Müller engages our attention is only the *indefinite*. He confesses as much in the *Hilbert Lectures* and in the treatise before us the infinite is little else than something *beyond* the finite. At times he is willing to allow the contrast between the finite and infinite to be expressed by the terms visible and invisible. All of which is little short of metaphysical trifling with one of those root notions or fundamental beliefs of our nature, which no empirical theory can properly account for or explain the nature of in an adequate way.

3. On the *religious* side Müller's doctrine commits suicide. And this in several ways. Grant the cognition of the infinite, how does "the consciousness of the *infinite*" become the consciousness of the *divine*, unless we assume that the human mind already possesses the notion of the divine? Again, grant with Müller that prior to *animism* and *fetichism* there was an earlier stage of religious belief among men called henotheism, why not take the additional logical step, that prior to henotheism there was a purer stage of religious belief, when monotheism, and perhaps a primitive revelation, generally prevailed? If Müller has unsheathed the sword to destroy *positive* and *agnostic* theories regarding the origin and growth of religion, that same sword before he can sheathe it strikes through and spills the life-blood of his own theory. The moral is that all naturalistic and purely evolutionary theories of religion are inadequate; and we may be sure that, however much useful and interesting information Professor Müller gives us in his books that are

fragrant with the aroma of scholarship, still he proceeds to unlock the problems of religion, even of Natural Religion, with a key that will not fit the manifold combinations of the lock. Christian theism is the key to unlock the problems of Natural Religion, and the supernatural manifested in the sacred Scriptures, in the miracle, in the Christ of history, and in the church as a spiritual kingdom, is the key to unlock the mysterious and perplexing problems of Christianity.

We shall only add that we always read Professor Müller's writings with interest; and yet that interest is tinged with a measure of regret that one so well qualified to deal with the great problems of Natural Religion, should have pitched the tone of the discussion on such a low key that the broken accents of earth rather than the songs of heaven are chiefly heard.

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BOYD CARPENTER'S "PERMANENT ELEMENTS OF RELIGION."

THE PERMANENT ELEMENTS OF RELIGION. The Bampton Lectures for the year 1887. *By W. Boyd Carpenter, D. D., D. C. L., Bishop of Ripon, etc., etc.*, 12mo. Cloth. Pp. lxiv-423. MacMillan & Co., London and New York: 1889.

A pathetic personal interest attaches to this book in that it was placed in the hands of the lamented Latimer for review. During his long chivalrous fight with failing strength he retained it, and doubtless its pages were among the latest that engaged his gifted mind. This explanation of delay is due both the publishers and the public, and the present writer shares with them the regret that our noble brother was compelled at the last to leave to another the task he was so preëminently competent to perform. The volume is a historical study. We read on the first page of the Introduction:

"Before we can say what are the indispensable features of religion, we must study the religions of different races and times all the world over. To define a word by the exercise of the easy dogmatism of our study chair is not a scientific proceeding. The only definition worthy of the name is that which results from a large induction of facts. If we are to learn what religion is, let us leave our own preconceived ideas on one side, and let us interrogate mankind. From the study of man and his needs and requirements, we shall receive, if not a clearer answer, yet one which shall be founded on fact." A little further on our author states that "those elements which man imperatively demands in a religion," are what "we may call permanent elements of religion."

We confess that by the announcement of this method there was at the very outset created in our mind an impression distinctly and decidedly unfavorable. As this impression may to some readers seem unreasonable, we feel inclined briefly to indicate some grounds for it, as follows:

1. We understand the author's purpose to be the ascertainment and establishment of the essential characteristics of *true* religion, those elements which, amid all that may be merely incidental or accidental, and hence transient or at least changeable, shall prove permanent. His is no discussion of mere mythological systems, the interesting vagaries of the religious sentiment of mankind in all the varieties of its expression or the stages of its development. His purpose is distinctly different from this; his is a serious search after the elements of that religion which for all coming time can command the confident and intelligent acceptance of man, and prove his worthy guide in life, and his sufficient support in death. He is on no holiday excursion, he is exploring for a highway down which the feet of dif-