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THE TREASURES OF DARKNESS.

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(*Methodist.*)

And I will give thee the treasures of darkness.—Isaiah xlv., 3.

THIS is one of the promises of the world's Father, made on purpose to win the stranger and the wanderer to Himself. In these days when a high appreciation is put upon the promises, when, by the wings of poesy and music, they fill our sacred courts with their joyful iteration, when we memorize them to repeat in the public promise meeting, and in the private place of needed comfort, it does seem strange that a promise could be found so neglected as this one. This is especially so, knowing as we do that our God deals in no mean gifts, and lures His children to no disappointments.

Truly enough, this is not an oft repeated promise. This may arise from the form in which it is here presented. But our study of the words and works of God has long ago taught us, that the form in which a truth is presented is made to bear with special emphasis upon the particular mind to which it is immediately addressed.

This must lead us to examine the context.

The words were here addressed to Cyrus the Persian king. He is called in this chapter the Lord's "anointed," because he is chosen to fill out the Lord's plans for the restoration of His people, Israel. This is one of many promised blessings recorded in the context. The Lord is seeking to acquaint Cyrus with Himself as the God of Israel. The prevailing religion of Persia was one in which the leading doctrine was that of two gods. Cyrus was led by a belief in two supreme and co-eternal beings, acting always, however, in opposition to one another. One of these gods was held as the

whole world better. But will not the names of Howard, the friend of prisoners, and Pestalozzi and Fröebel, the teachers of little children, and Father Mathew, the apostle of Temperance, and the founders of ragged schools and of Sunday-schools, who have lived such struggling lives, and had so small a share of the world's esteem—will they not shine forth in the records of Heaven with purer spiritual luster?

WARNINGS AGAINST OPPOSITION TO FAITH.

BY REV. HERRICK JOHNSON, D. D., OF CHICAGO, ILL.

(*Presbyterian.*)

Turning away from the profane babblings and oppositions or the knowledge which is falsely so-called.—I. Timothy vi., 20.

THIS is the way the pew of inspiration characterizes the knowledge of a certain sort that puffs itself up, and claims to have solid foundations for its feet. It is science or knowledge, "falsely so-called." Timothy, and through him every disciple of the Lord Jesus, is warned against the profane babblings and oppositions of such knowledge. Knowledge, for example, that sneers at faith and boasts of nothing but facts, and calls such questions as are treated of in volumes of divinity, in the beautiful language of Huxley, "essentially questions of lunar politics."

Hence, the boast of a certain class of scientists that they have no use for the speculative and the theoretical, while they kiss the very dust before a fact. To such men, God, if there be a God, geometrizes. The heavens are crystallized mathematics. Crystals are solid geometry. "Observation and experiment," this is the scientific shibboleth, the only open sesame to positive knowledge; the one road for men who want to know where they are placing their feet. All other domains of thought and truth they bow out of court with the convenient word "agnostic," which Frederick Harrison says "is simply dog Greek for don't know." Everything must be brought to the test of facts. And by facts is meant things to be handled with the senses, investigated with the microscope or telescope, taken into the laboratory, proved, demonstrated. Hence, it is held that, outside the material world, man does not possess one particle of knowledge that he could teach as fact. And, hence, the

further recent avowal that "The time has come when the claims of science to be the supreme mistress of thought and action cannot be too boldly or earnestly advocated."

Of course, if thought is thing, and emotion is motion, and intellect and will were once "latent in a fiery cloud," what need of aught else but experiment and observation? In such a scheme of the universe imagination is our impertinence, and science may well be named "Supreme mistress of thought and action"—for thought and action have lost their old transcendent meaning. But we deny the theory. And we are bold to say the science that has its sneer at faith, and speaks of those who claim a knowledge of heavenly things as children of credulity or imagination, is rightly termed knowledge falsely so-called, and is full of ignorance and conceit, and of profane babblings and oppositions. Let us see if this proposition is true. First of all, we concede the majesty of fact. We admire the scientific spirit that so reveres a fact, however minute, that it dares not overlook or falsify it. We recognize the unerring and incontrovertible witness of a well conducted experiment carried out with skill and care. We stand in wonder and admiration before the splendid results of modern scientific research. We have little patience for the reverence that shuts its eyes and ears in pious awe when confronted with a new truth of science, as if the spirit of investigation were hostile to faith. We regard it as an indisputable canon of criticism, that the only pertinent or valid challenge of a scientific doctrine is that which undertakes to show that the doctrine is not what it claims to be—in other words, that it is not scientific. But we utterly repudiate the dictum that outside the material world man does not possess one particle of knowledge that he can teach as fact; and that such questions as are treated of in volumes of divinity and in pulpits are "essentially questions of lunar politics."

I wish to show you that science as well as religion has made large use of imagination, and rightly too, but that science instead of accepting only what it could teach as fact has often gone wild with theory, and in the use of imagination has given us a great deal of knowledge that was not knowledge at all, but guesses and vagaries equalling and surpassing anything ever born in the so-called realm of lunar politics. The shores of the past are strewn with nothing more thickly than with the wrecks of scientific theories that were

exploited as established fact, and "they had their day and ceased to be."

Take, for example, the Aristotelian dogmas in regard to motion. They ruled the world for ages, and yet they were knowledge falsely so-called. Aristotle was one of the great fountain heads of the thought of Europe : the forerunner of modern science. Universities were founded in Aristotle. Dante speaks of him as "the master of those that know." Aristotle held that the tendency of light bodies to rise, and of heavy bodies to fall, is inherent, and that motion is the effect of this inherent tendency. He reduced the elements to four : fire, air, earth, water. Fire and air have their natural motion upward. Earth and water downward. But he saw or thought he saw, another motion in a perfect line without beginning or end. Hence, concluded this ancient philosopher and scientist, there must be something superior and more Divine than the four elements to which this perfect motion is natural. This fifth element was called *quinta essentia*. And, hence, this modern word "quintessence," which is absolutely all that is left of the old Aristotelian dogma as to motion.

Yet, this guess, this unreasonable hypothesis, this baseless fabric of a dream, this product of imagination, held the throne of science for centuries. It commanded men's convictions. It was claimed as scientific knowledge. Every great name of science was behind it as authority. Is it a wonder Copernicus waited in silence for twenty or thirty years before he gave his book to the world that challenged this and proved it an absurdity? Is it a wonder that Galileo was also kept for years from avowing his adoption of the Copernican system? Think what it was for a scientist to face the science of centuries, and write upon it, weighed in the balance and found wanting!" These men knew they could not do this without popular outcry and the utter scorn of the scientific. The persecution of the church was not then dreamed of. Long before the question of the relation of these new ideas to the prevalent religious faith was raised, Galileo was hissed at in his lectures at Florence for even giving the results of his experiment at the tower of Pisa, and he found it convenient to resign his professorship. And for simply furnishing ocular demonstration of the falsehood of Aristotle's old maxims about motion, the bigoted Aristotelians poured out upon him the vials of their wrath and hate. Science made him feel the fires of persecution, long before the church imitated, to her shame, the bad example.

Let us go into another department of science. Newton conceived the emission theory of light. He ascribed the luminous power to small projectiles darting through space, and carrying the energy from the luminous body to the point of application. It has been largely, almost universally, set aside for the undulatory or wave theory. This second theory has done marvels in the way of explaining some phenomena. Seeing a water wave move across the sea without carrying the same identical particles of water across with it, an air wave has been imagined transmitting sound and light. But the air is so dense that it retards motion. And as the planets swing through illimitable space with no perceptible retarding of their motion, and as illimitable space must be filled with something as a medium for the transmission of energy, imagination has filled space with a highly attenuated luminiferous ether—an ether so ethereal that a solid block of it, the size of this room, would not weigh according to science more than a fraction of a grain. Yet, further discoveries in science have made it necessary to give this ether an incredible elasticity. The wave of light traveling 183,000 miles a second must have a hard road to travel on. In other words, the particle of ether must be bound together by a force representing millions on millions of pounds to every inch of surface, in order to get sufficient elasticity for the incredible swiftness of light. And the accepted authorities are, therefore, now calling this luminiferous ether "an adamantine solid." Listen now to the honest confession of a sober scientist who deliberately writes of this undulatory theory, that while to him most fascinating and one of the noblest creations of the human intellect, it demands postulates which even the wildest imagination cannot reconcile with common sense.

Take the molecular theory, as well established as any in science, making matter a mass of excessively minute molecules. All is plain sailing until we come to the attributes and relations of these molecules which the theory compels us to ascribe to them. In hydrogen gas, for example, under the standard conditions, science says each molecule strikes against its fellows 17,750 million times a second. In view of this and other facts the Harvard professor of chemistry says we must not only ascribe to the infinitesimal molecules a perfection of attributes like perfect elasticity, but we must also associate together attributes which, from our experience, seem to be incompatible. "We must, in a word," this distinguished authority in

science goes on to say, "give up all our ordinary prepossessions, and accept provisionally what seem to us *monstrous hypotheses*." Thus, monstrous hypotheses, and contradictions of experience, and incredible beliefs are tumbled in upon us all in the interests of a theory, and this by the testimony of the very science that "dreads of all things getting off its feet," and boasts of knowing nothing but "facts," and calls such questions as are treated of in volumes of divinity, "essentially questions of lunar politics."

Let a look into the field of evolution suffice. Evolution, it is claimed, is no longer debatable. It commands the assent of the scientific world. But which evolution? There are different kinds. One denies God, atheistic evolution. Another, the Huxley-Tyndall-Spencer variety, doesn't know God; agnostic evolution. Another, held by Dana, Gray, Owen, Dawson, Carpenter, Sir J. Herschell, Sir W. Thomson, affirms God; theistic evolution. Which evolution is it has the consensus of scientific opinion on its side?

The stupendous difficulty with the Huxley-Tyndall-Spencer variety of evolution is to get over the gulf between living and not-living matter. Huxley says: "If the hypothesis of evolution is true, living must have come from not-living matter; for by the hypothesis the condition of the globe was at one time such that living matter could not have existed in it, life being entirely incompatible with the gaseous state." He says also: "The present state of knowledge furnishes us no link between the living and the not-living." But he still says the bridge is there. It cannot yet be found—it cannot be seen. But it is there. It must be. When asked why it must be, his answer is, the hypothesis of evolution stands or falls with that bridge! Yet the bridge is all in his eye. And this is the man who tells us "In matters of intellect not to pretend that conclusions are certain which are not demonstrated or demonstrable."

How does Tyndall bridge this gulf? By revolutionizing all ideas of matter, contradicting the senses, denying intuitive beliefs, and making matter a kind of "two-faced somewhat," material on the one side, spiritual on the other. To get rid of a creative act, he brings in this double-sided, two-faced, looking-both-ways child of imagination, with which to bridge this dreadful yawning gulf between the living and not-living. And this is the substance in which he saw "the promise and potency of every form and quality of life." It was first a formless fog, made up of infinitesimal molecules. But

who, he asks, "who will set limits to the possible play of molecules in a cooling planet?" Who, indeed! And who will set limits to the possible play of imagination that can create a two-faced somewhat, hard on one side, soft on the other! Divisible on the one side, indivisible on the other; and then evolve out of this double-sidedness, blind power working for apparent ends, non-intelligence producing intelligence, unconsciousness producing consciousness, necessity producing ideas of freedom, and an automaton discharging duties!

We are left little time, now, to consider imagination in religion. Undoubtedly there is a legitimate use for this regal faculty in the field of religion as in the field of science. Undoubtedly also there has been wide and unwarranted abuse of the use in both fields. But our broad and confident contention is that imagination has no more to do with establishing our fundamental convictions in the domain of religion than in the domain of science. And that the wild conjectures with which scientists support a theory—conjectures that on the confessions of scientists themselves, transcend "experience," and involve "absurdities," and end in logical suicide—would not be tolerated in the fields of intelligent theological debate.

Let it be remembered that science starts with three faiths, or a three-fold act of faith. Faith in the uniformity of Nature, faith in axiomatic truths, and faith in our own faculties. Religion asks for just this—only this and nothing more. "Faith in an order, which is the basis of science, cannot reasonably be separated from faith in an ordainer, which is the basis of religion." Natural laws do not account for their own origin. The law of development does not explain itself. If the order of Nature betrays intelligence, intelligence must have been in the ordainer of order; freedom, morality, conscience, appear in the order, they must have been in the ordainer. Who or what was he? Dead matter? But life from the lifeless, intelligence from mechanism, morality from chemical combination, are the absurdities of this theory. If anything can produce everything there is an end of all reasoning; and blind faith on dead matter has the field. But, remember, it is science, not religion, that asks this large credulity.

Here is a vast process of Nature in which everything is adjusted to everything else with marvelous balance and adaptation. Intelligence does it, or non-intelligence. These two terms exhaust the

possibilities of thought. There is no third something—no *tertium quid*. This imaginary unknowable, “this transcendental,” as Prof. Bowne calls it, “is not a thought, but a phrase. To appeal to this example is not to explain, but to abandon explanation.” Reason in religion reveals the ordainer of this vast order with its illimitable succession, and gives to this spirit personality; to its complexity of parts and processes, spirit; puts in this personality the attributes it feeds on in human personality; intelligence, will, love, power, justice, truth; exalts these to infinite, eternal, and changeless perfection; and names the Being *God!* And in doing this, we hold there is nothing done that contravenes our primary beliefs, or challenges any law of thought, or postulates any absurdity, or involves any contradiction; but the process is rational, and we do this not only in conformity with axiomatic truth, but responsive to the demand of the human mind for an adequate first cause.

But what of evolution? it is asked; as if evolution had forever disposed of the argument from design; which is sneeringly called “the carpenter theory.” Paley’s watch, it is claimed, has gone to pieces as a bit of evidence. For evolution proves that the universe is a watch *that has made itself*. Well, if the universe is that kind of a universe, we get rid of the old watch of Paley, only to have a more wonderful timepiece brought into court. A man makes a watch, and the watch proves wisdom, purpose, design. Suppose he could make a watch that developed itself—what would it prove? Whether it is easier to make things? Or, to make things *that make themselves*? If the marvels of intelligence, purpose, plan, that are in the universe, were all once in primal star-dust, what must it have been to make the star-dust?

Imagination? Yes. We grant that a conception of the infinite is a conception of the imagination. But we know it is a conception warranted by reason as well as by revelation, and out to this conception of the infinite the human mind reaches with the certainty of absolute demonstration. We know, for example, what wisdom is, and we extend that wisdom, widen the sweep of it, and reach to any circumference, only to find that there are illimitable reaches beyond; and we call this limitless wisdom infinite. We know what love is, and we let imagination heighten the height of that love and deepen the depth of it, and increase the tenderness of it, and the height, and the depth, and the tenderness, and the power are limitless, and

then we call that limitless love infinite. And so we build up, as it were, a conception of God—we invest Him with affinities, and eternities, and sovereignties, and grandness warranted by personality. And, then, in order that personality may not be lost in this awful immensity, that the Divine may not be lifted out of the sphere of human sympathy, revelation (religion) shows this Being of infinite perfection in intimate personal relations with men through the matchless Christ, so that while man may feel that he is from eternity to eternity, and while the ideal circle is swept with the most magnificent conceptions of spiritual and moral power, at the same time all that grandeur has kissed men, caressed them, nursed them, thought of them, felt for them, wept for them, and laid itself down for them. Use of imagination in religion? Yes. “How can a man,” asks Beecher, “stand and tell or ask all the world to rejoice at things not seen, through any other faculty than the imagination?”

Abuse of imagination in religion? Yes. When the wildest fantasies are made a substitute for intelligent faith; when it was thought the Pope’s “bull” could scare Halley’s comet away, without any danger even from the whisk of its tail; when it was a dogma of the church that the Bible is authoritative on questions of science as of belief; when the church made her poor fallible interpretations a warrant for bitter hostility to some new scientific doctrine, and counted it “damnable heresy” that the priesthood of science should remain with the men of science; when she thought the law of gravitation handed a good deal of God’s work over to material mechanism; when she burned martyrs as a sweet savor to God; and when men, as now, imagine the foundations are about to be destroyed because of some supposed conflict between religion and science, as if God could commit moral suicide by contradicting Himself.

We here close the discussion. But out of this consideration of imagination in science and religion, some things seem to come with a very considerable clearness. (1.) The party of either part who sneers at imagination and has contemptuous flings at its use, is discarding the one indispensable means by which the heights are mounted in the domain of science or the domain of faith. (2.) Neither party is quite in a condition to throw stones. (3.) Imagination, uncurbed, may easily make a man a sciolist or a bigot; a sciolist, grasping after the new only because it is new—credulously receptive of the last theory—and imagining unverified guesses of

science to be unchangeable facts, or a bigot clinging to the old only because it is old, skeptically resistant of new discovery and imagining his old interpretations of Scripture to be God's changeless truth. (4.) "The sphere of mechanism is unbounded." Let scientists widen the sweep of it as they may, we have no quarrel with them for that, but its significance is everywhere subordinate. There is something the master of the mechanism. Mechanism is beneath the maker of it. Personality is the noblest and mightiest thing in the universe. (5.) Attitude toward truth. It should be fearless. "Shame to stand on God's creation and doubt truth's sufficiency." It should be generous. Truth is large; not all bound up in a book or a world. If he who looks askance at science as the mother of all abominable things, transcends the limits of self-respecting reason, what must be thought of him who wraps up all the intelligence and will and conscience of the universe, with their plans and purposes and eternal sanctions, in a primordial fog! Let us believe in the old book of Revelation, and in the old book of Nature, and believe in the regal power of the imagination that lights our path in both fields, and helps us, both in the Bible and in Nature, to see God.

SOCIAL PURITY.

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EXTRACTS FROM AN ADDRESS RECENTLY DELIVERED BEFORE THE SOCIETY OF CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR.

THIS audience has listened to the trenchant and thrilling statements of our friend, Mr. Murphy, relative to intemperance; that is the crime of a class. On yonder parade, Mr. Anthony Comstock, in the maturity of his knowledge, can uncover the villainies of gambling; that is the crime of class. The defiance which is flung in the face of a Divine command, ordaining Sabbath observance; that is a crime of a class. But the crime of social vice is all-invading. It looks every man and every woman in the face, and says, "Beware!" It touches the palaces of royalty in Europe, and the dwellings of elegance and wealth in America, down to the rusticities of agrarian conditions. It touches the ducal