

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_churchman\\_os.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php)

## Notices of Books.

### THE BIBLE AND EVOLUTION.

*Redemption According to the Eternal Purpose.* By the REV. W. SHIBLEY.  
London : Elliot Stock, 1902.

TO many minds the ideas of science and theology which they have conceived seem to imply a hopeless contradiction. Despair as to any hopes of reconciliation between the two grieves and saddens a multitude of minds. So many of the attempts that have been made to bring about that reconciliation have been ill-judged in conception, intemperate in the language used, or illogical in reasoning, and this on both sides of the conflict, that to many anxious minds it has seemed best to let things drift for a time, with a confidence that all must come right at last, and that truth must prevail under the providential guidance of Him who is the God of truth. With this aim the disturbed soul has been encouraged to believe that "in quietness and confidence" is its strength, and that though "God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform," yet at the last He will make all things plain.

But notwithstanding this, it is well always to give a welcome to any investigator after truth who tries to lay down the bases for such a reconciliation. Great gifts are required if the work is to be done satisfactorily. A knowledge of both theology and science, a careful definition of terms, patience, a good temper—all these are indispensable, combined with a power to realize the positions which an opponent takes up.

The author of the volume we are at present considering possesses a good measure of most of these qualities. The ideas which he formulates are not all new—notably, those about "man before Adam" found a place in McCausland's works between thirty and forty years ago—but they are treated with fresh vigour, and even where we do not follow him Mr. Shirley sets us thinking.

A very large proportion of the book deals with the period covered by the narrative of the early chapters of Genesis. It is only when we reach the last sixty-five pages (out of 363) that we pass beyond the Flood. To anyone, therefore, who is interested in the study of the *origines* of the world and all that therein is, and the laws governing that world, the volume will, we think, be full of interest.

We may sum up the line taken by the author if we say that it contains a doctrine of "evolution by compartments," if we may venture to use the expression, combined with an attempt to arrive at a divinely appointed law which is put into force at the points where the law of evolution fails us and gaps in continuity exist. This law involves a

mortification of some baser part and therefore its disappearance, with an accretion of something higher, which cannot be the result of direct evolution. Darwin, the apostle of evolution, if we may call him so, recognised the difficulties in his way caused by these gaps or chasms much more openly than some of his disciples, or those who have accepted his theory with less knowledge than he had, have done. Perhaps the clearest idea of what Mr. Shirley tries to do in his attempt to state a law governing these transitional points is to be found in his account of the passage of the chasm between the vegetable and the animal kingdoms. Here, as elsewhere, he would say: "The newness of the new creature has risen out of the mortification of the old" (p. 69). We piece together a few of his sentences to show how he works out his idea: "There are the same phenomena surrounding a similar appearance of a new power, of which the origin is equally obscure. There is a question, if not unanswerable, yet similarly unanswered. Could the sun-worship and faith of the plants (anthropomorphic words have to be used) have led any living members of that family up to the higher animal life? It may be impossible to say" (pp. 56, 57), but "who can prove impossible such an occurrence? . . . All things are possible with God, even the Immaculate Conception, even so strange a birth of animal from plant. . . . It is no easy task the atheistic evolutionist has set himself. No mere reference to chance, the struggle for existence, survival of the fittest, or other partly indefinite phrases, will suffice. . . . Ere a plant will move, it must have sacrificed its greedy roots, surrendered the security of its earthly anchorage, laid low the pride and refinements of its flowers; more yet, its whole nature, built up for the storage, must have altered itself for the expenditure of sun-force . . ." (p. 59). This surely it could not do by itself. Rather with the mortification of the old comes a newness of life which cannot be other than a gift of a higher power—that is, God.

It is with reference to this particular chasm that Mr. Shirley makes his argument clearest. In others, notably that of the coming in of the soul, his mode of thought is not by any means so manifest. But it is easy to see how such a train of reasoning might apply to the higher spiritual life of the Christian on earth, and still more to the difference between the natural body and the spiritual body of the life beyond the grave, just as he would claim for it that it would account for a pre-Adamite carnal man and the newness of life in Adam. There may have been animism or fetichism in that pre-Adamite race, but that will not account for "the God of Eden" who "became Jahveh when there was a first man with whom He could enter into a covenant," who was "the God of the tree of life," and therefore "a Saviour." In this way in Adam we see a carnal nature mortified; "his freedom was new, being the service of his God; Eden was his new world, and the new law over him was Love" (p. 91).

One great advantage claimed by the author for his theories is that it

enables us to accept the literal meaning of the narrative of the early chapters of Genesis. There is a great deal of direct, though perhaps somewhat discursive, statement on the relation of the sexes in the chapter entitled "Adam and Eve," which ends up thus: "There can be no rivalry between the sexes, for woman is not without the man, nor did God create Adam without Eve. These twain are one flesh" (p. 175).

Throughout the volume Mr. Shirley is plain-spoken, though sometimes we can scarcely approve his choice of expressions. Which is it to be—"nidering" (p. 192) or "niddering" (p. 193)? Sometimes, too, the very form in which he puts his opponent's argument runs the danger of making it appear more attractive than it really is.

The last chapters of the book deal in a more hurried manner with the following subjects: "Redemption by the Law," "Redemption by Christ," and "Certain Objections 'Ambushed.'" At the present, when much is being said and written on the subject, it may be interesting to read what Mr. Shirley has to say on the Doctrine of the Incarnation:

"If that wonder be a tradition of men, then the world's course, which seems to have been diverted by Christianity, was diverted humanly, which means not at all, seeing that in such a case the direction taken must have been natural, however novel. Christ, stripped of the supernatural, is left the self-deceived, somewhat vainglorious Teacher, who voiced an aspiration of mankind. On the other hand, if the Incarnation be a fact, so great a wonder must have portended and introduced a work otherwise impossible in the world, whatever may be pretended after the rescue. The nature of redemption must rest upon the truth of the Creed, 'Conceived of (*sic*) the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary'" (p. 324).

*The Coming Unity.* By Rev. A. J. HARVEY, M.A. London: Elliot Stock.

This is one of the many expressions of that yearning for the realization of the brotherhood of all Christian believers, which is a hopeful feature of the present age. If we compare the general feeling in that direction with the mutual animosity which prevailed after the Caroline Restoration Parliament, we cannot but be struck by the immense alteration in sentiment. Have we really become more kindly and tolerant? or is this change in feeling merely an outgrowth of that genial laxity which very often appears in the religious thought of to-day? Perhaps, as usual, each cause contributes somewhat, and some souls wish for union because they hold their own principles so dearly that they can love others who are equally staunch according to their lights; while the "honorary members of all religions" are actuated by a benevolent indifference. We are glad that Mr. Harvey is not inclined to make nothing of the differences that do exist between the various Protestant Churches, and we think that his little book aptly indicates the lines on which alone a

*rapprochement* is possible. That it is probable is more than any man, we fear, can maintain.

We have received two stories for children from the S.P.C.K. *The Farm of Aptonga* is a reprint of one of the late Dr. Neale's tales. The scene is laid in Africa, in the times of St. Cyprian. We are introduced to his martyrdom and that of others. The narrative moves briskly and with interest, and is characterized by the religious fervour that is to be expected from the author; also, we must add, by his highly sacramental views. The same tendency is noticeable in *A Scholar of Lindisfarne*, by GERTRUDE HOLLIS. This records the mission of the Celtic Church to Northumbria under Aidan and his monks, conveys a great deal of historical teaching in a brightly written narrative, and is well illustrated. From Seeley and Co. we have received a reprint of BISHOP SAMUEL WILBERFORCE'S *Agathos*. The stories which make up this collection were once widely read; we fancy that they would still be most useful if told by parents or others from memory. In such a way, they would carry much information to children of between five and ten years old. The Bishop's questions at the end of each allegory might also be used as a basis of discussion.

Two volumes of the "Quiet Moments Series" (R.T.S.), clearly printed and well bound, are *The Teaching of Jesus Christ in His Own Words*, compiled by the EARL OF NORTHBROOK, and *The Gates of Life*, by the Rev. H. E. LEWIS. Lord Northbrook says in his preface that he originally compiled his book for the use of Indians. With this purpose, he includes the teaching of Christ in His own words, but leaves out those parts of the teaching which were addressed specially to the Jews. It will occur to all that our Lord taught, not only by His words, but by His acts, and by the whole tenor of His life. While, therefore, such compilations can be in no sense a substitute for the Gospel story, they are yet convenient and useful, as showing the substance of Christ's teaching on different topics. It is in this manner that Lord Northbrook has arranged his quotations. The idea has been carried out before; we recollect especially one charming book, called "The Great Discourse," compiled some years back by an anonymous author. In one sense, he was more consistent than Lord Northbrook, for he included only Christ's actual sayings, while the ex-Viceroy of India inserts in italicized passages quotations from the Old and New Testaments bearing upon whatever subject he is treating of. This little book will be useful for both study and meditation, and cannot fail to clarify and so to strengthen the faith of the believer. *The Gates of Life* is a series of studies on different doctrines, such as Repentance, Forgiveness, Justification, and Sanctification. They are thoroughly sound, if, perhaps, somewhat trite and conventional.

*True Religion.* By the Very Rev. F. W. FARRAR. London: Brown, Langham and Co.

These sermons exhibit all the well-known traits of the great preacher. There is the same glow of language, perfectly boundless wealth of illustration, impassioned appeals after righteousness, and scathing denunciation of formalism that we have known and loved before. Criticism is silent before so much honesty and sincerity of purpose. The admirers of the gifted Dean—and are they not found all the world over?—will rejoice in this collection of trumpet-like calls to a single-minded and moral life.



### NOTES.

WE understand that Messrs. Eyre and Spottiswoode, His Majesty's printers, will shortly transfer their Bible and Prayer-Book Department to 33, Paternoster Row and 13, Paternoster Square. We are also informed that arrangements have been made for the transfer of Messrs. Thomas Nelson and Son's Bible Department to the same premises, and that both businesses will thereafter be conducted under the name of Eyre and Spottiswoode (Bible House), Limited. The new premises, which will probably be opened in April, will contain a reading-room, a show-room, and a collecting department, with ample warehouse and office accommodation.



ERRATA IN "LIGHT FROM THE ALMANACK," IN THE "CHURCHMAN"  
FOR DECEMBER, 1892.

- Page 121, line 27, for "went" (*ἀπῆλθε*) read "came" (*ἦλθεν*).  
 " " lines 30 and 31, delete "The Revisers . . . little difference."  
 " 122, line 1, for "south-west" read "south-east."

