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CREATION AS ILLUSTRATED BY EVOLUTION.

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Charles Darwin taught that new species of plants and animals have come, and continue to come, by the same route as that taken by all babies, namely, by being born of older individuals; only differing by the circumstance that the new individuals have varied somewhat from the parental features. In the concluding chapter of his *Descent of Man*, he draws the parallel between the origin of a distinct species by descent from a lower form, and the origin of an individual by the laws of ordinary reproduction. And he tries to forestall the charge of atheism by adding that the birth both of the species and of the individual "are equally parts of that great sequence of events which our minds refuse to accept as the results of blind chance."

To this general doctrine he appended a series of interesting speculations, naming them collectively *natural selection*, which in effect made the result mainly depend on second causes, and largely upon the chapter of accidents. Perhaps we should add that sometimes he seemed, notwithstanding his disavowal, to regard the accidents as blind. He often seemed to regard chance not as an instrument of Providence, but as a substitute for Providence. He indeed admitted, as mathematicians can prove, that there is no absolute chance in the course of nature; but he was not of a philosophical mind, and hence people were puzzled, when by the aid of chance he explained phenomena which had been usually ascribed to supernatural activity. It was this feature which gladdened the foes of religion, and dismayed many of its friends.

I shall always feel grateful that before the appearance of Dar-

THE BOOK PRE-EMINENT.*

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It is related by Sir Walter Scott that as he lay on his death-bed he turned to Lockhart, his son-in-law and future biographer, and said: "Lockhart, bring me the book." "What book?" said Lockhart. "The Bible," answered the dying man; "there is but one book."

The sentence is to you a familiar one; you have seen it in print; you have heard it often quoted; but it is therefore none the less significant or suggestive. The man who was speaking was a man of letters, the writer and the publisher of many books, ranking by virtue of genius and of labors as one of the first, if not the very first, of the world's great novelists; called when unidentified "The Great Unknown," and when known by name "The Wizard of the North," lying now at the very close of life when the best that the world had to offer in literature passed in review before him; yet this man, knowing, loving, producing books—bowed willingly, reverently to the supremacy of this the *king* among books.

That we of this Seminary give cordial assent to this great man's estimate is made clear by the fact that the Bible is par excellence the text-book of this institution and that when one has passed from case to case and shelf to shelf of our own Library and then comes out, it is to face the motto, carved where all may read, "*There is but one Book.*"

The Bible is pre-eminent; so pre-eminent as to be unique; a book without an equal and without a like among all other books, secular or religious, known to men. Let us now consider in what must be at best a brief and imperfect way certain of the larger features of this pre-eminence.

I. The Bible is pre-eminent, first, because of its ORIGIN AND THE NATURE OF ITS COMPOSITION.

*An address delivered by Mr. McAllister at his inauguration as Adjunct Professor of Hebrew, Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, Va., Monday evening, May 8, 1905.

One of the significant triumphs that mark our time is the perfection in the art of printing. The genius of man has here, it seems, been laid under a tribute that has tested and taxed its vast resources and not found them wanting. How wonderful the machines that set the type, then cast the lines and then distribute! But greater wonders are in reserve in the presses that print and fold and cut the sheets and turn out completed papers at the almost incredible rate of 26 a second!

Another significant triumph that marks our time follows on this; the growth in the output of books. What an amazing fact that every week sends out broadcast through the land 75 different works of fiction! And how great the multitude we see pressing behind and beyond all these when we consider that every science and every art, indeed every subject that challenges or invites investigation, has to be broken up into departments, and these again divided and subdivided, until every branch and every phase of thought has its ministry of printer's ink!

This fact—wonderful in itself—becomes little less than overwhelming when one visits one of the great libraries of the world. The largest of them all—the National Library of Paris—shelters and shelves 3,000,000 of books. Books of all authors are there—of poets, of philosophers, of physicians, of novelists, of historians, of travellers, of explorers, of geologists, of chemists, of astronomers, of churchmen, of statesmen, of publicists, of emperors and kings, of princes, pretenders, peasants, of the great and small, the high and low, the rich and poor, the successful, the defeated—and so through the long list of men whose books are ranged on more than sixty miles of shelving. Yet out from that vast number there stands one book apart from all the rest—the *Bible*. *They* are human productions. *It* is a divine production. *They*, from the least to the greatest of them, come from men. *This* Book, alone of all the world's millions of books, comes from God.

And *how* it has come is not its least distinction. Not emblazoned on the blue of the heavens—at once, in terse command—by its Author who sits as king above them. Not graven deep by Him—as proud and perished monarchs have told their story—on obelisk or pyramid or mountain side. Not written by His finger on what perhaps was then fadeless parchment or imperish-

able clay. Not written even by angels whose home is near his throne. But sent through *men*—ignorant but made wise, feeble but made strong, sinful but purified for vision—men of distinct races, But sent through *men*—ignorant but made wise, feeble but of differing traits, of varied talents, of diverse pursuits, of separated periods, of contrasting conditions; men under God's providence and suggestion and control weaving the story of His purposes and grace from the materials of personal life—with its broken image, its darkened and pathetic ruins, its loves, its fears, its emboldened faith, its strength renewed, and after storm its peace—and from the materials of *national* life, now light, now dark, through struggle, defeat, victory, perilous prosperity and safe adversity—through silence that seemed gloom until new, glad voices proclaimed the coming and the kingdom of Him for whom men had been looking and the pious of them praying through weary years; in whom were wondrously fulfilled the prophecies of old; and from whom was to go the final word of Truth—men weaving for us this story in history and poetry, in proverb and parable, in rugged or polished argument; in stern rebuke; in tender epistle; in glowing prophecy that does not end until it spreads before us the new heavens and the new earth—how pre-eminent—how unique—the composition of this Book—in the fact that *men* were chosen to write it and in the men chosen, in the *materials* they have gathered and used to bring its teachings to us; and in the *manner* in which these men, yielding each his contribution, unconsciously laid stone on stone and built for us one symmetrical temple, the temple of Scripture, so that in every part it is the work of God and yet in every part the work of man!

II. The Bible is pre-eminent, in the second place, because of its **CONTENTS**. It contains that which infinitely transcends what other books contain.

The Bible reveals *God*. It reveals Him as a spirit and thus invisible and unsearchable. It reveals Him as life and light and love and as the author of them all. It reveals Him as eternal, all-wise, all-powerful, everywhere present, holy, just, merciful, long-suffering. It reveals Him as the Creator and the Owner of the universe, its Preserver and its Governor, controlling the forces that bring men into life, setting the bounds of their habitation,

giving laws for their just government and interested in their every act and word and thought.

The Bible reveals the *Law of God*. It reveals that law as high, holy and just, perfect and good. It reveals that law as broad—directing in principle all of the affairs of men. It reveals that law as deep—going down into the very springs of action and of being and having to do with motives of the life. It reveals that law as so truly for our good and for God's glory that we are commanded to yield to it our constant and best obedience.

The Bible reveals *man*. It reveals him as made in the image of God and enjoying communion with Him, yet as fallen from this holiness and happiness by his own free choice, involving in his ruin the ruin of the race, and by advance after advance marring this image and well-nigh effacing it. It reveals Him as ungrateful for daily mercies, as refusing to recognize the claims of God upon the homage of his heart and the service of his life; as rebelling against his beneficent and rightful king, as finding delight in continued and increasing sin, and, after the round of life is lived, as returning to mingle with the earth from whence he came.

The Bible reveals *sin*. It reveals it as in its origin the work of Satan. It reveals it as in its essence contempt of God's character and defiance of His law. It reveals it as in its power seizing the citadel of man's nature and bringing him thus into bitter yet unresisted slavery. It reveals it as in its sweep including all who have lived or are to live on earth. It reveals it as in its course bringing the weakening of powers, the ruin of character, the downfall of dynasties, the devastation of war; oppression, persecution, stifled hopes, extinguished ambition, heartaches, griefs, the desolation of death—the speechless pathos of our human kind. It reveals it as in its end shut out into a darkness from which all light has fled.

The Bible reveals not only God and man, but the God-man, our Lord Jesus Christ. It reveals Him as one with the Father through the eternity of ages that have been or are yet to be. It reveals Him as God Himself, blessed forever, yet in human flesh and humble circumstances throwing Himself into the breach and reconciling us to God; bearing the penalty that was due to us for

sin; carrying our sorrows and burdened with our griefs, tempted like His brothers, and yet without sin; crucified, raised from the dead, exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance unto Israel and remission of sins, and when time is ended to judge the world in righteous mercy and gather in His own.

The Bible reveals the Holy Spirit. It reveals Him as *co-equal* sharer in the life and power and everlasting glory of the Father and the Son. It reveals Him as the Spirit of Truth, illuminating by His wisdom the darkness of this world; setting within it, as beacon-lights along its shores, the rulers of the race; giving to it, in the presence of utmost need, the Scriptures to flash the way, and then opening the blinded eyes of men to see what had thus been given. It reveals Him as the Spirit of Holiness—holy in Himself, prompting and guiding to what is pure out in the world's carnival of sin; and making attractive to men the beauty of holiness in salvation.

It reveals Him as the Spirit of Power, bringing to fair completion the works of the first creation, raising the spiritually dead to life in the new creation in Christ Jesus; raising *Him* to life, the first-fruits of a host which no man can number; and after keeping these from falling in this life, preserving them without spot or blemish, faultless, before the presence even of God's glory in the life to come.

The Bible reveals the providence of God in dealing with man all down the centuries of time; how God dealt with our first parents before the Fall and after; how God dealt with the world of sinners at the time of the Flood, yet saved the righteous man and preacher Noah; how God dealt with Abraham, in calling him out from a strange land and in bringing him into another that was to be centuries later the possession of his descendants; how God dealt with the Israelites in Egypt, looking upon their oppressions, raising up and training their deliverer, leading them out by the pillar of cloud and fire, settling them in the land which was henceforth to be the theatre of the greatest events in history; how God dealt with David in bringing him through years of waiting and hardship and testing to the throne; how God dealt with Solomon, rewarding him for right choice and actions, and punishing him when he had introduced the worship and the vices of foreign gods; how God dealt with the divided kingdom—

Israel and Judah—abandoning them to bitter captivity by reason of their disobedience and *fulfilling* his promise to bring back a remnant out of whom should spring the world's Saviour; how through His Son God dealt with the people of New Testament times, calling disciples to be with Him for training, impressing them with the pure beauty of His own nature, inspiring them to forgiveness and long-suffering and self-sacrifice, making them the witnesses of His services and suffering and resurrection; and sending them out to preach His truth, win converts, plant churches, develop in them all the graces of Christly living, and then perhaps to die for the cause, promising and giving them His strength and peace and victory in the work and in the dying.

The Bible reveals not a little concerning the Future Life. It reveals it not as swallowed up and lost in a very gulf of being, but quite as separate and undivided as we know it here to be. It reveals it as a life not of ignorance, but of growth in knowledge in range and reach undreamed of now. It reveals it as a life which to the Christian is one not of bondage, but of freedom from sin in whatsoever force or form; not of slavish dread or lingering fear, but of joyous communion face to face with God; not of idleness, but of jubilant and ceaseless service.

What book among all the world's books has revelations to make such as this?

III. The Bible is pre-eminent, in the third place, because of its PURPOSE.

We were only now reviewing the contents of the Bible. It is well to consider that what is there is *not* there for the purpose of filling up 1,400 pages; nor for the purpose of gratifying the idle curiosity of men; nor for the purpose of entertaining its readers with the charms of poetry or romance; nor for the purpose of thrilling and inspiring them with narratives of martial courage or perilous adventure; nor for the purpose of teaching them the genesis and kinship and growth of nations, their languages and laws and customs and traditions; nor for the purpose of exhibiting to them the facts out of which shall be reared the temples of the sciences. Its purpose is higher.

The Bible reveals God—in order that we may know Him from whom we have life and all that shields and sustains and enriches it; and with whom we have constantly to deal, in the

characters we develop, in the work we do, in the worship we offer as we approach Him who is revealed to us in this Bible as not angry with out cause, not revengeful, but "longsuffering to reward, not willing that any should perish, but all should come to repentance."

The Bible reveals God's law—in order that we may know what it is that God would have us to *be*—holy even as He is holy—and what God would have us to *do*—to love Him, the Lord our God with all our heart and soul and strength and mind and our neighbor as ourselves; and that we may know how far we come from measuring up to it and how really we are forced to turn to our Lord Jesus who alone could and did meet all that the law demanded in character and in service.

The Bible reveals man—not that it may brand him as stooping lower than the beasts—but in order that he may know what otherwise he could not, would not, know—the truth about himself, the corruption from which he may and must be cleansed—the bondage to sin from which he may, and must, be freed. The Bible reveals man—not that it may mock him with pictures of a happiness which, forfeited once, is to be his never again—but in order that he may see himself—if he will—a new creation in Christ Jesus, placed in a new and higher order of life, pledged and prepared for life in a Paradise Regained wherein the glories of the new exceed by far the glories of the old.

The Bible reveals sin—in order that we may know what it is in itself—rebellion against our just and loving King—and what it does if unbridled, runs riot in our lives—and to what destiny it will drive us unless in self-distrust and faith we come to claim the atoning work of "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world."

The Bible reveals Christ—in order that we may see in Him our Saviour, redeeming us by a priceless price, bearing *our* griefs, carrying *our* sorrows, loving *us* unto the uttermost; interceding for *us* that our faith fail not in the often stress upon it, that we may see in him our *Lord*, giving us our orders, fighting with us His enemies and ours, extending through us His kingdom that is now supreme and shall one day be universal; that we may see in Him our *Model*—the pattern of a life that was lived in the world but not of it—that was lived through

the fiercest of temptations, yet mastered them by a power that is given us to wield.

The Bible reveals the Holy Spirit—in order that as the Spirit of Truth He may become our Teacher in the spiritual things which may be only spiritually discerned; in order that as the Spirit of Holiness He may lead to us to see and seek that holiness lacking which no one of us can see the Lord; and in order that as the Spirit of Power he may raise us to newness of life and constancy of struggle and shout of triumph.

The Bible reveals God's providence—in order that we may escape the penalties that others meet, and embrace the promises that others grasped; and win the rewards that others won on life's large battle-field, the while remembering that the God of Providence is none other than our Lord—dimly known of old, dimly seen even now by eyes unopened to the truth, but revealed to us in Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh, "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever."

The Bible reveals somewhat of the Future Life—not that curious and idle questionings should be answered—but that the incentive should be ours to faithful living in the present life, while we look across the separating stream of death upon the Holy City, whose immovable foundations God himself has laid—the city which holds in reserve visions and voices, forces and service, union and communion, beyond the reach of words or thoughts or feelings now.

What book among the world's millions of books can show purposes such as this?

IV. The Bible is pre-eminent, lastly, because of its INFLUENCE—a subject that is itself many-sided, exhaustless, redolent of romance.

We might speak of the influence of the Bible in the sphere of Law—with the Jews, to whom, in Old Testament times and New, the laws were directly given; with the later Romans in the Code of Justinian, the text-book throughout Europe and to this day the basis of Europe's jurisprudence; with Charlemagne, who great though he was as a soldier was greatest as a legislator, founding the Western Empire and the nations which in later centuries sprang from it on the laws found in this Book; with Alfred the Great, who shaped so largely the beneficent and

fruitful institutions of Great Britain in keeping with a code which commenced with the Ten Commandments and was shot through and through with the teachings of the Bible; with the Genevan Church-State which under Calvin told so largely on the history of its great period and that which has been written since; with *France* in her Code Napoleon, the frame-work of law for so much of Europe in the present day; with Europe's colonies in the Western Hemisphere, and in the Eastern—all giving proof of the fact that "Christianity is a part of the Common law" not "of England" only, but of all that we call Christendom.

We might speak of the influence of the Bible in the sphere of *literature*—in the words and sentences taken bodily from it and embedded in permanent and ephemeral productions; in the style of every great master in literature, forged from the history and poetry and parable of this book; in the principles and thought that consciously or unconsciously form the texture of so large a part of the world's best secular literature; in the libraries of books that have been written solely in defence or exposition of these Scriptures.

We might speak of the influence of the Bible in the sphere of *language*—in shaping, and purifying, and preserving it. Or we might speak of the influence of the Bible in the sphere of education and of commerce, of family and social life, finding endless illustrations of what Matthew Arnold himself concedes, that "The revelation which rules the world even now is not Greece's revelation, but Judea's; not the pre-eminence of art and science, but the pre-eminence of righteousness."

But all this is secondary and incidental, for the pre-eminent influence of the Bible is its influence as a spiritual force.

This influence began long before the book itself was finished. When not more than one-third of the Old Testament had been penned, David wrote the psalm that sketched this influence when he told us of the law of the Lord that was perfect, restoring the soul and the statutes of the Lord that were right, rejoicing the heart.

When not more than two-thirds of the Old Testament was written, the Jews were carried away into captivity. They carried with them their precious Scriptures which in the darkness became their light; and in times of storm the charter of their spiritual liberties, and the sheet-anchor of their hopes.

And when the Old Testament was finished, what but the influence of it could have nerved the heart and the arm of that band of heroes who defied death and went uncomplainingly through the fire and blood of the second century before Christ? And of that faithful band who endured the horrors of siege and sack of Jerusalem under Titus in the year 70 of our era? And of others still who faced gladly the later bitter persecutions of the Roman power? What but the influence of this book—completed now—could have conquered the men who conquered Rome and transformed them—Vandals though they were—into rulers humane and wise? What but the influence of this book brought the world out of the darkness and chaos of the Middle Ages into the clear light and order of the centuries that gave birthrights to our own? What but the influence of this book has given us Scotland with her Covenanters, and France with her Huguenots, and Holland with her unyielding freeman, and America with her liberty enlightening and enheartening and leading the world? We do not wonder that John Adams said of it, “The Bible is the best book in the world,” or that Patrick Henry, nearing the close of his life, laid his hand upon the Bible and remarked to a friend, “Here is a book worth more than all others.” For all that is tenderest in human affection—all that is purest in family and social life—all that is best in order and in government—all that is noblest in literature and art—all that is sincerest in the world’s service—all that is truest in the world’s sacrifice—all that is bravest in the world’s heritage of heroism—all this we owe to this blessed book of books. The Bible as a Spiritual force! It mocks all human measurements. The instruction and the prayers learned at your own mother’s knee—the beauty of holiness you have seen in the lives of saintly men and women—the love and the forgiveness and the self-sacrifice that make this world fit to live in—all this is debtor to this Book that takes its place by right as pre-eminent in the world.

And thus, because of its divine origin and marvellous composition; because of its varied and vital contents; because of its lofty and commanding purpose; and because of its regnant and everlasting influence—for reasons such as these this Book is forevermore the Book Pre-eminent.

In this Book we are to look upon the blessed face and form of God himself, manifest in human flesh.

From this Book we are to learn in trustful earnestness the words and the way of everlasting life.

To this Book we are to bring for final test and settlement every question that vexes life.

By this Book—some day—you and I—each one—shall stand or fall in judgment.

Within this Book God grant that through ages never ending we may read, with open eyes and ever new delight, the wonders of His grace!