

ARTICLE VII.

UNCONSCIOUS GREEK PROPHECY.

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To the anthropological argument for the divinity of Christ Dr. Baumstark's labors in the present work¹ have been profitably devoted. It starts with viewing man as a spiritual being, and from this assumption proceeds to a series of pregnant inquiries: Can the spirit be viewed as a mere accident of matter? Does not the soul act as efficiently on the body as does the body on the soul? Must not materialism as an exclusive theory, therefore, be rejected, and must we not hold to the separate and continuous existence of the soul as a spiritual entity, distinguished by high prerogatives of intuition and reason from not merely matter, but from brute life?

So, also, as to the *individuality* of the soul as opposed to pantheism. By pantheism, as held by Spinoza, the individual has a phenomenal, and not a real existence. But can pantheism elucidate the problem of life, or resolve its difficulties, or direct its course? Must it not, as is shown by Dr. Baumstark, fail not only as a revealer of truth, but as a comforter in trouble and a vivifier of life?

But it is to man as a religious being that Dr. Baumstark mainly directs his argument. Man, he holds, has no intuitive divine consciousness — has no innate capacity that enables him, without the aid of revelation, to discover the divine nature. But, while such is the case, man has a need of religion, and to find out religion his various psychical powers are and have been constantly engaged. In other

¹ Christliche Apologetik auf anthropologischer Grundlage; von Chr. C. Baumstark. 1 Band. Frankfurt, a. M.: Heyder und Zimmer. 1872.

words, some true religion there must be. Which religion is true?

As facilitating this inquiry, Dr. Baumstark takes an elaborate survey of the various non-Christian religions, showing that by none of them are the religious needs of the soul satisfied. He begins with the lowest and less cultivated types, treating prominently among these the religions of the Africans, and of the North American and Australian aborigines. From this he ascends to consider the religions of nations of higher culture, noting successively the Peruvians, Mexicans, Chinese, Hindoos, Persians, Babylonians, Syrians, Canaanites, Phoenicians, Egyptians, Gauls, and Germans. The last stage in this ascent comprehends the religious system of the Greeks and Romans. Mohammedanism he touches under a subsequent and independent head. The argument founded on this material is not new. It is simply this: The religion which we need is either A, or B, or C, or D. But it is not A, nor B, nor C. It is therefore D. But, while the argument in this its formal statement has been anticipated by others, nowhere have the proofs been brought out so fully and felicitously as in the pages of Dr. Baumstark. Rarely, indeed, has there been a more valuable contribution to that branch of Christian literature which is at once apologetic and elucidative,—which at once exhibits the defences of Christianity and unfolds its character.

But to follow Dr. Baumstark in the full course of his argument is not what I here propose. I prefer to take up a single point made by him, and to amplify it in directions towards some of which his scrutiny does not extend. My object in the following remarks is, first, to show—following, in this respect, Dr. Baumstark—that Greek culture, while stimulating, does not satisfy the religious need. And, secondly, I would advance a step further, and indicate some points in which this culture may be viewed as one of God's chosen agencies for preparing the nations, in the fulness of time for Him that is to come.

The office of Greece, in the preparation for the fulness of
Vol. XXX. No. 117.

time, was that of the discipline of the mind. There is a difference between this office and that of Rome, which we cannot too closely study. Rome trained communities; Greece, individuals. Rome governed by subjecting the masses to her laws; Greece, by the culture of those of whom the masses were composed. Roman civilization moved forward in column; breaking roads, but not changing opinions; establishing colonies, but not tutoring the colonist; retaining in its remotest marches its proud national type, and disdaining the communication of that type to others. The Greek, however, was sociable, flexible, and curious. He went everywhere, as a merchant or as a traveller; adapting his attire and usages to those whom he visited, and thus all the more completely subjecting them to his culture. If Rome acted as country upon country, the influence of Greece was that of individual upon individual. Rome was like a powerful water-flood, such as those which geology records, which swept through the land, altering land-marks, levelling hills, filling up valleys, and opening in mountains and plains new passes or channels through which the future currents of civilization were to run. But Rome, when this work of re-organization was over, disappeared, like the same torrent, leaving behind no signs except those of territorial change. Far otherwise was it with Greece. Her influence dropped like rain wherever her scholars or her traders went. She was unorganized herself, nor did she attempt the organization of others. Subtile, pervasive, quiet, she appeared to lose herself in others, when, in fact, she was assimilating others to herself. She fertilized and harmonized, until there was not a form of mental life which she did not stimulate, regulate, and vivify. So it was that while Rome dealt with *corporate*, Greece acted on *individual* life; and that while by Rome the nations of the north were arranged as in a vast audience-chamber to hear the divine word, the individuals were so trained by Greece as better to understand what the word meant.

Let us look, for a moment, at some of the qualities which

adapted the Greek to this work of mental training. In the first place, notice the national flexibility and quickness. What the Jew now is in trade of goods, the pre-Christian Greek was in the trade of thought. Mental speculation was his business, his delight, his instinct. He had no national or personal pride which prevented him from adopting the guise of any nation whom he might visit, conversing with gossipy ease, always glad to hear and glad to communicate. Those whom the stately Roman would stalk by in supercilious gloom, the affable Greek would sit down with in sociable, if not kindly talk. And, unlike the Roman, who never moved except in armies, the Greek was an active, often solitary traveller. Wherever he went, he seemed to feel it his duty to spread the entertainments and impart the arts of his home. In lower Italy, long before Rome became imperial, along the shores of the Mediterranean and of the Black Sea, even among the Scythian tribes, the Greek adventurers carried their literature, their arts, their mythology, and their theatre. And then, when Rome sent forth her conquering legions, Greece, as the iron share of the conqueror furrowed the ground, had her scholars and artists hovering over the soil to drop in it the seeds of thought. And, observe, to take up the second point, — that of cultivation, — this was not a mere superficial and vapid restlessness. The Greek hurried about Europe, telling and hearing news, it is true; but we must recollect that his mission was a great one; for the thought he communicated, next to that of revelation, was the highest that the mind of man could receive. It embodied the results at which, after centuries of labor, the quickest and most cultivated intellects of the world had arrived. His nation had reached the highest perfection in the exercise of the imagination, of the artistic powers, and of the reason; and he was freighted with the treasures which these labors had produced. And as it was the unconscious mission of the Roman to open paths over which Christianity was to pass, so it was the equally unconscious mission of the Greek to discipline the minds who

about these roads were to be collected. And, in God's good providence, the work to be done by each of these agents was not for self alone. The mental training of Greece, as well as the material training of Rome, was so carried on as to leave the *mind* of the barbarian, as the Roman left his *country*, open without prejudice to receive the doctrines of the truth that was to come.

As we contrast Greek with Roman literature, the more strikingly will this peculiarity appear. Rome, so catholic in the mechanism which she was to perpetuate, was singularly local and self-introverted in her literature; Greece, who was so narrow and provincial in her mechanism, was in her literature catholic and free. Rome wrote and taught for Romans who were to be kept Romans; Greece, for all men, who were to remain in that same common brotherhood of humanity in which she found them. It will serve to illustrate the individual completeness of the preparation in which these two great nations took part, to look for a moment at their respective literatures, and see how deeply this distinction penetrates. Let us consider, first, the imagination; beginning by showing the distinction between the poetry of Rome and that of Greece.

In Rome the greatest epic poet takes the primacy of his country as his theme, and seeks to account for it by a divine appointment, which, however inoffensive it may appear to us now that Rome has passed away, must have been exquisitely galling and repulsive to those into whose very quick the iron foot of the legions was pressing. So the satirist, if he be grave, as Juvenal or Persius, uses a weapon so deeply encrusted with Roman allusions, that often we are unable to see the blade; or if he be gay, like Horace, only reflects the times, without seeking to explain them to foreign or future worlds. What we have here is not the genius which creates an epoch, but the talent which an epoch draws out. And so it is with the historian. In the stern and concise narrative of Tacitus, it is the measured tread of empire that we hear; in the more diffusive and colloquial pages of Livy, the gossip

of the court; but in either case it is but the autobiography of Rome. So even pre-Christian Roman philosophy, in its prevalent form, was one of a hard and implacable fatalism; Rome being the determining fate, and the rest of the world the slave. With but rare exceptions, the philosophers, like the historians and poets of Rome, so far from desiring to conciliate or convert the barbarian, greeted him on every page with the expression of indelible scorn and implacable caste.

Far otherwise was it the case with Greece. Providence, which committed to her the mental disciplining of the pre-Christian mind, had endowed her with every grace and charm which might make this discipline attractive and successful. Let us go on viewing this in connection with the *imagination*, a faculty, we must remember, essential to the true conception of the beauty of things divine. Let us take, as an instance of the catholicity of the Greek culture of the imagination, the first great epic of Homer. The theme in itself, it is true, is narrow. It is the petty siege of a petty town. Yet this theme is treated in a way which touched the sympathies and incited the heroism and appealed to the humanities of him who dwelt on the amber coasts of the Baltic, or who in Sarmatian forests hunted his prey. Thus, e.g. that *commonness of the grave*, into which fall, not merely the poor and friendless, but

“The souls of mighty chiefs untimely slain;
Whose limbs unburied on the naked shore,
Devouring dogs and hungry vultures tore;”

is painted in connection with an universality of brotherhood which brings all men together in one current from birth to death. And observe to the same effect the following:

“Like leaves on trees, the race of man is found;
Now green in youth, now withering on the ground;
Another race the following spring supplies;
They fall successive, and successive rise:
So generations in their course decay;
So flourish these, when those have passed away.”

Nor can we be unmindful of those frequent though vague allusions to the traditions of patriarchal revelations which

the ruder nations retained with, at least, equal tenacity with the more refined. Thus Achilles, while defying all human sanctions, bows with solemn dread before those piacular sacrifices the priesthood offered, and by which alone guilt could be removed;

“ Perhaps with added sacrifice and prayer
The priest may pardon and the god may spare.”

So there is a common god omnipotent over all :

“ Supreme of gods, unbounded and alone
Who in the heaven of heavens has fixed his throne.”

And then again we are arrested by constant allusions to that sad common nature of sin under whose bondage groaned barbarian as well as Greek.

To these consciousnesses, which, when touched, awakened a thrill in the rudest slave as well as in the most polished scholar, is added that wondrous catholicity of expression which has opened the fountains of hearts of all climates and years. It would seem as if the sunlight of Homer's genius, making everything glitter that it touched, — that sunlight that gave, as common objects of beauty to all men, the laughing sea, the all-enshrouding storm, the glittering but silent armies of the heavens, the breezy azure where dwell the blest, — which gave these objects of beauty in flashes so swift and sudden as to arrest the most thoughtless, and so brilliant as to fascinate the most dull, should have been the chief agency in drawing the barbarian mind to that severer discipline which was to adapt it to the reception of the coming truth. For wherever went Roman conquest, in its march indurating and repelling the hearts among which it trod, thither went the verses of the oldest of Greek poets awakening the brutalized mind to the consciousness of a higher nature, of a common inheritance of beauty, of new and generous and heroic impulses, and of a common discipline of preparation for the word to come. Still more peculiarly was this distinctiveness of mission observable in the Greek tragedians. The Roman stage must have withered up every generous feeling both of the conqueror and the conquered. The serried ranks of the

spectators, as they bearded over the terraces of the amphitheatre gloating on the scene of blood beneath; the murmurs which burst from the lips of the noble as well as of the slave, as the gladiator seemed to strike sparingly on his prostrate foe; the scream of delight that eddied up and quivered over the arena as the spear entered the vitals, and the blood of the heart bubbled out, and the eye of the victim began to glaze and his frame to totter, — these things, if they brutalized and degraded the Roman, must have planted in the barbarian a bitter hate and horror of the civilization which made such scenes its recreation and its symbol. Yet wherever Rome went she carried the amphitheatre as her representative.

Widely different was the case with that complex, flexible, and gifted people whose mission it was, not to teach military drill, but to impart intellectual culture. The Greek drama, whose less pretending screens and awnings were unfurled wherever Roman conquest built in the walled city the amphitheatre, addressed the purest and most generous sympathies of which the unregenerate nature is capable. It scrupulously rejected all representations of blood or lust. It unfolded on its simple stage, — a stage, not like that of our modern theatre, but a mere elevated platform where living dialogues were uttered, — many scenes which must have evoked the finest sympathies of men the rudest or the most hostile. On that stage presided not the artificial and insolent conventionalism of an arrogant conqueror, or of a supercilious metropolis, but those high and pure impulses and passions which, like the mountain winds, circulating as they do around our free humanity, reveal its nobler aims and stimulate its sublimer energies. How grandly, for instance, must have sounded in the barbarian ear, those deep and awful notes of Aeschylus, in which, in his Prometheus, he declares that neither torture nor contumely nor imprisonment, — nothing but the abandonment by the proud heart of *itself*, — can destroy man's true freedom. How must barbarian hearts have swelled as they saw how Prometheus, so strange a pre-

mouition of what they might be, if they took courage, was able, though lashed to the rock, and though torn by vultures, to lift his brow in invincible defiance against the tyrant; and how to that tyrant the tortured prisoner was able to predict a retribution certain and complete. Must not the rude but heroic Gaul or Goth have exulted when he heard from the hoarse voice of Aeschylus how the noble and brave, rough though he might be, must ultimately overcome?

Nor, when the author is changed, and the audience is taken from the austere and rugged, but sublime, creations of Aeschylus to those more polished scenes where Sophocles brings out the tenderer influences of humanity, was the effect less perceptible. Let us go, for instance, as invited by a late able thinker, to Lyons or to York or to Coblenz, to any one of the old Roman fortified cities. There, where the sullen Roman, on his own particular mission, builds and breaks, the supple and sociable Greek introduces his language, his literature, and his theatre. If it be Sophocles that is represented, we may collect before our eyes, on that rough stage, surrounded by barbarian as well as by Greek, the scenery of *Electra*, where female character is draped in a refinement and dignity unknown to imperial Rome, in its then union of arrogance and lasciviousness; or we witness *Antigone*, showing, in eloquence chastened and smooth, how easy it is to sink from luxury to corruption, from frivolousness to folly, from insolent confidence to wretched despair. Or, it may be that the scene changes, and we hear recited the impressive periods of Euripides, greatly inferior, it is true, to those of his great predecessors in energy and boldness of imagination, but superior to them in philosophic culture. It would seem, indeed, as if Euripides thus closed the canon of the great Greek tragedians for the purpose of bringing the maxims of Socrates and of his pupils the more vividly before an audience to whom this dramatic dress was essential to the willing reception of philosophic truth. For, inferior as was Euripides in sublimity and boldness to his predecessors, inferior as he was in breadth and purity to Socrates, of whose teaching

he had the benefit, yet, as a poet of society, possessed of singular grace and flexibility, he reflected that philosophic culture of which Athens was then the seat. And what thinker was there in those motley audiences, barbarian though he might be, who would not have been roused to a higher life by the representation, though in a dramatic shape, of the grand truths of the old philosophy. He might not be compelled to leap forth for the defence of the right, as he would have been under the electric sparks of Aeschylus, nor to yearn for a purer life, as under the tenderer eloquence of Sophocles, but under Euripides he would be at least made to *think*, and this, not merely in the conventionalisms of a province, but in the terms which awaken a response in all mankind.

I have taken the works of the three great tragic poets of Athens as illustrations of the way in which Greece performed her mission of training the intellect of man for the fulness of time; and I have endeavored to show how, in this case, this was done by a branch of literature which of all others was the most calculated at once to attract the attention and refine and exalt the imaginative powers. Let us now turn to see how other faculties were in like manner trained and invigorated. Let us notice, in illustration of this topic, *psychology*. Look, for instance, at that extraordinary period when culminated Socrates and his disciples. The topic is one which, in some of its relations, will be glanced at presently, under another head. Two features only, as belonging to this branch of philosophy, we can now pause to notice: First, its appeal not to provincial, but to universal, feeling, and secondly, its severance from all such theological definiteness as would change it from a mental discipline to a religious faith, and thus make it a hinderance, instead of a forerunner of the truth to come.

Peculiarly is this worthy of notice in the Greek recognition of the *Psyche*, or soul, as a distinct and dominant factor in our common nature. Roman psychology knew but two factors—the intellect and the heart. Hence came the

truncated and blighted view of life that Roman psychology exhibited. If it was the heart that viewed and spoke, then life was a tragedy; we could not but sympathize with others' griefs and horrors, we could not emerge from our own; there was no future of reunion, restoration, and hope. If it was intellect that viewed and spoke, then life was a comedy; we may be amused, for we need not feel. But the Greek *Psyche*, calling to her side both Intellect and Heart, taught that life was represented by neither tragedy nor comedy, but rather by the grand old chorus, where tragedy indeed spoke in the dithyramb and comedy in the phallic, but which, incomplete in itself, was simply the premonition and incitement to a real life to come. Such, indeed, is the spectacle witnessed by the soul as it gazes on the stage of human life. The Roman, untaught by the soul, says: "This is all either comedy or tragedy, as I may view it with the mind or the heart." But the Greek says: "This is a choral prophecy of a future of retribution, of atonement, of immortal happiness or immortal woe."

But of all the branches of mental science, *logic* was that which was the most important as a guide to lead from the false to the true. Here, indeed, pre-Christian philosophy achieved its chief work. Logic is the only science that we know of which since Christianity has received no important additions. Logic was the science on which the reception of Christianity by the cultivated and intelligent most depended.

Before Aristotle the human mind was in the same condition as was the mariner before the invention of the compass. The sea of speculation was then as capable of being marked out into longitudes and latitudes as now; but there was no power by which this measurement could be applied. The mind that ventured out on the deep could have no certainty whether the course it followed was right or wrong. It might pursue the voyage of discovery on a plan which if carried out might be successful; but it had no confidence, for it had no *test* of truth. Hence, also, came the impostures of the old superstitions. An ingenious speculatist would introduce

a new scheme, which he declared would produce the universal good. Those whose hearts told them that this good was somewhere to be obtained would gather round the adventurer, listening eagerly to his report. It was on the narrow shore of immediate experience they would stand, and, like the sea-faring men of their own day, would attend, with half belief, half uncertainty, to the wild narratives of fabulous coasts which the pretended traveller would give them as they stood by their rude boats. They had no means of testing the truth of what he had said. They could not say: "Let us strike out into the deep, and see whether these wonderful lands of which you speak really exist." They could not say: "Here are charts compiled by the experience of others; let us see whether the coasts you describe are here marked out." They were equally unable to sustain a truth or to detect a fallacy; and hence the appeal from the gospel miracles, if it had fallen on them then, might have fallen on them, humanly speaking, as a mere shadow. If they had seen the miracles, it might have been one thing; but if they had merely heard of them, they would have placed them with the myriads of other wonders to discriminate between which the human mind possessed no test, and which must either be received as a mass, or rejected as a mass.

But logic supplied this want. It gave a process, as the magnet gave a needle, by which a true course could be verified and a false course detected. Take, for instance, as an illustration of this, this very subject of *miracles*. Logic established two forms of syllogisms — the *inductive* and the *deductive* — the first, reasoning up from a given number of facts to a principle; the second, reasoning down from the principle to all the individuals of the class to which the principle applies.

Before Aristotle there had been no attempt to establish the uniformity of nature. The mind was as credulous of the supernatural as of the natural. It was as likely to believe that next year the sun would move backward as that

it would move forward, or that across the sea there were monsters instead of men, or fish that were gods, or gods, fish. But Aristotle first laid firmly down the great truth that there were certain fundamental principles from which all minor results were to be drawn, and that one of those principles was the uniformity of nature. He inaugurated the scepticism of the unreasonable, which is so essential to a belief of the reasonable. Whatever was inconsistent with these principles must be rejected; for, to speak of it technically, it would be a conclusion drawn from a term which was either ambiguous or undistributed. And all the hosts of false religions began to hurry off when the test was applied. They had all of them been believed, because what was supernatural, instead of being presumed to be false, was presumed to be true. And here were opened those methods by which Christianity could alone have been proved to the cultivated mind—those methods of severe, exhaustive criticism which exposed the gospel narrative to an examination more searching than was ever bestowed, before or since, on any other history, and which hence has given to that a degree of certainty to which no other history can lay claim.

Such, then, was the direct office of Greek culture—that not merely of sublimating the imaginative powers so that they could conceive the loveliness and majesty of Christianity, but of so disciplining the reason that the mists before existing could be dispelled, and the truth made sure. And it brings before us very clearly the accurate sweep of God's providence in this respect, that, when the fulness of time drew near, men whose unaided vision had before so much failed them were supplied with an instrument by which the clouds could be pierced, and the coming word perceived. When the mariner was about to launch forth into the deep to seek this before unknown land of bliss,—when that land was about to be revealed,—there was placed in his hand the compass by which the truth could be approached, and error detected. And it brings this providence the more strikingly before us, that this science is the only one, which we know

of, that in one generation was introduced, was perfected, was universally disseminated. Aristotle conceived it and completed it; and in the shape in which he left it, the new grammar of thought, with its arbitrary but catholic symbols for the verifying of the truth and the detection of the fallacy, spread over the Levant to Egypt and Arabia, over the Adriatic to Lower Italy, and over the Euxine to Persia. Wherever Roman arms went, there went the Greek school, affording as well an exorcism by which local as well as metropolitan superstitions were expelled, as a test by which the approaching gospel was to be established. It was the work of mental discipline to which Greece was elected, as was Rome to that of material preparation. And in this discrimination of office we may see the same wise purpose by which the particular mission of each had been directed.

Had Rome added the fascination of Greek culture to the vigor of her own arms, she might have perpetuated her government; had Greece added Roman administrative power to her own culture, she might have perpetuated her own philosophy. But it pleased God that their work should be severed, and that both should only *prepare*, — neither, *establish*. Rome was the builder of the roads, and hers the bugle-note which called the nations together; Greece gave the language and the discipline by which they could know the word to come. Then, when the work of building and summoning and training was over, and He that was to come approached, the forerunners and summoners disappeared, and Greece and Rome sank into the church.

But to Greece was not assigned the work of mental training alone. If her psychology taught how to seek the truth, her ethical philosophy produced a yearning which the truth alone could satisfy. Let us now turn to see how this work was performed. The philosophy of Plato was not a *system*, but a *summons*. It was as if men should have been couvened on some great plain, to listen, as in the ancient tournaments, to a proclamation claiming to be supreme. A mysterious knight appears, of gigantic though shadowy pro-

portions, having about him something greater than man, and calling to deeds of heroism which human selfishness, in its unaided strength, finds beyond its reach. Such was Platonic philosophy; and yet, if its vague but sublime form shows forth the supernatural in its shadowiness and loftiness of aspiration, it is almost less than human in its feebleness of arm. It stirs the soul, but it strengthens not. It is the awakening cry to a slumbering world, but it gives not life nor action; and soon the crowds whom it addresses fall back as if from an uneasy dream. It is a collection of sublime aspirations, but not of life-giving principles. And even those aspirations are so mingled with weakness and follies that, like the alarm-clock that is followed by other and more familiar sounds, they are dreamed into the dream of the sleeper, and thus make his torpor only the more profound.

Yet, if the Platonic philosophy did little to awaken the *practical* side of ethics, it achieved wonders in stimulating the *speculative*. The deep and mystical utterances of the great philosopher called up school after school which sought to satisfy the craving he had aroused. That vague longing for truth which Plato had rather excited than created, could only be met, it is true, by Him who was the way, the truth, and the life; but, as if to show that nowhere else but in him was the truth to be found, hypotheses after hypotheses of speculative ethics were advanced by minds the most acute, the most accomplished, the most profound. Gradually these hypotheses narrowed themselves to two—the Stoic and the Epicurean. If these failed, it would be clear that there was no human system of ethics which would succeed. *How* they failed, and in what way the soul, thus heart-sick, and yet agitated by these sublime aspirations, was led to truth, we will now consider.

First, let us observe the *Stoic* philosophy; and let us successively notice the contrast between it and the Epicurean, and the way in which by the divine power of Christianity the truths of these two philosophies, repugnant as such truths were before considered, were united in a harmony

which is in Christ alone. Let us notice, severally, the relations, first of the Stoic, and then of the Epicurean schools, to the questions of God's government of the world, and man's government of himself. First, in reference to divine power. God, according to the Stoic, is the energy, the life, and the order of the universe. He is a semi-corporeal, nervous essence that absorbs the whole world in his embrace. As Aristotle, on the one hand, separated the divine essence from the world as the pure eternal spirit from the eternal matter, so the Stoics, on the other hand, rejected this severance, and united God and the world as power and substance in one. "Matter is the passive base of existence, the substratum of the divine activity. God is the active, creative power of matter, and is essentially inwrought with it. The world is the body of God; God is the soul of the world." Thus they held God and matter to be an identical substance, which, viewing it on the side of its passive and changeable properties, is matter; on the side of its active and eternal power, is God. The world has no substantive existence; it has no purport or mission of its own; it is produced, inspired, and directed by God. "It is nought but a great living frame (*ζών*), whose intelligent soul is the Godhead. All it contains is equally divine, because the divine soul pervades all of it equally. God is to it the eternal necessity which controls everything in unchangeable sequence; as an intelligent providence, which appropriately creates and shapes; as perfect wisdom, which holds undisturbed the order of the world, punishing evil and rewarding good. Nothing can isolate itself from God, or move out of its pre-ordained limit. Everything is unconditionally dependent on the order of the whole, of which the Godhead is the principle and the power."¹

By this theory there is an entire absorption of the human in the divine. The human will ceases to exist as a substantive agent, capable of voluntarily following or voluntarily rejecting good or evil. Of the two great factors which the Christian

¹ I translate this from Schwegler's excellent synopsis in his "Geschichte der Philosophie" (p. 88), as giving substantially the theodicy of the Stoic.

recognizes in God's moral government, — his constancy and his special providence, — the Stoic recognized only the first — his constancy, and rejected the last — his special providence. Of the two great factors which the Christian recognizes in man's moral agency, — his impotence and his free-will, — the Stoic recognized only his impotence, and rejected his free-will. That divine union of contradictions in the plan of salvation — that arch out of the ken of philosophical vision by which are united, in the revealed word, God's constancy and his special providence, man's impotence and his free-will — neither Stoic nor Epicurean was able to comprehend. While the Epicurean, as we presently will see, seized the last of the two factors, and built a system upon it, so the Stoic seized in like manner and built upon the first. Let us picture to ourselves the world which the Stoic thus produced. The shadowiness of philosophical phraseology vanishes, as we gaze on it, and we see a vast and gloomy factory, in which is forever droning through its monotonous rounds a great central wheel, which is the motive power, as well as the regulator, of the entire mechanism. There is no future beneficent purpose for which this factory runs, no blessed change in the far future to which these labors are to yield, no delicate fabric of love they are to generate. The work is to be eternal. Eternally is that giant wheel to grind on its uniform rounds. Nor can the slightest member of this vast mechanism pause; to do so would be death. Man is, as it were, on a tread-mill. Onward and onward must he move on his predestined path, without choice or rest. Forever, at least while life lasts, will the cold, metallic grinding of this monotonous machinery sound on his ears; forever will that heavy, impassive, relentless wheel revolve. It is despair in life, and, on the Stoic's theory, it was despair in death. Human life, when the stamp was worn out, was like a defaced coin, to be picked up again and re-issued, but not as the same continuous existence. It came out, blind to the past and blind to the future, to again move through this hopeless, dreary cycle, to be again, when its impress was

worn out, resumed and re-issued, and so on forever. There was no immortality of the soul, no hope in life and no hope beyond life, no consciousness of separate existence now or hereafter, no power of choice in the creature, no power of forgiveness in the Creator, — nothing but an eternal round of helpless, hopeless, passive endurance.

Then observe the Stoic's idea of *virtue*. Pleasure, even innocent pleasure, was to him a sin, as a stepping aside from the inexorable purpose of life; it was a wrong, a sacrifice of the whole to the individual. The slave chained to the wheel could not pause a moment, even to pick up a flower, for the pitiless wheel would roll on and crush him, and then continue to roll on as impassively as before. It was a sin to sanction the household feast, to smile at the play of children, or with pleasure to watch the myriads of gay and joyous life that were glancing through the summer stream, or to dwell on the rich contrasts of the woods yellowed in the light of autumn, or on the gorgeous retinue of clouds and of shadows, each crowned with gold, with which the royal sun departs between the gates of the western hills.

So the energetic pursuit or the joyous play of *individual* talent was sinful to the Stoic, as contravening that general purpose and that common good to co-work in which was the sole virtue. To the Stoic, the poet whose gentle eyes turned so tenderly on the hare that he caressed in his solitude at Olney, and who wrote John Gilpin, would have sinned in thus looking and writing. To the Stoic, Milton would have sinned in the designing of *Paradise Lost*, Michael Angelo in the sculpturing of that sublime statue of Moses on which even the thoughtless cannot look without awe. Everything that falls not into the common, mechanical progress of things — which separates the individual purpose or passion from the aggregate — is sin. The ideal is absolute perfection. Whoever falls short of this at all, falls entirely. There is no way of covering up his sins, or of atoning for them. He is an alien in the harmony of the universe, a victim to be forthwith crushed under fate's grim wheel.

Such was the philosophy of the Stoic — a philosophy which truly recognized the absoluteness of God, but untruly rejected the individuality and autonomy of man ; which truly recognized the existence of a divine and absolute standard of virtue, but untruly rejected that universal corruption which made man incapable of reaching this standard. An absolute Providence, a perfect ideal of virtue, was the half of the coming truth upon which the Stoics seized ; but that half, exhibited alone, only reduced man to the greater despair.

On the other hand, the Epicureans, who with the Stoics, in the era immediately preceding Christ, divided the schools, took the opposite factors, and equally failed. The Epicurean philosophy, upon which we can now barely touch, withdrew God from all practical government of the world, and made the individual will supreme. God, it is true, might occasionally intervene to help out a human impulse ; but there were no laws by which events were pre-adjusted, no external force by which the individual purpose was swayed. Man's happiness or misery was left to his own free choice, and what he won he owed to himself alone. Each individual must seek for his own happiness, not the happiness of society ; for the social is to be subordinated to the individual. *Pleasure* is to be the object of life. But we should be doing injustice to the Epicureans did we assume that the pleasure thus to be pursued was to be the mere lust or passion of the moment. It was the ease and satisfaction which, having the future in view, as well as the present, were diffused over a whole life by so adjusting the tastes that they would relish such pleasures as were without undue fatigue attainable — pleasures such as the quiet endearments of social life, the varied beauties and comforts of the seasons, the charms of music, of painting, of statuary. With regard to virtue, if the Stoic standard failed because it forgot *man*, the Epicurean's failed because it forgot *God*. The Stoic made a system which rejected human weakness ; the Epicurean one which rejected the divine perfection. The road of the first was unapproachable to human foot, because it was stretched like

drawbridge between inaccessible heights ; the road of the last failed, because it was laid unsupported over those quicksands of human corruption on which none can step without ruin.

And this difference between the two philosophies in respect to ethics sprang from the corresponding difference in their theodicy. The Stoic absorbed man's individuality in God's omnipotence ; the Epicurean, God's omnipotence in man's individuality. The Stoic destroyed man's moral agency in God's sovereignty ; the Epicurean, God's sovereignty in man's moral agency. The one's ideal was a perfectly divine man ; the other's, a perfectly human God. In theodicy, as well as in ethics, each seized upon one of the great pillars of the arch of truth, but, clinging to it as a fragment, found in it, as the passenger finds on the single pier in the dismantled bridge, not the shore, but a fathomless abyss.

Let us pause, for a moment, to look at the pre-Christian world as the time was approaching when the Desired of all Nations was to appear. It was as if all men, under the strain of some prophetic voice, like that which told in older days of the deluge, were gathering for refuge about one or the other of the two disjointed fragments of truths which these philosophies uncovered. That there was in each *some* truth, those may well have thought who looked at those massive piers ; but that these were hostile and irreconcilable no one could doubt who saw how broken and incomplete were their ragged sides. How were these truths, each in part certain, yet the two wholly contradictory, to be reconciled ? Man had attempted it in vain, and now, conscious that even in his faith he was wretched, he waited for the word to come.

And the word thus came in the fulness of time. In the God-man was the way shown how God could be just, and yet the Justifier ; how his eternal purpose and man's moral agency could be united ; how the same Divine Being, at once perfect man and perfect God, could at the same time bring us to God and bring God to us ; how as our High-Priest he was to bear our sins, as our divine and yet human friend was to be touched with our infirmities, as our perfect

substitute to cover us with a mantle of righteousness such as no human virtue could approach.

So were reconciled the truths of those two philosophies which had divided among themselves the thoughtful minds of pre-Christian heathendom. For, in theology there were then first brought together those two elements, of the Creator's sovereign power and the creature's moral responsibility, which make up the doctrines of grace; since, as St. Bernard tells us, if you abolish free grace, there is no God to save us, and if you abolish free will, there is no man to be saved.

And so in ethics were the *ideal* of the divine perfection and the *actual* of human dependence united in Christ Jesus. For the divine pattern set by him combined a rule of holiness severer than Stoic ever imposed, with a tenderness of humanity beyond that of the purest and gentlest of the Epicureans. For he who declared that blessed were the pure in heart who declared even that angry and impure *thoughts* would bring danger of the judgment; who said it was better to pluck out an eye or cut off a hand than that eye or hand should offend; who directed no treasures to be laid up on earth, and no thought taken for the morrow; he who laid down these rules so austere, whose divine presence sanctified the marriage feast; whom Pharisaism rebuked as one who ate with sinners; who so yearned over little children that he could not be held back from blessing them; who provided, even when the shadows of the passion were gathering over him, for the comfort of his disciples, and in the hour of agonizing death, for his mother's home; who wept over the grave of those whom he loved as tenderly as he had blessed the wedding; and who thus sympathized with the sorrows and hallowed the innocent pleasures of men at the same time that he afforded them a perfect standard of right.

So it was that the philosophers of heathenism, in the failure of their systems pointed the way to him, the God-man, in whom alone was truth. To recur to an illustration that has been heretofore used, it is as if you should see in a great and stormy estuary two island piers, all that remain of a bridge

which once had united shore to shore. Around these piers are collected multitudes of shipwrecked travellers, feeling that what they clasp is sure, but that it is purposeless unless it can be connected with the main-land of the haven where they would be. But how can this be done? No human masonry could be laid in those stormy waters. No human skill could construct that necessary arch. Philosophy has tried this, but in vain; and now each of her great schools can do no more than impotently cluster around the insulated pier of its own half truth. Then a voice is heard above the waters, "Lo, I come! in the volume of the book it is written of me"; and by the God-man the arch is spanned, and its piers consolidated in a structure which is the revealed way of God.

Some there are who still refuse to look up with the eye of faith, and to see how to the soul this stream is bridged over and escape secured and home to the lost restored. They still cling to those half truths which alone are revealed to the eye of sense, unable, in this mere sensuous perception, to see the arch at once of union and of salvation to which revelation points. Our duty to them is a duty of humility as well as of power. It belongs to us to show that philosophy, not merely from its own human limitedness of vision, but from the evidence of its past failures, is incapable of discovering that which belongs to the highest counsels of God. Ours, therefore, is the humility which flows from the consciousness that by human wisdom alone we cannot find out God. But the weakest believer, besides this humility, is adorned with that faith which is in itself power. For to him the half-truths of philosophy unite in a sublime and harmonious whole.

The perfection of God and the feebleness of man, the righteousness of God and the sinfulness of man, the sovereignty of God and the free-will of man, — these, the solitary and disrupted piers of the Stoic and the Epicurean, — these are united not merely to the sight but to the tread of faith. The pilgrim, once clasping desolately the shivered and insulated buttress, looks up and finds a road open to his ascent. That road is holiness and its end heaven.