



J. Rosenat Rosen

101 - cut off print

Scarce

CHRISTIANITY AND MYTHOLOGY.

©

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

ESSAYS TOWARDS A CRITICAL METHOD.

NEW ESSAYS TOWARDS A CRITICAL METHOD.

MONTAIGNE AND SHAKSPERE.

BUCKLE AND HIS CRITICS: a Sociological Study.

THE SAXON AND THE CELT: a Sociological Study.

MODERN HUMANISTS: Studies of Carlyle, Mill, Emerson, Arnold, Ruskin, and Spencer, with an Epilogue on Social Reconstruction.

THE FALLACY OF SAVING: a Study in Economics.

THE EIGHT HOURS QUESTION: a Study in Economics.

THE DYNAMICS OF RELIGION: an Essay in English Culture-History. ("By M. W. Wiseman.")

A SHORT HISTORY OF FREETHOUGHT, Ancient and Modern.

PATRIOTISM AND EMPIRE.

STUDIES IN RELIGIOUS FALLACY.

AN INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH POLITICS.

CHRISTIANITY AND
MYTHOLOGY

BY

JOHN M. ROBERTSON

ISSUED FOR

THE RATIONALIST PRESS ASSOCIATION, LIMITED

LONDON

WATTS & CO., 17 JOHNSON'S COURT, FLEET STREET

1900

CORRIGENDA.

- P. 37, Note 2. *Read*, See hereinafter, Part III., p. 417.
P. 110, Note 4. *For* miraculous *read* miraculously.
P. 124, Note 1. *For* Mithraism, § 6, *read* Part III., p. 417.
P. 187, Note 8. *For Hierosolyma* *read Hierozoicon*.
P. 190, Note 6. *Read*, See hereinafter, Part III., pp. 329-330.
P. 203, Note 1. *After* See, *read* hereinafter, Part III., pp. 330-1.
P. 203, Note 2. *Read*, See hereinafter, Part III., passim.
P. 215, Note 1. *Read*, See hereinafter, Part III., p. 417.

CONTENTS.

PART I.

THE PROGRESS OF MYTHOLOGY.

CHAP. I.—THE SCIENCE AND ITS HISTORY.	PAGE
§ 1. The Problem	1
§ 2. The Scientific Beginnings	3
§ 3. The Relation to Christianity	12
CHAP. II.—MODERN SYSTEMS.	
§ 1. The Etymological and Solar Schools	19
§ 2. The Movement of Anthropology: Tylor	25
§ 3. <i>A priori</i> Evolutionism: Spencer	28
§ 4. The Biological Correction	30
§ 5. Fresh Constructions, Reversions, Omissions, Evasions	34
§ 6. Mr. Lang and Anthropology	40
CHAP. III.—THE SEPARATIST FALLACY.	
§ 1. The Theistic Presupposition	52
§ 2. The Metaphysic of Religion	65
§ 3. Mr. Grant Allen's Theorem	71
CHAP. IV.—THE STAND FOR THE BIBLE.	
§ 1. Hebrew Mythology	79
§ 2. Christianity and "Degeneration"	95
§ 3. The Psychological Resistance to Evidence	101
§ 4. The Problem of Non-Miraculous Myth	111
§ 5. The Problem of Priority	117

PART II.

CHRIST AND KRISHNA.

I. THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM.

Standpoint of the Investigation. Current Presuppositions. Vice of Christian Method. Rationalism committed to no Historical Presupposition	129
---	-----

II. THE QUESTION OF PRIORITY.	PAGE
Old Date of Orthodox Hypothesis. Theories of Giorgi. Hyde. Missionaries. Jones. Maurice. Jones's Presuppositions. Polier. Paulinus. Kleuker. Moor. Creuzer. Reactionary Spirit of English Religious Archæology. Suppression of Evidence	131
III. AGE OF INDIAN DOCUMENTS.	
Ritter's Criticism. Extravagance of Indian Chronology. Oldest Inscriptions. Origin of Writing. Müller and Tiele. Oral Preservation of Lore. Brahman Method of Study. The Druids	135
IV. THE SPECIAL DOCUMENTS.	
Age of Vedas. Developments of Indian Religion. Vogue of Krishnaism. Its Documentary Bases. Phases of Krishna	138
V. THE KRISHNA LEGEND.	
Barth's Synopsis. Solar Significance. Krishna Black, Hiding, or Night Sun. Black Deities in other Systems. The Vegetal Spirit Theory. Krishna and Arjuna. Osiris and Typhon. Krishna originally a "Demon." Supersedes Indra. Contrary Christian View. Note on the Black Osiris	141
VI. THE CHRISTIAN ARGUMENT.	
Wheeler's <i>History</i> . Thesis of its <i>Athenæum</i> Critic. His Presuppositions. Professor Müller's Apologetics. Superior Candour of Continental Scholarship. Weber's Attitude. General View of Sanskritists. Wheeler on Question of Imitation	148
VII. THE CENTRAL DISPROOF.	
Antiquity of Kansa Myth. Bhandarkar on Patanjali. Weber's Admissions. The Main Question Settled	154
VIII. ANTIQUITY OF KRISHNAISM.	
Further Proofs. Bhitâri Pillar Inscription. Bayley's Inscriptions. Khandogya Upanishad. Müller and Weber	156
IX. INVALID EVIDENCE.	
Lassen on the Hercules of Megasthenes. Criticism of Tiele. Wilson's Position. Upheld by Weber and Senart. Bala Râma's Characteristics. His Close Correspondence with the Hercules of Megasthenes. Râma Chandra	160
X. WEBER'S THEORY.	
His General Attitude; Theory of Early Greek Influence and Imitation of Christianity; Doctrine of Faith; Festival Details. § 1. Criticism of his Positions; The Kansa Myth; Problem of Christian Origins; Virgin and Child derived from Isis and Horos; De Rossi on the Catacomb Madonnas; Pre-Christian Child-carrying Goddesses; Juno; Dêmêtêr; Venus; Alitta; Aphroditê; British Museum Nomenclature; India and Egypt; Tiele's Criticism of Weber; Buddha Virgin-born; Jerome's Testimony;	

	PAGE
Krishnaite Name-giving; Early Christian Placing of Nativity on Epiphany; Christmas a Pre-Christian Festival; Name-day in Hercules Worship; Name-day in Mazdeism; Baptizing on Epiphany; Abyssinian Usage. § 2. The Birth-Festival and the Purânas; Weber's Explanation Accepted; Purâna Legends not necessarily Late; Birthdays of Gods Astrological; Krishna and Star Rohini; Krishna Nativity in July; Significance of this; Birthday of Horus in July; Hindu Festivals; Mattu Pongal and St. Anthony's Day; Myth Derived from Ritual; Krishnaite and Roman Festivals; The "Swinging" Festival	163
XI. THE SOLAR-CHILD MYTH.	
Connection of Kansa Legend with Legend of Cyrus. Parallel Legends. The Coat of Many Colours. Dangers Run by the Divine Child. The Myths of Sargon, Horos, and Moses. Confucius Miraculously Born. The Messianic Cyrus and Jesus. The Massacre of the Innocents. The Child Speaking at Birth. The Birth in a Cave. The Child Born on a Journey. Maya and Mary. The Mythological River. The "Taxing" Journey. The Myth of the Seven Gates	183
XII. THE STABLE AND MANGER.	
Weber and Senart on the Krishna Ritual. The Manger-basket of Dionysos, Hermes, Zeus, and Ion. Bas-reliefs in the Catacombs. Ox and Ass. Cows and Stable. Isis and the Virgin Cow. Horus Born on Christmas Eve. Virgin, Child, and Manger Myth pre-Christian in Egypt. Cow Myth in Mithraism. Ox and Ass Symbolic. The Christian Legend. The Text in Habbakkuk. The Cave Motive. Agni the Babe God in the Veda. Myths concerning Him. Agni and Dionysos twice Born. The Cow-shed in the Krishna Ritual and in Catacomb Sculpture. The Symbolic Ass. Images in Christism and Krishnaism. Joseph and the Ass. Virgin-Myth Ritualized in Egypt. The Magi. Antiquity of the Babe-Sun-God. Dramatic Ritual in Krishnaism and Christism	197
XIII. THE MYTH OF ST. CHRISTOPHER.	
The name <i>Christophoroi</i> . Cognate Terms. The <i>Pastophoroi</i> . The Charge of Child-eating. The Christian Mysteries Secret. Testimonies of Clarkson, Palmer, Trollope, and Hatch. Child-carrying in Pagan Cults. The Sacramental Eating of Baked Images. General Use of such Images. The Principle of <i>Eating the God</i> . The Krishna Myth and the Christian. St. Christopher's Day	215
XIV. INDIAN AND CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS DRAMA.	
Weber's View. Wilson's. Buddhist Testimony. "The Toy-Cart." Devakî and Vasudeva. Dramatic Ritual in Early Christism. Evidence of St. Proclus. Dramatic Origin of the Eucharist and the Mass. Early Christian Religious Drama.	

	PAGE
The Liturgies. The Greek Mysteries. Persistence of the Pagan Drama	227
 XV. THE SEVEN MYTH.	
§ 1. The Seven Brother-Martyrs; The Seven Sleepers; The Seven Priests; Contact of Mithraism and Christism; The Banquet of Seven; Cox on the Seven Myth; The Sleepers and Martyrs = the Seasons and Pleiads. § 2. The Seventh Month; Devakî's Children; Vedic Myth of the Eighth Child; The Younger Brother; The Seven Planetary Spirits; Eight Egyptian Cosmic Powers; The Week Myth; Semitic Usage; Saturn; Possible Myth Connections; Alteration in Order of Months. Birthday Festival Dates	235
 XVI. THE DESCENT INTO HELL.	
Introduction of the Dogma. Pagan Precedents. Osiris, Hermes, Dionysos, Adonis, Orpheus, Zamolus, Mithra, Apollo. Balder and Arthur. Krishna's Descent. Cerberus. The "Two" rescued "Sons" in both Legends. Also in Legend of Buddha. The Dragon. Christian Borrowings from Buddhism	249
 XVII. SPURIOUS AND REMOTE MYTH-PARALLELS.	
The Address to the Fig-tree. Doctrine of Immortality. Transfiguration. Feet-washing. Raising the Widow's Son. Anointing the God. Judas and his Bag	258
 XVIII. EXPLANATION OF THE KRISHNA MYTH.	
§ 1. Its Obviously Solar Character; Repetitions in Solar Mythology; Krishna and Agni; Cox's Analysis; Krishnaite Syncretism; The Three Râmas = One; The Cult of Bala Râma. § 2. Weber's Chronological Scheme; Senart's Refutation; Weber's Answer: Its Insufficiency. § 3. Buddhist and Other Parallels	261
 XIX. KRISHNAITE AND CHRISTIST DOCTRINE.	
§ 1. Weber's Misconception of Wilson; Wilson's Real Opinion. § 2. Lorenser on the Bhagavat Gîtâ; His Error as to "India"; Vague Early Use of the Name; Chrysostom's Evidence; No Early Hindu Translation of Gospels. § 3. Date of the Gîtâ; Telang's Suggestion; Lorinser's Parallels; Their Futility; Pagan and New Testament Parallels; Universal Theology and Ethics; Brahman and Christian Pantheism. § 4. <i>Bhakti</i> and <i>Sraddhâ</i> ; Christian Doctrine of Faith from Judaism; Its Universality; Muir, Telang, and Tiele, on the Indian Doctrine; Position of Senart and Barth	274
 XX. THE "WHITE ISLAND."	
Weber's Thesis. Lassen's Argument. Telang's Refutation. Tiele's Endorsement. Senart and Barth Take Same Ground. Christian Tritheism and Monotheism	290

XXI. THE CRUCIFIXION MYTH.	PAGE
The Error of Moor and Higgins. Was there an Asiatic Crucifixion Myth? Andrade and Giorgi on the Crucifixion Myth in Tibet. Indra Crucified. Dr. Oldfield's Corroboration. Krishna on the Tree. The "Two Thieves." Frauds on Wilford. Wilson on Gnostic Borrowings from India. Epiphanius' Testimony. Difficulty of the Question. Orthodox Criticism. Jacolliot	294
XXII. SUMMARY.	
Results Positive and Negative. The Christian Hypothesis Found Untenable and Absurd. All the Evidence Against It. Presumption of Some Christian Borrowing from Krishnaism as well as from Buddhism	299

PART III.

THE GOSPEL MYTHS.

PREAMBLE.

FIRST DIVISION. MYTHS OF ACTION.

§ 1. The Virgin Birth	317
§ 2. The Mythic Marias	319
§ 3. The Myth of Joseph	326
§ 4. The Annunciation	328
§ 5. The Cave and Stable Birth	329
§ 6. The Birthday	331
§ 7. The Massacre of the Innocents	332
Note on the Moses Myth	333
§ 8. The Boy Jesus in the Temple	334
§ 9. The Upbringing at Nazareth	335
§ 10. The Temptation	343
§ 11. The Water-Wine Miracle	356
§ 12. The Scourging of the Money-Changers	358
§ 13. The Walking on the Water	358
§ 14. The Healing of Two Blind Men	359
§ 15. Other Myths of Healing and Resurrection	360
§ 16. The Feeding of the Five Thousand	362
§ 17. The Anointing	363
§ 18. The Riding on the Ass and Foal	366
§ 19. The Myth of the Twelve Apostles	370
§ 20. The Characteristics of Peter	378
§ 21. The Myth of Judas Iscariot	384
§ 22. The Last Supper	386
§ 23. The Transfiguration and the Passion	392
§ 24. The Crucifixion	394
§ 25. The Seamless Robe	414

	PAGE
§ 26. The Burial and Resurrection	416
§ 27. The Banquet of Seven	418
§ 28. The Ascension	420
 SECOND DIVISION. MYTHS OF DOCTRINE.	
§ 1. The Jesuine Discourses in General	423
§ 2. The Preaching of John the Baptist	432
§ 3. Jesus as a Preacher of Universalism	433
§ 4. Jesus as Messiah	434
§ 5. Jesus as Preparing the Kingdom of God	437
§ 6. The Sermon on the Mount	440
§ 7. The "Lord's Prayer"	450
§ 8. The Woman Taken in Adultery	457
§ 9. Gnostic and Cryptic Parables	460
§ 10. The Late Ethical Parables in Luke	462
§ 11. The Discourses of the Fourth Gospel	463
Epilogue	470

PREAMBLE.

THE three treatises making up this volume stand for a process of inquiry which began to take written form nearly fifteen years ago. It set out with a certain scientific principle and a certain historical purpose: the principle being that Christian Origins should be studied with constant precaution against the common assumption that all myths of action and doctrine *must* be mere accretions round the biography of a great teacher, broadly figured by "the" Gospel Jesus; while the practical purpose was to exhibit "The Rise of Christianity, Sociologically Considered." To that end I was prepared to assume a primitive cult, arising in memory not of a great teacher but (perhaps) of an obscure thaumaturg, concerning whom there is preserved, in the Epistles of Paul, only the tradition of his crucifixion. But the first independent explorations, the first rigorous attempts to identify the first Jesuists, led to a series of fresh exposures of myth. "Jesus of Nazareth" turned out to be a compound of an already composite Gospel Jesus, an interposed Jesus the Nazarite, and a superimposed Jesus born at Nazareth. And none of the three aspects equated with the primary Jesus of Paul. Each in turn was, in Paul's words, "another Jesus whom we have not preached." And the Twelve Apostles were demonstrably mythical.

While, therefore, a sociological foundation was in a measure reached, it was plain that the ground had not yet been cleared of mythology; and at that stage I even

surmised that, in view of the known frequency alike of Messiahs and Jesuses in Jewry, an actual succession of Jesuses might be the historical solution. Such a theorem represented a still imperfect appreciation of the scope and dominion of the principle of Myth; and it fitly chanced that the sociological inquiry was arrested for the time as a literary task, though continued as a study.

Soon after, at the request of the late Mr. Bradlaugh, I undertook the research concerning "Christ and Krishna" by way of solving scientifically and objectively a simpler general problem in mythology and hierology; and about the same time the undertaking of an independent research into Mithraism further enabled me to see the Christian problem in a fuller scientific light. Thus the original inquiry, never discontinued as a subject of thought, led gradually to a conception of Mythology as a more catholic science, or a more scientific classification of certain knowledge, than it has yet been shown to be in the hands of its cultivators, admirable as much of their work is. That view I have now tried to set forth critically and historically in the opening treatise on "The Progress of Mythology." The study on "Christ and Krishna," which first appeared serially in Mr. Bradlaugh's journal and was reprinted (1889) with additions and corrections, is now again a good deal expanded, and in parts rewritten. It seeks on one hand to illustrate, in detail, what seems to me the right method of dealing with certain problems glanced at in the opening treatise; and on the other hand to lead organically into the general problem of Christian mythology. Finally, the survey of "The Gospel Myths," portions of which were also published serially, is recast and greatly enlarged, by way of finally clearing the mythological ground for sociology "proper."

As regards the theoretic problem, I cannot better

prepare a reader to catch my point of view than by indicating it critically as against the diverging doctrine of the recently-published work of Dr. Percy Gardner entitled "Exploratio Evangelica," a treatise in many respects wise and stimulating, which came into my hands only when the bulk of this volume was in type. As I regard it, Dr. Gardner's treatise relies unduly on the old, untested, metaphysical conception of mythology. Consider, for instance, the proposition that "probably at that time [early Christian age] in all the Levant *the true myth-making age was over. But the faculties which had been employed in the construction of myth were still at work.* And they found their natural field in the adaptation of history to national and ethical purpose."¹ Such language seems to me to confute itself: in any case, the whole drift of the present work is a gainsaying of such divisions as the one thus sought to be drawn. Dr. Gardner speaks again² of "the vague and childish character of *the true myth.*" I submit that there are all degrees of vagueness and childishness in myth, from the grossest to the slightest, and that though there may be classification there can be no scientific sunderance. A myth commonly so-called, when all is said, is simply a false hypothesis (whether framed in bad faith or in good faith) which once found easy credence; and when inadequate or illusory hypotheses find acceptance in our own time, we see exemplified at once the play of the myth-making faculty and that of the normal credulity on which it lives.

Any "explanation" which is but an *a priori* formula to account for an uncomprehended and unanalyzed process of phenomena is a "true myth" in so far as it finds utterance and acceptance. Some myths are less fortuitous, more purposive, than others; and a question

¹ Work cited, p. 149.

² *Id.* p. 108.

What a myth is.

Myths at the present day.

might fairly be raised as to whether there is not here a true psychological distinction. My answer is that we can never demonstrate the entire absence of purpose: it is always a question of degree; and it makes little scientific difference in our elucidation whether we impute more or less of ignorant good faith, provided we recognize variation.

A quite primitive myth may have been a conscious fiction on the part of its first framer; but the credulity of its acceptors assimilated it in exactly the same way as others framed in better faith.

Even if, however, we restricted ourselves to false hypotheses framed in absolute good faith, the old conception of myth remains a stumbling-block to be got rid of. It obscures our comprehension of the psychological process even of myths commonly so-called. Dr. Gardner, for instance, writes that "the Phœnician kinsmen of the Jews retained down to quite late times the terrible custom of human sacrifice. Its abolition very early among the Hebrews was a mark of their unique religious consciousness, and a sign of their lofty destiny."¹ This proposition

I should describe as the quasi-explanation of an uncomprehended process in terms of the phenomena themselves; as in the propositions that opium has a dormitive virtue, and that nature abhors a vacuum. And such explanations, I submit, so far as they are accepted, are myths, made in just the old way, though with far higher intellectual faculties. Even as the movement of the sun and planets was not scientifically accounted for by supposing them to be tenanted by Gods or guiding spirits, so the evolution of a community and its culture is not accounted for by crediting the community with "unique consciousness" and "lofty destiny." The old explanation was a myth; the other is only myth on a different plane of instruction.

¹ Work cited, p. 105.

Purpose in
myths.

First a
fiction.
Then credu-
lous accep-
tance of it.

Very good

The effect of this change of theoretic standpoint must needs be considerable, at least as regards phraseology. I will merely say that, conceiving myth thus comprehensively, I have sought to track and elucidate it by lines of evidence not usually made to co-operate. Myth in the Gospels, on the view here taken, is to be detected not merely by means of the data of comparative mythology, but also by means of analysis of the texts. As Baur argued long ago, from criticism of the history we must come to criticism of the documents. But the later criticism of the documents, prepossessed by old conceptions of myth, has often made little account of concrete mythology, and has so fallen back on Hegelian formulas—that is, on philosophical myths—where real solutions were quite feasible. At the same time, students of mythology have often taken myth for biography, for lack of analysis of the texts. As illustrating my idea of what is to be gained by the concurrent use of both procedures, I may point to the subsections of "Gospel Myths" dealing with (a) the Myth of the Temptation, and (b) the Myth of the Upbringing at Nazareth. The first undertakes to trace an ostensibly fortuitous myth by various methods of comparative mythology, in particular by colligating clues in art and in literature; the second undertakes to trace a relatively purposive myth by analysis of the texts which gradually construct it, leaving part of the problem of the motives, in the latter case, for a wider historical inquiry. And here we have cases which test the old theory of myth—Baur's and Dr. Gardner's conception of "the true myth." The first myth, we say, is ostensibly fortuitous, the second ostensibly purposive. But neither assumption is susceptible of proof. The first myth, in its Christian aspect, *may* have originated in a deliberate fiction by a priest who gave what he knew to be a false explanation of a picture or sculpture; the second *may* have

Myth detected by data of comparative mythology, and analysis of texts.

Myths fortuitous and purposive

originated in good faith, with a theorist who did not believe that the first Christian Nazarenes were so called in the sense of Nazarites. In fine, what makes a myth "truly" so is not the state of mind of the man who first framed it, but the state of mind of those who adopted it. And that state of mind is simply uncritical credulity.

The state of mind that makes a myth.

It may be that in some process of textual criticism in the treatise on "The Gospel Myths" I have unknowingly put forward theses already advanced by other critics. The German literature in that department is so immense that I have not sought to compass even the bulk of it, having read a good deal with little decisive gain. Much of it is a mere prolongation of dispute over the more problematical, leaving the less problematical line of demonstration unoccupied. It seems in every way more profitable to put the case afresh from my own standpoint, on the lines of my own chosen approach, which is the result or sequel of a survey of previous methods; and to do this without even criticising a whole series of such methods which strike me as finally fallacious. Not that they were not meritorious in their circumstances; on the contrary, they frequently convey a melancholy impression of a great expenditure of intellectual power to no effectual end. In comparing Bruno Bauer, for instance, with "safe" modern practitioners like Bernhard Weiss, one cannot but be struck by the greater originality and acuteness of the free-lance. But the bulk of the work of Bruno Bauer is practically thrown away by reason of his false Hegelian or quasi-Hegelian method; for he is more Hegelian than Strauss, and constantly frames his solutions in terms of the more problematical rather than in terms of the less. Every phenomenon in the text is by him accounted for through an *a priori* abstraction of the constructive consciousness of the early Christian community,

acting as it theoretically needs must; so that we get psychological and sociological myth in place of theological. The negation is right; the affirmation is wrong.

Broadly speaking, such work as Bruno Bauer's, and much of that of Strauss, answers to Comte's conception of the normal rise of a metaphysical mode of thought as the first departure from a theological; this though Bauer thought that he and Weiss and Wilke and others had reached the true "positive" standpoint. The truth is that none of us—certainly not Comte—could make the transition so promptly as he supposed himself to have done; at best we grow less and less metaphysical (or, as I should prefer to put it, *less a priori*), more and more "positive." This appears even in the weighty performance of F. C. Baur, a much more "positive" thinker and investigator than Bruno Bauer, whose error of method he exposed with perfect precision. Common prudence, therefore, dictates the admission that the method of the following treatises is likely to suffer in some degree from survivals of the "metaphysical" method. I claim only that, so far as it goes, it is in general more "positive," more inductive, less *a priori*, more obedient to scientific canons, than that of the previous critics known to me who have reached similar anti-traditional results. It substitutes an anthropological basis, in terms of the concrete phenomena of mythology, for a pseudo-philosophical presupposition.

That this will give it any advantage as against the ecclesiastical defence would be too much to look for. I have suggested that that defence represents, however unconsciously, the organization of an economic interest; that the ostensible course of criticism is not a matter of the logical evolution of discovery, as in a disinterested science; but of the social selection of types of teacher. No stronger brain than Baur has dealt with historical theology in

Germany since his day: either through their own choice of other careers or the official selection of other candidates, the stronger German brains have mostly wrought in other fields. So, in the Church of England, we see no continuous advance in the application of clerical ability, from Milman onwards, to the problems of Christian Origins. If the capable men are there, they are mostly gagged or obstructed. The late Dr. Edwin Hatch, the one Churchman who in our time has done original and at the same time valid and important service in that field, appears to have been in a measure positively ostracised in his profession, though the sale of his works shows their wide acceptability even within its limits. The corporate interest and organization avail to override unorganized liberalism, there as elsewhere.

When then Dr. Percy Gardner, writing as a layman, avows that he cannot hope "to escape the opposition and anger which have always greeted any attempt to apply to the Christian creed the principles which are applied freely to other forms of faith,"¹ I may well count on a worse if more cursory reception for a book which in places represents him as unwarrantably conservative of tradition. Such treatises properly appeal to serious and open-minded laymen. Unfortunately the open-minded laity are in large part satisfied to think that traditionalism is discredited, and so take up an attitude of indifference to works which any longer join issue with it. None the less, those who realize the precariousness of modern gains in the battle against the tyranny of the past must continue the campaign, so doing what they can to save the optimists from, it may be, a rude awakening.

J. M. R.

June, 1900.

¹ Work cited, p. 118.

Same words.

CHRISTIANITY AND MYTHOLOGY.

PART I.

THE PROGRESS OF MYTHOLOGY.

CHAPTER I.—THE SCIENCE AND ITS HISTORY.

§ 1. *The Problem.*

THERE are stages in the history of every science when its progress can be seen to consist in applying to its subject-matter a wider conception of relations. Scientific progress, indeed, mainly consists in such resorts to larger syntheses. In geology, as Mr. Spencer points out, “when the igneous and aqueous hypotheses were united, a rapid advance took place”; in Biology progress came through “the fusion of the doctrine of types with the doctrine of adaptations”; and in Psychology, similarly, an evolutionary conception partly harmonized the doctrines of the Lockian and Kantian schools.¹ It is true that Mr. Spencer proceeds to turn the generalization to the account of his theorem of a “Reconciliation” between “Religion” and “Science,” on a ground which he declares to be outside both—that is, to belong to no science whatever. Nevertheless, the general proposition as above illustrated is just; and there is an obvious presumption that it will hold good of any science in particular.

*a wider
conception
of
relations
necessary.*

It is proposed in the present inquiry to try whether the renewed application of the principle may not give light and

¹ *First Principles*, p. 22.

leading in the science—if we can agree so to call it—of mythology. By some the title may be positively withheld, on the ground that mythology so-called is seen in recent discussions to be only a collection of certain lore, to which are applied conflicting theories; and it is not to be denied that there is enough of conflict and confusion to give colour to such an account of the matter. But inasmuch as there has been progress in course of centuries towards scientific agreement as to certain classifications of the phenomena; and as this progress can be shown to consist in successive extensions of the relations under which they are contemplated, there is reason to conclude that mythology is a science like another, though latterly retarded more than others by the persistence of pre-scientific assumptions.

What is
myth?
Traditional
error.

91.
Its general
conditions.

Note

Myth, broadly speaking, is a form of traditional error; and while the definition of mythology turns upon the recognition of the special form, the bane of the science has been the more or less complete isolation of it in thought from all the other forms. The best analogy for our purpose is perhaps not any of those cited from Mr. Spencer, but rather the case of Astronomy, where Newton's great hypothesis was by way of seeing planetary motions as cases of motion in general. Any form of traditional error, it seems clear, must occur in terms of the general conditions of traditional error; and such error in general must be conceived in terms of men's efforts at explanation or classification of things in general, at successive stages of thought. Yet in our own time, under the ostensible reign of Naturalism, after ages in which men looked at myth from a point of view that made almost invisible the psychological continuity between myth-makers' mental processes and their own, we find accomplished students of the science still much occupied in setting up walls of utter division between the mythopoeic and all other mental processes; between the different aspects of early classification; between the aspects of myth; between myth and "religion," religion and magic, myth and early morals, myth and legend, myth and allegory, myth and tradition, myth and supernaturalist biography. If past scientific experience can yield us any guidance,

it would seem that such a tendency is frustrative of scientific progress.

§ 2. *The Scientific Beginnings.*

Gains there have certainly been, in the past half century. When we compare its results with those of the previous ten or even four centuries, as sketched in the *Introduction à l'Etude de la Mythologie* of Eméric-David,¹ we must admit a considerable progress; though if we should chronicle as he did the backward treatises as well as the others we could make a rather chequered narrative. The definite gain is that the naturalist method, often broached but not accepted before our time, is now nearly though not quite as generally employed in this as in the other sciences, whereas in past times there was an overpowering tendency to handle it from the point of view of that belief in "revelation" which so completely vitiated the study of Greek mythology in the hands of Mr. Gladstone, the last eminent practitioner on the old basis. How effectively that belief has retarded this science in particular may be partly gathered from Eméric-David's historical sketch.

Belief in
"Revelation" and
Mr Gladstone.

Beginning with Albric in the eighth century, Maimonides in the twelfth, and Boccaccio in the fourteenth, the learned academician makes out a list of between seventy and eighty scholarly writers on mythology down to Benjamin Constant. He might have extended the list to a hundred; but it is duly representative, save in that it oddly omits all mention of Fontenelle, whose essay *De l'origine des fables*, as Mr. Lang points out, substantially anticipated the modern anthropological and evolutionary point of view.² This was of all previous treatises the one which could best have enlarged and rectified the French historian's own method, and he either overlooks or wilfully ignores it, taking note only of the very one-sided view of the anthropological principle presented later by De Brosses and his disciple Benjamin Constant. It may be helpful at this point, however, to note the manner of the progression, as very fairly

¹ Paris, 1833.

² As does his *Histoire des Oracles*, 1686.

set forth in the main by Eméric-David, and in part by Karl Ottfried Müller, in his earlier *Prolegomena*.¹

The movements of advance and reaction in the history of mythological science, then, may be thus summarily and formally stated.

1. In rationalistic antiquity, the principle of evolution was barely glimpsed; and on the one hand the professed mythologists aimed at multiplying symbolical or allegorical meanings rather than tracing development, while on the other the school of Evemerus framed a set of false "naturalistic" explanations, being equally devoid of the requisite historical knowledge. The mythologists sank the fabulous personalities of the Gods in symbols; the sceptics sank them in actual human personages.

The Personalities of the Gods and Symbols.

2. A substantially scientific beginning was made by the late school which reduced the symbolism of the older schools to a recognition of the large part played by sun and moon in most systems. In the hands of Macrobius (4th c.) this key is applied very much on the lines of the modern solar theory, with results which are still in large part valid. But that step of science, like nearly every other, was lost under Christianity and the resurgence of barbarism.

The part played by sun and moon.

3. The Christian Fathers, when not disposing of Pagan Gods as demons, had no thought save to ridicule the old mythologies, failing to realize the character of their own.

4. The scholars of the Renaissance recognized the principle of Nature-symbolism, as set forth by Macrobius; but when, in the sixteenth century, scholarship began to classify the details of the pagan systems, it had no general guiding principle, and only accumulated data.

Nature-Symbolism.

5. Bacon, who made symbolism his general principle of interpretation, applied it fancifully, slightly, and without method. Selden and others, with much wider knowledge, applied the old principle that the pagan deities were personalized nature-forces, as sun and moon. But others, as

Bacon and Symbolism.

¹ Neither supplies a complete survey; and the present sketch is of course only a bird's-eye view. For others, see Preller, *Griechische Mythologie*, Einleitung, § 7; Decharme, *Mythologie de la Grèce Antique*, Introd., pp. vi.-xx.; and Father Cara, *Esame critico del sistema filologico e linguistico, applicata alla mitologia e alla scienza delle religioni*, Prato, 1884.

Leibnitz, Vossius, Bochart, and Mosheim, confused all by the theological presupposition (adopted from the ancient atheists) that the pagan deities were deified men, and by assuming further that the early life of antiquity was truly set forth only in the Bible.

6. Other earlier and later theologians, as Huet, though opposed by critical scholars such as Selden, Basnage, and Vico, went still further astray on the theory that pagan Gods were perversions of Biblical personages; and that all pagan theologies were perversions of an earlier monotheism. Such an application of comparative method as was made by Spencer of Cambridge (*De Legibus Hebræorum*, 1685) was far in advance of the powers of assimilation of the time.

7. Sceptics like Bayle derided all explanations alike, and ridiculed the hope of reaching any better.

8. New attempts were in large part *a priori*, and some went back to Evemerism, as that of Banier, who saw myth origins in perversions both of historical fact and of Biblical narratives. The sound theorem of personalized forces was reiterated by Vico and others, and that of savage origins was thrown out by Fontenelle, but the theological method and premisses overrode scientific views. Other rationalists failed to apply the clue of evolution from savagery, and wrongly staked all on purposive allegorizing.

9. The Naturalism of De Brosses (*Du Culte des Fétiches*, 1760), while rightly pointing towards savage life, ignored the many grades between fetichism and the higher paganism, and thus failed in the main to win even rationalistic students. On the other hand, the great astronomical and symbolical system of Dupuis (chief work, 1795), a development from the ancient positions of Macrobius, carefully applied to the Gospels and to the Apocalypse, did not account for the obscurer primitive elements of myth, though it rightly carried the mythological principle into the surviving religions. This was effectively done also in the slighter but more brilliant work of Volney, *Les Ruines* (1791), which proceeds on an earlier research by Dupuis. In England and Germany the deistic movement of last

century also led to the recognition of myths in the Old Testament.¹

10. In the same period, Heyne developed a view that was in large part scientific, recognizing that myth is "the infant language of the race," lacking "the morality and delicacy of a later age," and that in later periods early myths were embellished, altered, and poeticized. He radically erred, however, in assuming that the early myth-makers only provisionally albeit "necessarily" personified natural forces, and always knew that what they said had not really happened. On the other hand, while teaching that their myths came to be literally believed by posterity, he erred in ascribing to the Homeric bards a conception of these myths as pure symbol; this conception having originated with the theosophic priests of Asia and Egypt, whence it reached the post-Homeric Greek rationalists. Voss,² opposing Heyne as he later did Creuzer, did not improve on Heyne's positions, leaning unduly to the belief that primeval man allegorized reflectively, and making too much of the theory of deified ancestors, later insisted on by Mr. Herbert Spencer.

11. A distinct advance in breadth of view was made by Buttmann,³ who purified Heyne's doctrine as to the essential primitiveness or aboriginality of typical myth, and freshly laid the foundations of Comparative Mythology, recognizing that the same primitive mode of thinking could give rise to similar myths in different nations independently of intercourse, and calling for a comprehensive collocation. He thus naturally made too little of the special local significance of many myths.

12. Creuzer,⁴ on the other hand, while rightly recognizing

¹ Preller (*Griech. Mythol.* ed. 1860, i. 20) finds a predilection to particular points of view in the different nations—the Italians arguing for allegory, the Dutch for perversion of the Bible, the French for Evemerism and other pragmatic principles, and the Germans standing for an original monotheism. But this classification, as Preller implicitly admits, is only loosely true; and it no longer holds good in any degree.

² *Mythologische Briefe*, 1794.

³ Treatises between 1794 and 1828, collected in *Mythologus*, 2 Bde. 1828-9.

⁴ *Symbolik und Mythologie der alten Völker, besonders der Griechen*, 4 Bde. 1810-12.

that personification was a fundamental law of early thought, nevertheless founded on the false assumption of a "pure monotheistic primitive religion," and so stressed the idea of reflective allegory as to obscure his own doctrine that primeval man personified forces quite spontaneously. Yet he introduced real clues—as that of the derivation of some myths from ritual, and that of verbal misconception, a theory later carried to excess by F. G. Welcker, and still later by Max Müller. He also noted the fact—fallaciously stressed by Mr. Lang in our own day—that the primitive mind made no such distinction between spirits and bodies as is made in later theology. Hermann, proceeding on similar fundamental lines, likewise conceived myth too much in terms of the constructive allegorizing of priest-hoods, overlooking the spontaneous and relatively fantastic beginnings of savagery.

Alongside of these later German writers, whom he does not mention, Eméric-David does not innovate in any effective fashion. His own interpretative principle, further set forth in his treatise *Jupiter* (1832), is that laid down with caution but applied without any by Bacon—that myths are symbolical attempts to explain Nature; and to make his treatise broadly scientific it needed that he should have recognized how the principle of so-called fetichism, or the actual primitive personalizing of nature-forces, preceded and conditioned the systems which the writer handled as purposively symbolical, and symbolical only. The anthropological method had been indicated by Heyne, whose system he admitted to be "true at bottom"; but on this side he made no use of it. As it was, he partly rectified the bias towards a single astronomical point of view which narrows the great treatise of Dupuis, *De l'Origine de tous les Cultes* (1795). Concerning that, he rightly admitted that with all its limitations "it still constitutes the most luminous treatise that has been written on mythology";¹

¹ *Introduction* cited, p. lxxv.

and his own contribution may be said to have consisted in adding several wards to Dupuis's key, or new keys to Dupuis's two or three, letting it be seen that the old symbolical interpretation of nature was at once a simpler and a more complicated matter than Dupuis had supposed. At the same time, he made no attempt to carry on the great practical service of Dupuis and his school, the application of the pagan keys to the Christian religion, but confines himself to the Greek.

The same thing falls to be said in some degree of the earlier *Prolegomena* of Karl Ottfried Müller (1828),¹ of which Eméric-David makes no mention, on his principle of not criticising living writers. But none the less had Müller brought to the study of Greek mythology a learning, a genius, and a method which give a really scientific character to his work. Of the school of Dupuis he shows no knowledge. Whether this came of policy or of non-acquaintance we cannot well divine; but it is much to be regretted that he thus failed to come in touch with the most vital problem of his study. On the other hand, he did much to clear up the scientific ground so far as he did go. One of the most intellectual and most alert German scholars of that great period, he brought to bear on all Greek matters an exact and critical knowledge such as had hardly ever before been vigilantly applied to mythology; and though he did not escape the bane of all pioneers—indefiniteness and contradiction—he did not a little to reduce previous confusions. Good samples of his services as a first-hand investigator are his statement² of the grounds for holding that the complete myth of Prometheus and Epimetheus is late, and his analysis of the myth of the transformation of Callisto into a bear. In the latter case, by strict scrutiny of all the sources—a thing too seldom thought of before his day—he arrived at the clear demonstration that “Callisto is nothing else than the Goddess and her sacred animal combined in one idea,” and that

¹ Translated in English in 1844, under the title *Introduction to a Scientific System of Mythology*, by J. Leitch.

² *Introduction*, Eng. tr., p. 58.

“Callisto became a bear, in the original legend, for this reason only, that the animal was sacred to Arcadian Artemis.”¹ His deficiency on the concrete side appears in the same connection, when he observes that to Artemis as a Nature-Goddess “the most powerful creatures in nature, *such as the bear*, were sacred.” This is unduly vague, and leaves us asking, in the light of later anthropology, whether the bear is not traceable further, and, in the light even of previous explanation, whether the bear was not after all associated with the Goddess because of the verbal resemblance between the names *arktos* (bear) and Artemis.

As regards general principles, Otfried Müller is perhaps only at two points open to serious criticism. He rightly controverted the view, implicit in Dupuis and explicit in Creuzer (though Creuzer also implied the contrary), that systematic symbolism and allegory were the main and primary sources of myth; arguing with Schelling that myths were at the outset essentially spontaneous and unartificial. At the same time, when dealing with the substantially sound thesis of Heyne, that “the mythus [in its early forms] was the infant language of the race,” and that “poverty and necessity are its parents,”² he is led by his passion for classical antiquity to put an unreasonably flat contradiction,³ and thus seems to set his face against the fundamental truth that all religion begins in savagery. Thus he inconsistently lays stress⁴ on the conscious moral purpose of the myth of Zeus and Lycaon, which he holds to be very early, while disregarding the immorality of others, both earlier and later. The difficulty becomes acute when, making a needless verbal strife over the term “allegory,” he insists that, if a certain worship were “allegorical in the *strict* sense, it could be no worship at all.”⁵ He goes on:—

“Here we have to deal with a mode of contemplating the world which is quite foreign to our notions, and in which it is difficult for us to enter. It is not incumbent on the historical investigation of mythology to

¹ *Id.* pp. 16-17.

² Cited by Müller, p. 256. Schelling had said the same thing (*Ueber Mythen*, 1793), cited by Strauss, *Leben Jesu*, Einleit. § 8.

³ Müller, p. 20.

⁴ P. 18.

⁵ P. 61.

ascertain the foundations on which it rests. This must be left to the highest of all historical sciences—one whose internal relations are scarcely yet dreamt of—the history of the human mind.”

On which one at once answers, first, that mythology, as distinguished from mere *mythography*, must be of itself a part of the history of the human mind, if it is anything, and that it must in some sort settle its bases as it goes along; and, secondly, that Müller himself, in the next breath, goes on to specify such a foundation when he speaks of a “certain necessity of intuition” as underlying the formation of mythi. But indeed he is thus reasoning out psychological foundations all through his treatise, and we are entitled to say that the deliverance above cited is in plain contradiction of his practice, as well as of his later and really sound decision, given in comment on Creuzer, that “mythology is still an historical science like every other. For can we call a mere compilation of facts history? and must we not, in every field of the science of history, *ascend on the ladder of facts to a knowledge of internal being and life?*”¹

That is the most serious contradiction in the book; and we can but say on the other hand that the reasoner enables us to correct him when he errs. His frequent protests (echoed by Grote) against the attribution of “allegory” to myths in general, do but point to the confessed imperfection of the “history of the human mind”—a consideration which should have made him more circumspect verbally. We are left asking, *What is allegory?* and while we can all agree that early Greeks certainly did not allegorize as did Spenser and Bunyan, and that the Prometheus story in its complete form is clearly late, we are none the less forced to surmise that something of the nature of allegory may enter even into the earliest myths—that at times even the myth-making savage in a dim way necessarily distinguishes *at the outset* between his myth and his other credences, or at least is often in a manner allegorizing when he *makes* his story to explain facts of nature. Where he differs from the scientific man—though not from the religious—is in his power of passing from the half-allegoric conception to the

¹ *Id.* p. 273.

What a
science of
History does
for us.

literalist. In any case, it is not historically or psychologically true that, as Müller puts it, "mythus and allegory are ideas lying [necessarily] far apart";¹ and we may, I think, be sure that some of the writers he antagonized were using the word "allegory" in a sense of which the practical fitness is tacitly admitted by his repeated use of the phrase "*strictly* allegorical." All the while he admitted,² as does Grote after him,³ that an allegorical explanation frequently holds good of *parts* even of early myths; which is really a surrender of the essentials in the dispute.

As against these minor confusions, however, we must place to the credit of Ottfried Müller a general lucidity and catholicity of method that make him still a valuable instructor. While he avoided the extravagances of the symbolists, he sensibly recognized and explained many symbols;⁴ and while he objected to allegoric systems he gave the sound advice: "Let us therefore, without rejecting anything of that kind, merely hold back, and wait for the development of individual cases."⁵ Without laying down the anthropological method, he prepares us for it, especially by his keen attention to the geography of Greek myth; and while disclaiming all-round interpretation he helps us to many. The most helpful of his many luminous thoughts is perhaps his formulation⁶ of the principle, implicitly to be gathered from Creuzer,⁷ that in many cases "the whole mythus sprang from the worship, and not the worship from the mythus"—a principle accepted from him by Grote⁸ and by a number of recent students, including Professor Robertson Smith and Mr. J. G. Frazer, and likely in the future to yield results of the first importance when applied to living as it has been to dead problems.⁹ But thereby hangs, as we shall see, a tale to the effect that the course of

¹ *Id.* p. 272.

² *Id.* pp. 18, 58.

³ *History of Greece*, second par.

⁴ *E.g.* that of the Dog-Star, p. 135.

⁵ P. 18: *cp.* p. 19.

⁶ Pp. 171, 175, 206, and previously in his *Orchomenos* (1820).

⁷ Cited by Müller, p. 270, from the introduction to the *Symbolik*.

⁸ *History*, end of ch. i.

⁹ It must always be kept in mind that the worship which has given rise to a given mythus has itself arisen out of a previous mythus, on a different plane of conception. See below, ch. iii. § 1, *end*, and compare Bergmann, *Le Message de Skirnir et les Dits de Grimnir*, 1871, p. 3.

true mythology does not run smooth. The application of the science to living problems is the weakest point in its present development. Thus far, then, we may round our summary of progress :—

13. Karl Ottfried Müller and Eméric-David, proceeding on earlier studies and laying down general principles for myth interpretation (the former looking narrowly to documentary evidences and the latter putting stress on general symbolic values), alike failed on the one hand to explain the barbarous and primeval element in mythology, and on the other hand to connect mythology with the surviving religions. Each, however, gave sound general guidance, and Müller in particular established some rules of great importance.

§ 3. *The Relation to Christianity.*

So close on the publication of Ottfried Müller's *Prolegomena* as not to be fundamentally affected by it, came Strauss's epoch-marking *Leben Jesu* (1835), after Dupuis the first systematic application of mythological science to the Christian system. For several generations the mythical principle had been partially applied by German scholars to matters of current belief: the stimulus of the English deistical school having borne fruit more continuously among them than elsewhere. Deistical in spirit the movement remained; but it had all the easier a course; and the line of thought entered on by the school of Eichhorn, following on Heyne and Reimarus, was not even blocked, as was the case in England and France, by the reaction against the French Revolution. The Old Testament narratives, of course, were first dealt with; but so fast did criticism go that as early as 1802 there was published by G. L. Bauer a treatise on the Hebrew Mythology of the Old and New Testaments; a work which is noteworthy as already laying down the principle that it is of the highest importance to compare the myths of different races, thereby to learn how parallels may stand not for identity of matter, but for similarity of experience and way of thought among men of

a given culture-stage.¹ It also affirms in so many words that "the savage animizes all things (*denkt sich alles belebt*), for only what lives can act, and thus he personifies all."² But in his interpretations Bauer follows the early rationalist method of reducing mythic episodes to exaggerations or misconceptions of actual events; and he makes little advance on Semler, who had connected the Samson myth with that of Hercules as early as 1773.³

Very important.

A generation later, whereas Keightley in producing the first edition of his *Mythology of Ancient Greece and Italy* (1831) could say that "in selecting mythology" he "took possession of a field which lay totally unoccupied,"⁴ the Germans had a whole library of treatises compared with which even his much improved second edition was but a respectable and prejudiced manual. So far had free scholarship travelled at a time when the teachers of the insular and stipendiary Church of England⁵ were declaring that "infidelity" was no longer associated with scholarly names. While English theology and philosophy, under ecclesiastical auspices, were at an absolute standstill, German thought was applying rational tests, strenuously if imperfectly, to nearly every department of traditional knowledge. The progress, of course, was halting and uncertain at best. Strauss has shown⁶ how vacillating and inconsistent were most of the innovators in their advance; how they were always trying to limit their concession, attempting first to explain miracles as natural events, then admitting myth to a certain extent, seeking for each myth a historical basis, striving to limit the field of myth to early times, trying later to draw a line between the Old Testament and the New, and next to admit myth as regards only the infancy of Jesus—always compromising in the interests of faith, or of simple peace and quietness. Yet so early as 1799 an anonymous writer on "Revelation and Mythology" had substantially

¹ *Hebräische Mythologie*, 1802, Vorrede, pp. iv. v.

² *Id.* i. 17.

³ *Id.* ii. 81.

⁴ Pref. to 2nd edition, 1838.

⁵ "The priest-ridden kingdom of the leopards" was Alexander Humboldt's label for England in the early part of the century.

⁶ *Leben Jesu*, Einleitung, § 6, 8-11.

set forth Strauss's own thesis, that "the whole life of Jesus, all that he should and would do, had an ideal existence in the Jewish mind long prior to his birth"; and between this and the more limited treatment of details by intermediate writers the world was partly prepared for Strauss's own massive critical machine.

And yet, though the formidable character and effect of that is the theme of an abundant literature, it was not a decisive force, even for theoretical purposes. On the side of mythological science it was defective in that it overlooked many of the Pagan myth-elements in the Christian cult, above all those bound up with the very central doctrine of theanthropic sacrifice and eucharist; and this by reason of a too exclusive attention to Judaic sources. It dealt with the salient item of the Virgin-birth in the light of general mythology; but it ignored the connecting clue of the numerous ancient ritual cults of a Divine Child. It showed the incredibility and the irreconcilable confusions of the resurrection story; but it did not bring forward the mythic parallels. As regards the process of mythic accretion, it did not properly apply the decisive documentary test that lay to hand in the Pauline epistles. At many points Strauss is Evemeristic even in condemning Evemerism, as when he decides the historic reality of John the Baptist to be certain, and the story of the Sermon on the Mount to be in the main genuine, though manipulated by Matthew in one way and by Luke in another. Dealing with the obviously mythical story of the betrayal by Judas, he never realizes the central preposterousness of the narrative,¹ and treats it as history. On the side of philosophy, again, he strikes a scientific reader dumb by his stupendously naïve assurance that his long investigation of the life of Christ need have no effect on Christian doctrine. "The inner kernel of the Christian faith," he writes in his preface, "the author knows to be entirely independent of his critical researches. Christ's supernatural

¹ Cp. *The Myth of Judas Iscariot*, in the author's *Studies in Religious Fallacy*.

birth, his miracles, his resurrection and ascension, remain eternal truths, however far their reality as historical facts may be put in doubt. Only the certainty of this can give calmness and weight to our criticism, and distinguish it from the naturalistic criticism of previous centuries, which aimed at upsetting the religious truth along with the historical fact, and so necessarily came to conduct itself frivolously. The dogmatic import (*Gehalt*) of the Life of Jesus will be shown by a dissertation at the end of the work to be uninjured." There are different conceptions of what constitutes frivolity; and it would have been pleasant to have Voltaire's estimate of the seriousness of a scholar and theologian who produced an enormously laborious treatise of fifteen hundred pages to disprove every supernatural occurrence connected with the life of Jesus, and at the beginning and end assured everybody that it all made no difference to religion, and that those must be frivolous who thought otherwise. Only in Germany, it may be decided, can such supernatural flimsiness of theory be conceived as solid philosophy; and even in Germany, in the generation of Hegel, there was a good deal of serious¹ if not frivolous comment on Strauss's final advice to the clergy to keep on telling the mythical stories to the people with due attention to the spiritual application, thereby furthering the "endless" progress towards the dissolution of the forms in the consciousness of the community—this in a work in the vernacular. Mr. Arnold gravely if not bitterly complained that Colenso ought to have written in Latin, though Colenso's avowed purpose was to put an end to deception. He might a good deal more relevantly have given the advice to Strauss, whose work he not very ingenuously exalted in comparison.

It was not unnatural that such a teaching should leave the practice of Christendom very much where it found it. If the "rational" critic felt as Strauss did after fifteen hundred pages of destructive argument, there was small call for the priest to alter his course. And what has

¹ E.g. Julius Muller *On the Theory of Myths*, tr. in *Voices of the Church against Strauss*, 1845, pp. 176-7.

happened in regard to the mythology of both the Judaic and the Christian systems is roughly this, that after the mythical character of the quasi-supernatural narratives had been broadly demonstrated, specialist criticism, instead of carrying out the demonstration and following it up to its conclusions in all directions, has fallen back on the textual analysis of the documents, leaving the question of truth and reason as much as possible in the background. Later work on Hebrew mythology there has been, but not, as before, on the part of professed theologians; and even that, as we shall see, is to a considerable extent unconvincing, thus failing to counteract the arrest of the study. On the professional Biblicists it seems to have had no practical effect, their lore being at least kept free of any specific acknowledgment. One is inclined to surmise that this process of restriction turns upon one of selection in the personalities of the men concerned. It would seem impossible that after Strauss and Baur and Renan and Colenso the stronger and more original minds could deliberately take up theology as of old; and as a matter of fact no minds of similar energy have appeared in the Churches since that generation completed their work. For Baur we have Harnack; for Bishop Colenso Bishop Barry; the Bishop Creightons meddling with none of these things. The powerful minds of the new generation do not take up orthodox theology at all; the business is for them too factitious, too unreal, too essentially frivolous. So we get a generation of specialists devoutly bent on settling whether a given passage be by P or P², by the Yahwist or the Elohist, the Deuteronomist or the Redactor, the Jerusalem Davidian, or the other, or the Saulist or the Samuel-Saulist—an interesting field of inquiry, well worth clearing up, but forming a singular basis on which to re-establish the practice of taking that mosaic of forgery and fiction as the supreme guide to human conduct. Of course this is the only species of rational criticism that can be pursued in theological chairs even in Germany; so that even if a professor recognizes the need for a moral and intellectual criticism of the Judaic literature, he must be fain to confine himself to documentary analysis

and platitudes. But the dyer's hand seems to be subdued to what it works in. Even in our own day, men engaged in the analysis tell us that the scribes and interpolators dealt with really had supernatural qualifications after all.¹ It thus appears that when the higher criticism has done its work, the higher common-sense will have to take up the dropped clues of mythology and conduct us to a scientific sociologico-historical view of religious development. The textual analysis is a great gain; but to end with textual analysis is to leave much of the human significance of the phenomena unnoticed.

So with the mythology of the New Testament and the ritual usages of the Churches. In that regard also we now hear little of the element of myth, but a good deal of the composition of the Gospels; and men supposed to know the results of that analysis are found treating as great spiritual truths, special to Christianity, data and doctrines which entirely appertain to the systems and credences of buried Paganism. The men capable of realizing the seriousness of the fact either remain outside the Church or follow Strauss's counsel inside. The undertaking to frame a psychological presentment of the "real Jesus" is still seriously pursued, albeit the documentary analysis does not leave even a skeleton for the accepted historical figure, wherewith to materialize the silent spectre of Paul's epistles. Thus Evemerism is still the order of the day as regards the Christian mythus; and people who are supposed to have the elements of a sound culture, including the results of mythological science, are often almost entirely ignorant of any bearings of Comparative Mythology on the Gospels, even though they may have learned to disbelieve in miracles. Mythological science has been prudently restricted to other fields, spiritually remote from modern faith and ritual. The principle seems to be that of the legendary preacher who, when arranging with a brother cleric to take his place, warned him against speaking on

¹ See Canon Driver's *Introduction to the Study of the Old Testament*, 1st ed. pref. p. xv.

capital and labour, as the congregation included some large employers, or on temperance, as there were some brewers ; but added that “ for a perfectly safe subject he might take the conversion of the Jews.” Mythology is kept perfectly safe, and made to figure as an academic science, by being kept to the themes of the Dawn, the Tree, the Storm-Cloud, and the heathen Sun-God ; to Sanskrit, savagery, totems, fairies, and Folk-Lore.

CHAPTER II.—MODERN SYSTEMS.

§ 1.—*The Etymological and Solar Schools.*

WHILE, however, our science has thus faltered and turned back on those of its paths which come the straightest and the nearest to living interests, it has not been idle or altogether ill-employed. Even as the textual analysis of the Jewish and Christian sacred books lays a solid foundation for the mythologist of the future, so the modern schools of mythology, in building up the Comparative Method, with whatever laxities of logic and psychology, have been making the way easier for successors who will not submit to any restriction of their field. While Strauss, Colenso, and Renan were successively disturbing the peace of the Church without much resort to the mass of mythological lore, new and professed mythologists were beginning anew, and with on the whole a scientific bias, the presentment of mythological science so-called, with hardly any avowed recognition of its bearing on current creeds. Unfortunately the new schools are thus far much at issue among themselves, by reason mainly of their differing ways of restricting the application of the Comparative Method. Kuhn, who in Germany began the new investigation on the basis of the Vedas, was an acute or rather ingenious theorist along particular lines of myth-phenomena, his tendency being to reduce all myths to those of the phenomena of storm-cloud, wind, rain, and lightning. To Kuhn, however, belongs the honour of inaugurating the new Comparative Mythology in terms of the affiliation of Greek God-names to Sanskrit;¹ and his brother-in-law Schwartz, who had collaborated with

¹ Steinthal, *The Original Form of the Legend of Prometheus*, Eng. tr. with Goldziher, pp. 363-5; E. H. Meyer, *Indoger. Mythen*, 1883, i. 1.

him in collecting the *Norddeutsche Sagen* (1848), did real service to the science by his analyses and explanations of nature-myths in his *Ursprung der Mythologie* (1860). About the same period in England, Mr. Max Müller founded a separate "Aryan" school, standing mainly on the solar principle as against the storm-system of Kuhn; and inasmuch as this was but a setting of one myth-type in place of another, the scientific advance was not great. On one side, indeed, there was retrogression. At the very outset of his work in 1856, Müller thought fit to insist that

"As far as we can trace back the footsteps of man....we see that the divine gift of a sound and sober intellect belonged to him from the very first; and the idea of a humanity emerging slowly from the depths of an animal brutality *can never be maintained again.*"¹

Three years later was published *The Origin of Species*, followed in 1871 by *The Descent of Man*. But Professor Müller's conception of mythology was now fully shaped. Proceeding further mainly on the supposed primordially of Sanskrit, and preoccupied with the philological problems set up by any comparison of Sanskrit and Greek God-names, he elaborated the theory of Creuzer and Welcker as to verbal confusions, putting it that myths in general originated in a "disease of language,"² and that, the disease once developed—like the pearl in the oyster or the wart on the skin—it remained fixed in the languages derived from the given stem. The disease consisted in the primitive tendency to make proper names out of names for phenomena, the embodiment of genders in all names having the effect of setting up the habit of thinking of natural objects as animate and sexual. It is surprising that such a theory should ever be formulated without the theorist's seeing that the problem is shifted further back at once by the bare fact that the genders were attached to the words to begin with. Had Professor Müller merely claimed that in some cases a

¹ *Comparative Mythology*, in *Oxford Essays*, 1856, p. 5; cp. *Chips from a German Workshop*, ed. 1880, ii. 8. The passage ends with the phrase "such unhallowed imputations." In the reprint the adjective becomes "gratuitous."

² "Mythology, which was the bane of the ancient world, is in truth a disease of language." *Lectures on the Science of Language*, 3rd ed., p. 11. Cp. p. 240.

myth arose as it were at second-hand by the misunderstanding of a name, he might have made out a reasonable case enough; for certain racial and geographical and other myths can best be so explained. And when he wrote that

“Nothing is excluded from mythological expression; neither morals nor philosophy, neither history nor religion, have escaped the spell of that ancient sibyl. But mythology is neither philosophy, nor history, nor religion, nor ethics,”¹

he was putting a true conception which transcends the limitary principle of “disease of language.” At the same time he declared that “mythology is only a dialect, an ancient form of language.” Yet in the previous sentence he had, like his namesake Ottfried, repudiated Heyne’s formula, “*ab ingenii humani imbecillitate et a dictionis egestate*”; substituting the anti-evolutionary “*ab ingenii humani sapientia et a dictionis abundantia*”—as if it were *sapientia* to confuse the meanings of words. Thus the false principle overrides the true: sound conceptions passed on by Professor Müller himself have received development at other hands; and for lack of correlation in thinking he has repeatedly assailed his own positions; though, conscious of having held them, he is ready to resume them. Hence his attempts, under stress of controversy, to show that his doctrine was not what opponents represented it, have not only brought upon him some criticisms of much asperity, but have plunged the subject in extreme confusion. At times he has seemed to concede that the philological position is too narrow. After describing comparative mythology as “an integral part of comparative philology,”² he protested that he had “never said that the whole of mythology can be explained” as “disease of language,” claiming only that “some parts of mythology” are “soluble by means of linguistic tests.”³ Yet he later seems to oscillate between the extreme view and the broader;⁴ and he says in so many words that it is a pity that Comparative Mythology has got into any hands save those of Sanskrit scholars.⁵ Nor have

¹ *Essay on Comparative Mythology*, end.

² *Id.* as first cited, p. 86.

³ *Introd. to Science of Religion*, ed. 1882, p. 252.

⁴ *Natural Religion*, 1889, pp. 22, 24.

⁵ *Id.* p. 484.

his attempts to subsume Schleiermacher's philosophy of religion into his mythology been more fortunate; the philosophy and the psychology are alike inexpert; and not a little of his philological mythology is unsatisfying in detail, apart from all other issues. In particular, certain etymologies which Dr. Müller represented as scientifically certain—*e.g.*, the equations between *gandharva* and *kentauros* (Kuhn), *Erinnys* and *saranyu*, *Daphne* and *Ahana*—have been rejected as unsound by Mannhardt and others, as Mr. Lang is always reminding us.

In all probability this reaction has in turn gone too far; and latterly we find E. H. Meyer, in his *Indogermanische Mythen*, holding to the *gandharva-kentauros* equation against his master, Mannhardt. Pure philology was after all Dr. Müller's specialty; and he will probably stand on that when he has fallen on other issues. Next to his metaphysic and his psychology, it is his confidence of concrete myth-interpretation in terms of names that most weakens his authority. Most careful mythologists will admit that they are apt to put too much faith in their own explanatory theories: that they can hardly help coming at times to conclusions on a very incomplete induction. But Professor Müller has never lost the confidence with which he solved his early problems, while his readers, on the other hand, have in many cases lost the contagion. And this criticism applies in some degree to the brilliant performance of his most powerful English disciple, the Rev. Sir George Cox. That excellent scholar's *Mythology of the Aryan Nations* (1st ed. 1870), the most vivid and eloquent work in mythological science, was constructed on the assumption that the "Aryan" heredity was all decisively made out once for all on the old lines; and that the whole mythology of the races covered by the name is a development from one germ, or at least from a family of germs, found in the "Vedic and Homeric poets." In his second edition he admitted that since he wrote fresh proof had been given of the "influence of Semitic theology on the theology and religion of the Greeks"; but such an admission does not scientifically rectify the theoretic error embodied in his original thesis.

note

Anthropological as well as mythological research, following on the lines marked out by Fontenelle and De Brosses, had been showing not merely Semitic influences on Greeks, but (1) an interplay of many other influences, and (2) a singular parallelism in the mythology of races not known to have had any intercommunication.¹ These facts supplied reason for a recasting of the mythological scheme, by way of recognizing that there is more than "one story" in hand, and that though "the course of the day and the year" covers a great deal of the matter, there are some other principles also at work. Further, Sir George Cox has quite needlessly grafted Dr. Müller's overbalanced theory of "disease of language" on his exposition. Dr. Müller on his part had classed his disciple as belonging to another school than his own—the Analogical as distinct from the Etymological²—and Sir George might profitably have made the same discrimination. For his own part he had rightly represented the primitive "savage" as *necessarily* personifying the things and forces of nature: to him they "were all living beings: could he help thinking that, like himself, they were conscious beings also? His very words would, *by an inevitable necessity*, express this conviction."³ For this "necessity" Sir George could quote Dr. Müller; but instead of noting that such a proposition dismissed *a fortiori* the theorem of "disease of language," he went on to include the latter, *à propos* of the principle of Polyonymy (or multiplying of names for the natural elements), which needed no such backing. With his usual candour he proceeded to cite the trenchant comment of M. Baudry, who in his essay *De l'interprétation mythologique*⁴ countered Dr. Müller before the "Hottentotic" school did. As M. Baudry pointed out, there was no "disease of language" in the case of secondary myths arising out of polyonymy, but simply failure of memory or loss of knowledge, such as may happen in the

¹ See Schirren's *Die Wandersagen der Neuseeländer und der Maui-mythos* 1856, and Tylor's *Researches into the Early History of Mankind*, 1865, p. 326.

² *Natural Religion*, pp. 484, 492.

³ *Mythology of the Aryan Nations*, ed. 1882, p. 21.

⁴ Published in the *Revue Germanique*, Fév. 1, 1868.

case of a symbolic sculpture as well as of an epithet. Sir George's solution was that "after all there is no real antagonism" between the two accounts of the matter—a mode of reconciliation rather too often resorted to by Dr. Müller on his own account. There is certainly "no real antagonism" if only Dr. Müller's erroneous formula be dropped, and M. Baudry's substituted; but as it happens Dr. Müller's, instead of undergoing that euthanasia, is still made to cover far more ground than M. Baudry's pretends to touch.

In other countries the linguistic misconception had a hampering effect even on good scholarly research, as in the case of the work of M. Bréal, *Hercule et Cacus: étude de mythologie comparée* (1863). It is there laid down that "Never was the human race in its infancy, however vivacious and poetic may have been the first sallies of its imagination, capable of taking the rain which watered the earth for the milk of the celestial cows, nor the storm.....for a monster vomiting flames, nor the sun.....for a divine warrior launching arrows on his enemies, nor the roll of the thunder for the noise of the ægis shaken by Jupiter..... Whence came all these images, which are found in the primitive poetry of all the Aryan peoples? From language, which creates them spontaneously without man's taking care (*sans que l'homme y prenne garde*)."¹ If this be true, early man never really personified anything; but his more highly evolved posterity did, merely because he had seemed to do so. In other words, the early man knew the sun to be inanimate though his language made him call it a person; and his descendants consequently regarded it as a person when they were able to describe it as inanimate. Here we have Heyne's old conception of a species of allegorizing which was inevitable and yet not believed in—a theorem more puzzling than the phenomena it explains.

In the circumstances it was natural that there should arise an anthropological reaction against the Sanskritist and "Aryan" school, with its theory of family germs and

¹ Work cited, p. 8.

inherited disease of language; its forcing of philological hypotheses on a psychological science; and its assumption that we can trace nearly every myth with certainty to a definite natural origin. So many myths are inconsistent with themselves; so many are but fumbling explanations of ancient rituals of which the meaning had been lost; so many have been touched up; so many embody flights of imagination that are not mere transcripts from nature;¹ so many are primitively stupid, so many have been combined, that such confidence is visibly excessive; and there are always plenty of cool heads pleased to shatter bubbles. But there is more than mere conservatism arrayed against the confident lore of Professor Müller and the brilliant ingenuity of Sir George Cox: there is the solid opposition of students who, finding myths just like those of the "Aryans" among all manner of savages, proceed to show that what is represented as exquisite fancy among early Aryans is on all fours with the clumsy tales of Dyaks and Hottentots, and that the interpreters are putting more into many Aryan myths than their framers did.

§ 2. *The Movement of Anthropology: Tylor.*

To such criticism a powerful lead was given by Dr. E. B. Tylor's *Researches into the Early History of Mankind* (1865) and *Primitive Culture* (1871), which colligate much of the anthropological science on which alone a sound mythology can be founded. At the outset, indeed, Dr. Tylor ranks himself among the adherents of Kuhn and Max Müller,² significantly coupling their names, though Müller had rejected Kuhn's interpretations in terms of cloud and storm and thunder, preferring to stake everything on the sun. But besides bringing into correlation many terms of folklore, Dr. Tylor added to the keys already on the mythologist's bunch that of the "Myth of Observation," showing

¹ See Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, 3rd ed. i. 306, as to some of the conditions under which primitive invention is developed.

² *Researches into the Early History of Mankind*, 1865, pp. 298, 326.

by many instances how the discovery of peculiar remains had given rise to fabulous interpretation, as in the case, already noted by Darwin, of the savage theory that the large animals whose skeletons are found underground must have been burrowers. By including such ideas under the concept of myth, Dr. Tylor was usefully pointing towards the general truth that all myth is but a form of traditional error; and in his later work on *Primitive Culture* he further widened the conception, guarding against Müller's limitary view, and pronouncing "material myth to be the primary, and verbal myth to be the secondary formation."¹ Again, while inconsistently separating mythology from religion,² he expressly recognized that "the doctrine of miracles became as it were a bridge along which mythology travelled from the lower into the higher culture. Principles of myth formation belonging properly to the mental state of the savage, were by its aid continued in strong action in the civilized world"³—restricting his instances, of course, to mediæval Catholicism. Finally, in his summary of "the proof of the force and obstinacy of the mythic faculty," he supplied a very suggestive list of its modes:—

"In its course there have been examined the processes of animating and personifying Nature, the formation of legend by exaggeration and perversion of fact, the stiffening of metaphor by mistaken realization of words, the conversion of speculative theories and still less substantial fictions into pretended traditional events, the passage of myth into miracle-legend, the definition by name and place given to any floating imagination, the adaptation of mythic incident as moral example, and the incessant crystallization of story into history."⁴

The main logical or scientific flaw in the exposition is one that almost corrects itself—the separation from all this of the study of "Animism," which is separately handled as the basis of Natural Religion. Obviously Animism is involved in the very first of the processes above specified as constituting myth—the animating and personifying of Nature. This is admitted in the earlier announcement, in the first chapter on Mythology (ch. viii.), that the doctrine of Animism "will be considered elsewhere as affecting

¹ *Primitive Culture*, 3rd ed. i. 299.

³ *Id.* p. 371.

² *Id.* p. 285.

⁴ *Id.* p. 416.

philosophy and religion, but here we have only to do with its bearing on mythology." But here Animism is one thing or category, Mythology another, and Religion yet another; the two latter ranking as separate departments or processes of intellectual life, and being merely acted on by the third. Such a position marks the limit to the direct service rendered by Dr. Tylor to the science of mythology and of hierology, though his indirect service is unlimited. To make further progress we must recast the psychological concept and statement, recognizing that Animism, Mythology, and Religion are alike but aspects of the general primitive psychosis; and that while we may conveniently make any one of the three names cover the primary phenomena, it is a fallacy to make them stand for three faculties or provinces of intellectual life. Such a conception is only one more unscientific severance of unity, yielding no analytic gain of clearness, but rather obscuring the problem. So much seems to be felt by Dr. Tylor when in his concluding chapter he remarks that

"Among the reasons which retard the progress of religious history in the modern world, one of the most conspicuous is this, that so many of its approved historians demand from the study of mythology always weapons to destroy their adversaries' structures, but never tools to trim and clear their own."¹

Unfortunately the schematic fallacy rather than the implications of the comment tends to stand as the author's authoritative teaching; and in one other regard Dr. Tylor regrettably endorses a separatist view of primitive thought. Concluding his exposition of Animism,² he writes that

"Savage animism is almost devoid of that ethical element which to the educated modern mind is the very mainspring of practical religion. Not, as I have said, that morality is absent from the life of the lower races. Without a code of morals, the very existence of the rudest tribe would be impossible; and indeed the moral standards of even savage races are to no small extent well-defined and praiseworthy. But these ethical laws stand on their own ground of tradition and public opinion, comparatively independent of the animistic beliefs and rites which exist around them. The lower animism is not immoral, it is unmoral."

The use of the word "comparatively" shows a half-

¹ *Id.* ii. 447.

² Ch. xvii. vol. ii. p. 360.

consciousness of the essential error of the proposition. Obviously the animistic beliefs and rites themselves stand on "tradition and public opinion": and the tradition and public opinion in all cases alike subsist in virtue of being those of the same series or congeries of peoples or persons, whose ethic tells of their religion and mythology, and whose religion and mythology are part of the expression of their ethic. As we shall see, a mythologist as separatist as Dr. Tylor himself on the question of religion and mythology is able to controvert him as regards his separation of religion and ethic.

Always the trouble is arbitrary classification and limitation, illusory opposition set up between two aspects of a coherent process; and we seem to be delivered from one obstacle only to collide with another, set up by the deliverer.

§ 3. *A priori Evolutionism: Spencer.*

The fatality is peculiarly striking in the case of the greatest co-ordinating thinker of the time, Mr. Herbert Spencer. Coming in the due course of his great undertaking to the problem of the evolution of religious beliefs, he does indeed necessarily posit unity in the psychological basis of credences, having already well established the psychic unity of the thinking faculty or process from its lowest to its highest stages. But with all the results of Comparative Mythology thus far before him, Mr. Spencer must needs make all religious concepts pass through the single ivory gate of Dreams, reducing all forms of the God-idea to a beginning in the primitive idea of ghosts or souls.¹ Here, indeed, the primitive *Welt-Anschauung* is envisaged as all of a piece; but the manifold of myth and worship is traced to the root of a single mode of error. Thus mythology is poised on a single stem, where inductive research shows it to have had many; and where in particular the study of animal life, which Mr. Spencer was so specially

¹ *Principles of Sociology*, 1876-82, §§ 52-204.

pledged to take into account, reveals a general propensity prior to that special development on which he rests the whole case.

Thus again the science of Mythology, which is the basis of the science of Hierology, is confronted by a principle of schism, as the result of a great thinker's determination to shape the doctrine of evolution in terms of his own specific thought, to the exclusion or subordination of other men's discoveries. Dr. Tylor had fully recognized the play of the ideas of ghost and soul in ancestor-worship, and the bearing of ancestor-worship on other forms; but he had also recognized as a primary fact the spontaneous personification by early man of objects and forces in Nature. Mr. Spencer on his side escapes the false dichotomy between ethics and religion; and he rightly brings myth and religion in organic connection; yet his forcing of all myth-sources back to the one channel of ancestor-worship and the conception of ghosts has given as large an opportunity to reaction as did any of the limitary errors of professed mythologists before him; and specialists with anti-scientific leanings, who set up a false separatism where he does not, are able out of his fallacy to make capital for a fresh version of supernaturalism.

On the constructive side, Mr. Spencer's service is clear and great. He has given new coherence to the conception of the inter-play of subjective and objective consciousness in primitive thought. No one, again, had better established the principle of continuity in the process of intelligence. Where Professor Müller, in the act of insisting on the presence of the "divine gift of a sane and sober intellect" in the lowest men, yet represented them as getting their myths by sheer verbal blundering, Mr. Spencer rightly stipulated that all primitive beliefs are, "under the conditions in which they occur, rational."¹ Where other students had either waived the relation of the higher theology to the lower, or had used the language of

¹ *Id.* § 52. This, it should be noted, is clearly put by Fontenelle two hundred years ago; and from him the principle was accepted by Comte, who esteemed his work.

convention, he consistently traces one process of traditional error from first to last. Where professed mythologists continue expressly to differentiate Hebrew from all other ancient credences, he decisively asks whether "a small clan of the Semitic race had given to it supernaturally a conception which, though superficially like the rest, was in substance absolutely unlike them?"¹ And yet his limitary treatment of the animistic process has enabled partizans of that other order, who see abnormality in Hebrew lore and who describe the myth-making process as "irrational," to turn his error to the account of theirs—this though the correction of his fallacy had been clearly and conclusively made by a student of his own school, and had been indicated before him by other evolutionists.

§ 4. *The Biological Correction.*

note. The point at issue is fully indicated by Mr. Spencer himself when he argues² that sub-human animals distinguish between the animate and the inanimate, though for them *motion* implies life; that the ability to class apart the animate and the inanimate is inevitably developed by evolution,³ since failure would mean starvation; and that accordingly primitive man must have had a tolerably definite consciousness of the difference,⁴ and cannot be supposed to confound the animate and the inanimate "without cause." Hence he must have had a fresh basis for his known Animism; and this came by way of his idea of ghost or soul, reached through his dreams.⁵

But on the face of his own argument, Mr. Spencer has gone astray. If motion be a ground for Animism with animals, and if the instinct be passed on to primitive man with the burden of effecting a closer discrimination among things, many of the phenomena of Nature were thrust upon him without his having the knowledge needed to make such discrimination. For him, the sun, moon, and stars, the

¹ *Id.* § 202.

² *Id.* § 61.

³ *Id.* § 64.

⁴ *Id.* § 65.

⁵ *Id.* § 73.

clouds, the rain, the winds, the rivers, the sea, the trees and plants, were all instances of more or less unexplained motion. What should he do, then, but personalize them? That problem had been put and the answer given by both Comte and Darwin, who lay to Mr. Spencer's hand; yet he overrides their reasoning as he overrides the crux.

Darwin's clue is given in his story of how his dog, seeing an open parasol suddenly moved by the wind, growled at it as he would at a suddenly appearing strange animal.¹ This clue is systematically developed in the essay of Signor Tito Vignoli on *Myth and Science* (1882), where Mr. Spencer's theory is respectfully but firmly treated as a revival of Evemerism; and where myth is shown to root in the animal tendency in question, on which Signor Vignoli had carefully experimented.² And it would not avail for Mr. Spencer to reply that he had already avowed the tendency of the animal to associate life with motion, but that this cannot lead to a fetichism which animises the non-moving. In stating the case as to the animal he had already admitted fetichism in so far as fetichism consists in animizing *inanimate things which are moved*. Thus his statement that fetichism is shown by both induction and deduction to follow instead of preceding other superstitions is already cancelled. It is a self-contradiction for him to argue that the savage, being unable to conceive separate properties, is unable to imagine "a second invisible entity as causing the actions of the visible entity."³ One answers: Quite so. The savage makes no such detour: he sees or feels motion, to begin with, and takes for granted its quasi-personality: it is only on the ghost-theory, as its author admits, that he assumes "two entities." And having begun to ascribe personality where there is motion without consciousness, he *might* proceed to ascribe personality or consciousness where there is no motion, though on this head we may grant the ghost-theory to have a special footing. But the essential point is that to sun, moon, and stars, to winds

note.

¹ *Descent of Man*, ch. iii. 2nd ed. i. 145.

² Work cited, ch. ii.

³ *Principles of Sociology*, § 163.

and waters, to trees and plants, the savage is spontaneously led to ascribe personality, *in so far as he speculates about them.*

Here Mr. Spencer has providently set up another defence, in the proposition¹ that it is an error to conceive the savage as theorizing about surrounding appearances; that in point of fact the need for explanations of them does not occur to him. This is certainly borne out in a measure by much evidence as to *lack* of speculation on the savage's part; but the solution is simple. *He theorizes about the forces that affect or seem to affect him*; else why should he ever reach fetichism at all, with the ghost-idea or without it? The dog, which animizes the suddenly moved stone in his kennel, probably does not animize the wind and the rain, unless they should become violent,² or the river, the light, and the darkness; and it may be that many savages could also go through life without doing so on their own account. But the simple noting that the sun rises and sets, if followed by any speculative reflection whatever, must by Mr. Spencer's own admission involve the animizing of the sun by the early savage, who has acquired no knowledge enabling him to explain the sun's motion otherwise; and that is the gist of the dispute. That ghost ideas when formed should affect and develop prior animistic ideas is likely enough: what must be negated is the proposition that they are the beginning of all mythology and superstition.

Thus rectified, Mr. Spencer's teaching, complemented by all the data of anthropology and mythology, gives the true form or standing-ground for mythological science. Taking myth as a form of traditional error, we note that such error can arise in many ways; and when we have noted all the ways we have barred supernaturalism once for all, be it explicit or implicit. Unfortunately the rectification has been ignored by those mythologists who are concerned to retain either the shadow or the substance of supernaturalism; and until the naturalist position is restated in full, four-square to all the facts, they will doubtless continue to obscure the science.

¹ *Id.* § 46.

² Cp. Vignoli, pp. 57-67.

The old fatality, indeed, is freshly illustrated in an almost startling fashion by Signor Vignoli, the corrector of the psychology of Mr. Spencer. His thesis includes the perfectly accurate propositions that "the mythical faculty still exists in all men, independently of the survival of old superstitions, to whatever people and class they may belong,"¹ and that it is "in the first instance identical and confounded with the scientific faculty."² That is to say, a myth is a wrong hypothesis made to explain a phenomenon, a process, or a practice. And with a fine unconsciousness Signor Vignoli supplies us later on with a sheaf of such hypotheses of his own. Christianity, he tells us, citing his *Dottrina razionale del Progresso*, "was originally based on the divine first Principle, to which one portion of the Semitic race had attained by intellectual evolution, and by the acumen of the great men who brought this idea to perfection"; and again, "the Semitic people passed from the primitive ideas of mythology to the conception of the absolute and infinite Being, while other races still adhered to altogether fanciful and anthropomorphic ideas of the Being."³ Here be old myths: in point of fact the Jewish God *was* anthropomorphic, and was *not* an "absolute idea"; and monotheistic doctrine was current in Egypt long before the Semites had any. Or, if "Semites" had the idea as early as Egyptians, they were certainly not the Hebrews. On the other hand, Signor Vignoli is so oblivious of the facts of comparative mythology as to consider it a specially "Aryan" tendency to desire a Man-God.⁴ He has forgotten that Attis and Adonis and Hercules and Dionysos, all of Semitic manufacture, had been as much Man-Gods as Jesus; and he has no suspicion that Samson and half-a-dozen other figures in the Bible had been Man-Gods⁵ till they were Evemerized by the Yahwists.

note

¹ Work cited, p. 3.

Id. p. 33.

³ *Id.* p. 175.

⁴ *Id.* p. 181.

⁵ Goldziher indeed writes, *Mythology among the Hebrews*, Eng. tr. (p. 248), that "Samson never got so far as to be admitted, like Herakles, into the society of the Gods." But this view is completely negated by the records of the worship of Samas or Samsu in the Babylonian system. Herakles is late in joining the Greek Gods because he is an imported hero. Samson in the Bible has been Evemerized into a mortal.

But there is an element of new myth in Signor Vignoli's statement over and above these historic errors: he pictures the "Semitic and Chinese races" as having "soon freed themselves from their mental bonds" in virtue of the fact that their "inner symbolism of the mind" was "less tenacious, intense, and productive." All which is simply sociological myth: the reduction of a vast and incoherent complex to an imaginary simplicity and unity of movement. To generalize "the Semite" and "the Aryan" as doing this and that is but to make new myths. Such a phrase as: "*the idea of Christianity arose in the midst of the Semitic people through him whose name it bears,*" is merely literary mythology; and "the intellectual constitution of the race" is a psychological myth. Signor Vignoli, in fine, has taken over without scrutiny a group of current historical myths, including the current conception of the Gospel Jesus, and the Renan myth that "the Semites" lacked the faculty for mythology;¹ and he has added to these fresh sociological and psychological and literary myths in the manner of Auguste Comte. He even becomes so conventionally mythological as to rank among the "peculiar characteristics" of "our" [the "Aryan"] race, "a proud self-consciousness, an energy of thought and action, a constant aspiration after grand achievements, and *a haughty contempt for all other nations.*"² As if the Assyrians, the Egyptians, the Chinese, the Hebrews,³ and the Fijians lacked the endowment in question. Evidently we must set the mythologist to catch the mythologist.

§ 5.—*Fresh Constructions, Reversions, Omissions, Evasions.*

Happily, gains continue to be made, despite aberrations; and while general principles are being obscured in the attempts to state them, new researches are made from time to time with so much learning and judgment as to give

¹ When Renan committed himself, the Babylonian mythology had not been recovered. Signor Vignoli accepts the myth with the Babylonian mythology before him.

² *Id.* p. 180.

³ Cp. Goldziher, pp. 250-7.

solid help towards clearing up and re-establishing the general principles. Of such a nature, indeed, are most of the first-hand researches of the past generation into the beliefs, rites, and practices of the contemporary lower races. It is safe to say, further, that every systematic survey of Mythology has served to clear up some details as well as to facilitate the recognition of general law by later students. This holds good of J. F. Lauer's posthumous *System der griechischen Mythologie* (1851), though it sets up a superficial classification in defining *Mythos* as a wonderful story dealing with a God, and *Sage* as a story dealing with men. It holds good of the *Griechische Götterlehre* of Welcker; of the admirably comprehensive *Griechische Mythologie* and *Römische Mythologie* of Preller; of the eminently sane and scholarly *Mythologie de la Grèce Antique* of M. Decharme; of the brilliant *Zoological Mythology* of Signor de Gubernatis; of the astronomical and other studies of Mr. Robert Brown, Jr.; of Goldziher's *Hebrew Mythology*, despite the undue confidence of some of its interpretations (as that Joseph is certainly the Rain, Jacob the Night, and Rachel the Cloud); of the theorem of the historical critics that Rachel and Leah and their handmaids may be myths of tribal groups and colonies; and of a multitude of general surveys and monographs, down to the monumental *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, edited by Dr. Roscher. Yet probably no survey is yet sufficiently comprehensive; and even the most masterly researches are found at times to set up obstacles to the full comprehension of the total mythological process.

No abler or more truly learned monograph has ever been written in mythology than Mr. Frazer's *Golden Bough* (1890). Proceeding partly on the memorable researches of Mannhardt, which as usual were ignored in England till long after they were accepted elsewhere, and partly on those of the late Professor Robertson Smith, it connects Mannhardt's and Smith's data with much cognate lore, and constructs a unitary theory with signal skill and circumspection. In Mr. Frazer's hands a whole province of mythology becomes newly intelligible; and henceforth multitudes of cases fall

easily into line in terms of a true insight into primitive psychology. But there accrues in some degree the old drawback of undue limitation of theory. Rightly intent on establishing a hitherto undeveloped principle of mythological interpretation, the cult of the Vegetation Spirit, Mr. Frazer has unduly ignored the conjunction—seen deductively to be inevitable and inductively to be normal—between the concept of the Vegetation-God and that of others, in particular the Sun-God. He becomes for once vigorously polemical in his attack on the thesis that Osiris was a Sun-God, as if that were excluded once for all by proving him to be a Vegetation-God. The answer is that he was both; and that such a synthesis was inevitable.

A few unquestioned facts will put the case in a clear light. Mithra, who, so far as the records go, was primordially associated with the Sun, and was thereby named to the last, is mythically born on December 25th, clearly because of the winter solstice and the rising of the constellation of the Virgin above the horizon. Dionysos and Adonis, Mr. Frazer shows, are Vegetation-Gods. Yet they too are both born on December 25th, as was the Babe-Sun-God Horos, who however was exhibited as rising from a lotos plant.¹ Now, why should the Vegetation-God be born at the winter solstice save as having been identified with the Sun-God?² Again, Mr. Frazer very scientifically explains how Dionysos the Vegetation-God could be represented by a bull; animal sacrifices being a link between the Vegetation-Spirit and the human sacrifice which represented him. But then Mithra also was represented by a bull, who is at once the God and his victim; also by a ram, as again was Dionysos. Yet again, Yahweh and Moloch were represented and worshipped as bulls; and it would be hard to show that *they* were primarily Vegetation-Gods, though Yahweh does, like Dionysos, appear “in the bush.”

(Now, the mere identification of different Gods with the

¹ See hereinafter, *Christ and Krishna*, Sec. xii.

² It is noteworthy that Apollo had *two* birthdays—at the winter solstice for the Delians, and at the vernal equinox for Delphi. Eméric-David (*Introduction*, p. cvi.) sets down the latter to the jealousy of Delphian priests. It probably stands for another process of syncretism.

same animal, however different might be the original pretexts, would in the ancient world inevitably lead to some identification of the cults; even were it not equally inevitable that the Sun should be recognized as a main factor in the annual revival of vegetation. In the case of Osiris there is the further obvious cause that Isis, his consort, is an Earth-Goddess, this by Mr. Frazer's own admission. The God must needs stand for something else than the Goddess his spouse. For Mr. Frazer, finally, the sun enters the vegetation cult as standing for the fire stored in the sacred fire-sticks.¹ But to assume that only in that roundabout way would primitive man allow for the obvious influence of the Sun on vegetation, is to shut out one of the most obvious of the natural lights on the subject. Once more the expert is unduly narrowing the relations under which he studies his object.

Such questions come to a focus when we bring comparative mythology to bear on surviving religion. The whole line of Mr. Frazer's investigation leads up, though unavowedly, to the recognition of the crucified Jesus as the annually slain Vegetation-God on the Sacred Tree. But Jesus is buried in a rock-tomb, as is Mithra, the rock-born Sun-God²; and it is as Sun-God that he is born at the winter solstice; it is as Sun-God (though also as carrying over the administrative machinery of the Jewish Patriarch³) that he is surrounded by Twelve Disciples; it is as Sun-God that, like Osiris, he is to judge men after death—a thing not done by Adonis or Attis; it is as Sun-God passing through the zodiac that he is represented successively in art and lore by the Lamb and the Fishes; and it is as Sun-God that he enters Jerusalem before his death on two asses—the ass and foal of the Greek sign of Cancer (the turning-point in the sun's course), on which Dionysos also rides.⁴ The Christ cult, in short, was a synthesis of the two most popular Pagan myth-motives, with some Judaic elements as nucleus

Jesus as the
Sun-God.

2
3
4
5
6
7

¹ *Id.* ii. 369.

² See hereinafter, *Mithraism*, Sec. 4.

³ See the author's *Studies in Religious Fallacy*, pp. 164-5, and articles in *National Reformer*, May 8th and 15th, November 20th and 27th, and December 4th, 1887.

⁴ Lactantius, *Divine Institutes*, i. 21.

(and some explicit ethical teaching superadded. Not till Mr. Frazer had done his work was the whole psychology of the process ascertained.

Such is the nature, indeed, of the religious consciousness that it is possible for some to recognize the exterior fact without any readjustment of religious belief. To the literature of Christian Origins there has been contributed the painstaking work, *Monumental Christianity, or the Art and Symbolism of the Primitive Church as Witnesses and Teachers of the one Catholic Faith and Practice*, by John P. Lundy, "Presbyter" (New York, 1876). Its point of view is thus put by its author in his preface:—"It is a most singular and astonishing fact, sought to be developed in this work, that the Christian faith, as embodied in the Apostles' Creed, finds its parallel, or dimly foreshadowed counterpart, article by article, in the different systems of Paganism here brought under review. No one can be more astonished at this than the author himself. It reveals a unity of religion, and shows that the faith of mankind has been essentially one and the same in all ages. It furthermore points to but one Source and Author. Religion, therefore, is no cunningly devised fable of Priest-craft, but it is rather the abiding conviction of all mankind, as given by man's Maker." On the other hand the author holds by the Incarnation, as being "a more intelligible revelation than Deism, or Pantheism, or all that mere naturalism which goes under the name of Religion."¹ Thus the good presbyter's conscientious reproductions of Pagan emblems serve to enlighten others without deeply enlightening himself, albeit he has really modified at some points his old sectarian conception.

What Mr. Lundy imperfectly indicates—imperfectly, because he has taken no note of many Pagan works of art which are the real originals of episodes in the Gospels—has been set down with great theoretic clearness by M. Clermont-Ganneau in his *L'Imagerie Phénicienne et la mythologie iconologique chez les Grecs* (1880). It is there shown, fully

¹ Work cited, p. 11.

if not for the first time, how a mere object of art with a mythological purport (as in a group or series of figures), passed on from one country to another, may give rise to a new myth of explanation, and may attach to a God of one nation stories which hitherto belonged to another nation. This theory, which M. Clermont-Ganneau ably establishes by some clear instances, has probably occurred independently to many inquirers:¹ in any case it is a principle of the most obvious importance, especially in the investigation of the myths of the Gospels.

As against these important advances, there is to be noted a marked tendency on the part of philologists to revert to etymology as the true and perfect "key to all mythologies." Thus the *Erklärung alles Mythologie* of Herr F. Wendorff (Berlin, 1889) is wholly in terms of the supposed root-meanings of names in ancient myth; and the *Prolegomena zur Mythologie als Wissenschaft, und Lexikon der Mythen-sprache* of Dr. P. W. Forchhammer (Kiel, 1891) turns on the same conception, with, however, a further insistence on Otfried Müller's doctrine that it is necessary to study the myth in the light of the topography of its place of origin. Dr. Forchhammer's motto runs: "Only through the knowledge of the local and chronological actualities in myths, and through the knowledge of the myth-language of the Greek poets, is the hidden truth of the mythus to be discovered." The criticism of such claims is (1) that all myths tended more or less to find acceptance in different localities, with or without synthesis of local topographical details—even Semitic myths finding currency and adaptation in Greece; and (2) that the hope to reach certainty about the original values of mythic names all round is vain. Some have an obvious meaning: concerning others philologists are hopelessly at variance. We must seek for broader

¹ The derivations of Christian myths from Pagan works of art hereinafter offered were all made out before I had seen or heard of the work of M. Clermont-Ganneau. See again H. Petersen's *Ueber den Gottesdienst des Nordens während der Heidenzeit* (1876), Ger. trans., 1883, p. 82, for an independent statement of the principle. It is endorsed, again, in Collignon's *Mythologie figurée de la Grèce*, 1884, pp. 113-4.

grounds of comprehension if we are to comprehend the bulk of the phenomena at all.

Finally, account must be taken, in any professedly comprehensive survey, of the play of a principle which in some hands is indeed much overstrained, but which certainly entered largely into ancient religion and symbol, that of phallicism. While some inquirers exaggerate, others evade the issue. But science cannot afford to be prudish; and in this particular connection prudery ends in facilitating nearly every species of general error above dealt with. That the subject can be handled at once scientifically and instructively has been shown by the massive work of General Forlong, entitled *Rivers of Life* (1883), in which the evolution of religious ideas is presented in broad relation with the general movement of the species. It is clear, indeed, that every line of research into human evolution is fitted to elucidate every other; and that there will be no final anthropological science until the intellectual and the material conditions of the process are studied in their connections throughout all history. Every problem of religious growth in a given society raises problems of economics and problems of political psychology. Thus far, however, we are hardly even within sight of such a sociological method as regards mythology. There it is still necessary to strive for the application of ordinary scientific tests as against the pressures of conservatism and reaction.

§ 6. *Mr. Lang and Anthropology.*

The protagonist, if not the main body, of the reactionary school is Mr. Andrew Lang, whose *Custom and Myth* (1884) and *Myth, Ritual, and Religion* (1889, revised ed. 1899) set forth his earlier views of the subject, otherwise condensed in his article on Mythology in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Written with a vivacity which somewhat irritates scholars on the other side,¹ and with a limpidity

¹ See Professor Regnaud's *Comment naissent les mythes?* 1878, p. xvii.

which is no small advantage in controversy, Mr. Lang's books perhaps make amends for setting up needless friction, by the fresh impulse they give to mythological study. In large part they stand on the sure ground of evolution and comparative anthropology; and they do unquestionably make out their oft-reiterated main thesis, that myth has its roots in savage lore and savage fancy, and that all bodies of myth preserve traces of their barbarous origin—a proposition specially applied by Mr. Lang to certain of the cruder Greek myths, such as that of Kronos and Saturn, concerning which a variety of "explanations" have been offered by mythologists. This main position no one seems to dispute. If there is any positive counter-theory, it is to be found in Mr. Lang's own later and obscurer argument that a high "religion" arises in the most primitive stage of life, either in or out of connection with a faculty possessed by the very same savages for "supernormal" knowledge¹—a theory so completely out of relation with his earlier exposition of Mythology that, to understand or expound the latter, we must for the time keep them apart. Taking his earlier mythology by itself, we can credit it with coherence and a general reasonableness. While, however, Mr. Lang may on this score claim to have established all he sought negatively to prove, he in turn is open even there to some criticism, not only for the method of his handling of the point supposed to be in dispute, but for his failure to carry out to its proper conclusions the evolutionary principle by which he professes to abide. It is thus necessary to rectify the course of the science by calling in question some of his doctrine.

To begin with, Mr. Lang has in the opinion of some of us overstated the stress of the difference between his point of view and that of the solar school. He has been oversolicitous to create and continue a state of schism. As a matter of fact, his main tenet is not only perfectly compatible with most of their general doctrine, but implicit in

¹ Cp. in the author's *Studies in Religious Fallacy*, the paper, *Mr. Lang on the Origin of Religion*, and the Appendix.

that. Inasmuch as Sir George Cox and Dr. Müller more or less definitely accept the principle of evolution in human affairs, the former in particular constantly comparing savage myth and folk-lore with the classic mythologies, there is no good ground for saying that they ignore or reject the anthropological method. Sir George expressly points to the primeval savage as the first and typical myth-maker; and he uses phrases similar to Mr. Lang's concerning the "psychological condition" of early man. But Mr. Lang is always charging upon that school a positive rejection of anthropological science. Quoting¹ Fontenelle's phrase,

"It is not science to fill one's head with the follies of Phœnicians and Greeks, but it is science to understand what led Greeks and Phœnicians to imagine these follies,"

he goes on: "A better and briefer system of mythology could not be devised; but the Mr. Casaubons of this world have neglected it, and even now it is beyond their comprehension." Now, as we shall see, Fontenelle's sentence may really be made an indictment against the method and performance of Mr. Lang himself; but it certainly does not tell against Sir George Cox, who, as the leading English exponent of a system of (implicitly) universal mythology, would naturally figure for Mr. Lang's readers as a typical "Mr. Casaubon" in this connection. The whole purpose of Sir George Cox's work is to "understand what led Greeks and Phœnicians to commit these follies": the only trouble is that, in the opinion of Mr. Lang and some of the rest of us—though we do not all go as far in Pyrrhonism as Mr. Lang—certain of his keys or clues are fanciful. Where Mr. Lang has made of these divergences a ground for challenging the whole body of the work, he was entitled only to call in question given interpretations. Mr. Lang on his own part really seems unable to see the wood for the trees.

There is absolutely nothing in Sir George's works that is incompatible with Fontenelle's doctrine as to the origination

¹ *Myth, Ritual, and Religion*, 1st ed. ii. 324, App. A; 2nd ed. ii. 343.

of mythology among primitive and savage men: on the contrary, that is more or less clearly implied all through them. Indeed, those of us who came to the study of mythology as evolutionists, taking Darwin's theory as substantially proved, found no more difficulty—apart from problems of interpretation—in Sir George Cox's pages than in those of Dr. Tylor, where the mental life of savages is the special theme. In this connection the idea dated back at least a century, to Heyne, with his derivation of the mythus "*ab ingenii humani imbecillitate et a dictionis egestate*," so much objected to by K. O. and Max Müller. We took savage origins as a matter of course, and were puzzled to find Mr. Lang in chapter after chapter insisting on this datum as if it were a struggling heresy, ignored or opposed by all previous mythologists. Nay, we were the more puzzled, because while Sir George Cox, clergyman and theist as he is, leads us definitely through mythology into or up least up to the reigning religion, carrying the principle of evolution further than we could well expect him to do, Mr. Lang not only shows himself more of an *a priori* theist than Sir George, but definitely refuses to apply the evolution principle beyond certain boundaries. Instead of seeking above all things to "understand what led Greeks and Phœnicians to commit these follies," he again and again flouts attempts at explanation, and falls back on the simple iteration that "all this came from savages," which is no explanation at all, but merely a statement of the direction in which explanation is to be sought. Part of his grievance against other schools is that they are too ready with explanations. When he does accept an explanation that goes beyond totemism, he has often the air of saying that it is hardly worth troubling about. Let us take his own definition of his point of view:—

"It would be difficult to overstate the ethical nobility of certain Vedic hymns, which even now affect us with a sense of the 'hunger and thirst after righteousness' so passionately felt by the Hebrew psalmists. But all this aspect of the Vedic deities is essentially the province of *the science of religion rather than of mythology*. Man's consciousness of sin, his sense of being imperfect in the sight of 'larger other eyes than ours,' is a topic of the deepest interest, *but it comes but by accident into*