

# The Abbeville Press.

BY W. A. LEE AND HUGH WILSON.

ABBEVILLE, S. C., FRIDAY, AUGUST 14, 1868.

VOLUME XVI--NO. 16.

**ADDRESS,**  
Delivered before the Abbeville District Bible Society at its Forty-fifth Anniversary, 29th July, 1868.

BY W. A. LEE, ESQ.

ABBEVILLE, S. C.,  
July 29th, 1868.

W. A. LEE, ESQ.—Dear Sir:—  
Having had the great pleasure of hearing your Address to the Abbeville District Bible Society to-day, we desire, for the good of the cause, that you will furnish a copy of it for publication in our papers.

Respectfully yours,

ROBT. H. WARDLAW,  
R. A. FAIR,  
THOS. THOMSON,  
REV. E. A. BOLLES.

ABBEVILLE, S. C.,  
July 29, 1868.

MESSRS. ROBT. H. WARDLAW AND OTHERS—Gentlemen:—In deference to your wishes, and with the hope that the Address may accomplish some good, I herewith transmit a copy for publication.

Respectfully yours,

W. A. LEE.

MY FRIENDS OF THE BIBLE SOCIETY, AND RESPECTED AUDITORY:—It is with feelings of profound diffidence that I approach the discussion of a subject appropriate to this occasion. They who are accustomed to minister at the altar, may approach with boldness, but a stranger,

"I pause, and enter awe'd, the temple of my theme."  
Briefly I propose to consider some of the evidences which Natural Theology offers of the being and attributes of God, next the connection between Natural and Revealed Religion, and lastly the most striking proofs and distinguishing characteristics of Revelation.

"I had rather believe," says Lord Bacon, "all the fables in the legend, the Talmud and the Alcoran than that this universal frame was without a mind; hence God never wrought miracle to convince Atheism, because his ordinary works convince it." Who that surveys the starry heavens above us; who that looks upon the broad earth beneath us; who that regards the myriad forms of existence that surround us; who that feels the pulsations of the physical and intellectual life within us; who that is conscious of the moral law, that regulates every heart; who standing in this temple of universal nature, so replete with evidences of the being and attributes of God, himself the highest manifestation, and the most convincing proof of the Divine power, and wisdom and goodness, can be guilty of the amazing blindness, the supreme folly of unbelief; can refuse his tribute of faith to the great Creator, who set his constellations in the sky,

"And the well founded earth on hinges hung,  
And cast the dark foundations deep,  
And bid the waltering waves, their oozy channel keep."  
But great as is the folly of the atheist, he still stops far short of the tremendous presumption of anti-theism. He does not positively affirm that God is not, but asserts merely, that there is no adequate proof of his existence. Any other position would be in the highest degree absurd. It would be to assume the attributes of the Deity himself,—the very omniscience and omnipresence of the God-head. To be able to say that there is a God, we have only to examine the proofs of his presence and power in some definite territory of his wide dominions, but to be able to affirm that there is no God, we must have ransacked the countless ages of eternity; we must have traversed the wide fields of universal existence; we must have sounded the depths of all knowledge, and comprehended the infinite itself. In other words, unless the anti-theist would preclude another Deity, by being one himself, he cannot know that the being whose existence he denies, does not exist.

But whilst he is guilty of the absurdity of arrogating to himself, the ubiquity and omnipresence of the God-head, the atheist in his blindness and insensibility to the proofs of the Divine existence, sinks beneath the level of our common nature. These proofs are so many, so various, and so overwhelming, that we know of no truths which are better established, or more universally conceded, than the being and attributes of God. They are so patent, as to be understood by the uneducated, at the same time, they derive additional illustration and fresh confirmation from the researches of science. The instinctive feeling and intuitive perception, that every effect must have a cause, which

lies at the foundation of all knowledge, forms the basis of the high argument, that a world exhibiting evident marks of wisdom and design could only have originated from a being of infinite wisdom, and power, and goodness. This argument admits of only one reply, that the world has always continued as it is, and that there has been an eternal succession of finite beings; which involves a contradiction and manifest impossibility.

Consider for a moment those manifestations of the Divine existence and character which are exhibited in the varied operations of nature. Behold the prevailing order and harmony of the universe, proclaiming the existence of universal law, regulating as well "the smallest as needing its care and the greatest as not exempted from its power"—law which establishes the typical forms of organized being, and harmonizes the infinite developments of organized life—law which gives harmony to colors and symmetry to forms—law which controls the appetency of plants and the instinct of the animals, which guides the uerring mechanism of the bee, and the sure migrations of the waterfowl—law, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever, the one and unchanging, and which amid all the fleeing forms, and varied scenes of this present being, manifests the eternal archetypes of Divine order, and harmony and beauty.

Again behold the wonderful adaptation of means to an end, which is impressed upon the whole creation—the collocations and arrangements of matter—the manifold adjustments of place, and figure and magnitude, of light and heat and color, by which the varied forces of nature are made to subserv a common purpose and carry out the great designs of the Creator. Who that observes the frame work of any human mechanism—the construction, for example of a watch—the elasticity of the manispring, the regularity of the balance wheel, the varying forces of the levers,—all contributing to a single result, but will conclude necessarily, that this is the work of an intelligent and skillful artist. And turning to the great laboratory of Nature, we are surrounded on all sides with the evidences of design. The human frame itself "fearfully and wonderfully made," with its delicately constructed eye, taking in with lens and retina, the beauty and brightness of every scene, with its ear keenly alive to all the harmonies of Nature, with its complicated network of brain and nerves, and muscles and ligaments forming the nicely adjusted instrument by which the soul holds communion, with the outer world, sensitive to every external impression and obedient to every internal impulse, furnishes the highest manifestation of the wisdom and benevolence of the Divine Architect.

Again, survey the events of the Divine Providence, manifesting his controlling supervision over the world which he has made, and guiding all the forces of Nature to the accomplishment of his all-wise purposes, and learn from those that he is not only the Great Creator, but the wise and beneficent ruler, displaying his presence and power, alike in the operations of nature, the mutations of race, the checkered destiny of nations, and the experiences of the individual consciousness.

Turn to the human soul itself, "the presence chamber of the King of Kings," and there beholding the manifestations of the visible presence, ask yourselves in the emphatic language of Scripture, "He that formed the eye shall he not see; he that planted the ear shall he not hear; he that teacheth man knowledge shall he not know?" That blind and unconscious matter cannot originate the phenomena of mind, is one of those intuitions which lie at the basis of all knowledge, and is proved by the light of its own consciousness. The very fact that the soul is capable of entertaining these "thoughts which wander through eternity," perceptions dim though they may be of the infinite and eternal, indefinite happiness and boundless aspirations which lift it to the infinite source of the "Good, the Beautiful and the True," proves its heavenly lineage and Divine origin.

But would you learn one of the most striking proofs of the existence of a moral Governor of the universe, you must derive it from the moral constitution of man, and the supremacy of conscience. Philosophers may differ as to whether conscience be an original or a derived faculty, but all agree that it is the rightful master, and legitimate arbitrator over the passions, appetites and affections of our

nature. Its motions may be unheeded, and its authority disregarded, but though dethroned, it is the rightful monarch still, enforcing its sanctions by those keen inflictions of remorse, which form the penalties of its violated law. The idea of superintendency and supremacy is a necessary constituent in our apprehension of this faculty, and belongs to it from the very economy and constitution of our nature. "Had it strength as it has right," says Bishop Butler, "had it power as it has manifest authority, it would absolutely govern the world." An internal monitor and ever present judge, it suggests necessarily the conviction of the existence of a Supreme Judge and sovereign ruler who placed it in the human breast, as the representative of his authority, and the witness of his will and character. To borrow the language of Chalmers, "There is a depth of mystery in everything connected with the existence or the origin of evil in creation, yet even in the fiercest uproar of our stormy passions, conscience, though in her softest whispers, gives to the supremacy of rectitude, and the voice of an undying testimony, and her light still shining in a dark place, her unequalled accents still heard, in the loudest outcry of nature's rebellious appetites, forms the strongest argument within reach of the human faculties, that in spite of partial or temporary derangements, Supreme Power and Supreme Goodness are at one."

Such are some of the proofs which Natural Theology furnishes of the being and attributes of God. They establish the existence of a Divine Ruler, seated upon the throne of the universe, and demonstrate the perfection of his character. This order and harmony of nature, these manifold adjustments, and adaptations to man's physical, intellectual, and moral constitution, this sustaining power and providential care, these promptings of the moral law within, all proclaim the Wise Creator, the Beneficent Parent, the Moral Governor and the Righteous Judge. They constrain us to say,

"These as they change Almighty Father, these are but thy varied God: the rolling year is full of thee."

Whilst such are the proofs which Natural Theology furnishes of the being and attributes of God, it can furnish very little light upon the state and destiny of man. Here it but proposes problems which it cannot solve, discloses mysteries which it cannot fathom, and conducts to labyrinths of difficulty where it can furnish no guiding clue. But even here it has a high function to discharge. The hopes which it inspires and the fears which it awakens, furnish the motives which prompt the search and point the way to that purer and better light which is reflected from God's eternal word. It required no voice from the Almighty to teach us that our nature is in ruins. The world without and the world within alike proclaim it. War, and pestilence and famine, disease and sickness and death, all show how the course and constitution of nature has been disordered, and its beauty and harmony disfringed. The promptings of each individual consciousness tells us how much our nature has lost its original brightness, and its divine impress, how the natural gradation of its faculties has been inverted, the supremacy of conscience been lost, and our whole nature estranged from the love and adoration which is due to the creator. Nature discloses our lost and ruined condition, but it furnishes no means of deliverance—no city of refuge from the hand of the avenger—no Jacob's ladder reaching to the skies—no ark of safety from the stormy billows of the deluge. It prompts the enquiry, but it can furnish no satisfactory response to the question "How shall fallen man be just with God?" It holds up before him, as an angry judge and violated law, but provides no sin-atoning sacrifice. It discloses a moral Governor of the universe, rewarding virtue and punishing vice, and providing a future state, where the manifold inequalities and irregularities of this present life of probation, and discipline shall be finally and eternally adjusted. But how? What mercy can Natural Theology offer to repentant rebels who have braved the justice of God and done despite to the authority of his law? Can contrition make amends for transgression? The only solution is to be found in the Divine atonement, revealed in the Holy Scriptures, by which reconciliation and forgiveness are extended to a guilty world, and the justice and mercy of God are entirely harmonized.

The Scriptures then, whilst confirming the truths of Natural Religion,

the moral system of the world and the retributions of a future life, exhibit a scheme of redemption not discoverable by reason, in which man sustains new relations to the Divine Being, and is hence called upon to discharge hitherto unknown duties. Natural and revealed Religion—thus form parts of one great scheme of Providence, and their analogy to the course and constitution of nature furnishes a conclusive vindication of their truth. As it objected that the doctrines of religion are mysterious and incomprehensible, and that the view which they disclose of God's dealings with his creatures impugn his character for justice and benevolence; it is shown, that there is no difficulty in theology which does not first emerge in nature; and no objection to religion, which may not be urged to that constitution and course of nature which has been established by the Natural and Moral Governor of the Universe. Does the finite and feeble intellect of man presume to scan the purposes, and comprehend the plans of the infinite and eternal? Does it presume to apply its own narrow compasses and light balances, to measure those counsels which embrace the infinite universe, and find their development in the everlasting ages? It is met in nature, alike as in revelation, with difficulties which baffle enquiry and mysteries which transcend the finite comprehension, and find in the ignorance of man and the imperfection of his faculties, their only proper solution. All objections then, which are urged to Revelation as a scheme mysterious and incomprehensible, are entirely frivolous. Did it contain clear immoralities, or contradictions, either of these would prove it false; but certainly it is no objection to Divine Revelation, that it embraces much which is above reason, and the grasp of our finite capacities.

But turning from the scheme of Revelation, let us consider for a moment the evidence upon which it rests—its credentials, that it is a message from God.

First we have a train of miracles, attested in the most authoritative manner, which is within the competence of history. It is an acknowledged historical fact, that the great doctrines of the Old and New Testaments were offered to the world and claimed to be received on the authority of miracles. Publicly wrought in attestation of their truth—that in this respect our religion differs from all other religions—and that upon the faith of these miracles, the truths of the Bible were embraced and professed, and that, too, in spite of the opposing claims of temporal interest, education, prejudice and authority. Can we doubt the competency of witnesses who testified to facts which were publicly wrought in their presence? Can we doubt the sincerity of men, who bore attestation to the truth at the peril of their lives, and vindicated their faith by their sufferings and death? No! the miracles of the Jewish and Christian faith were too well established by contemporary evidence to be gainsayed, in the ages which witnessed their occurrence; but it was reserved for the critical sagacity of a Paulus and a Strauss, or the philosophic acumen of a Hume to deny the possibility of a miracle, or the conclusiveness of any testimony, which might be brought to establish its occurrence. The position of Hume that all experience is against miracles, is a mere begging of the question, whilst on the contrary to assume that what is beyond experience, is contrary to it and cannot be proved, involves the absurdity of rejecting every new discovery in science. The miracle is not contrary to nature, because it emanates from the God of nature himself. It is merely an exercise of power beyond its ordinary manifestations, by which the God of nature and Revelation designs to accredit his messengers and vindicate his truth, and exert from a believing world the testimony of Nicodemus, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do those miracles that thou doest except God be with him."

But turning from miracle to prophecy, we find proofs equally conclusive of the Divine origin of Revelation. Roll back the stream of time and listen with me in imagination to that prophetic promise which first tempered the bitterness of the curse, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." Go with me in imagination to the bedside of the dying patriarch of Israel, as gathering his sons together, and viewing with prophetic eye, the checkered lines of their successors, he disclosed the heaven-appointed curse, upon Reuben and Simeon and Levi, the temporal ben-

sings which should crown the lot of Joseph and the spiritual pre-eminence which should form the glory of Judah, as announced in that striking prophecy, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come, and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." Follow the long line of judges and lawgivers and prophets and hear them proclaim the wrath of Heaven upon the uncircumcised idolater; and backsliding Israelite, upon Moab, and Nineveh and Babylon and Jerusalem. Stand with the Savior upon the porch of Herod's temple, and hear him pronounce the doom which should consign its beautiful columns to the dust, and razes its very foundations. Read those prophetic pre-figurations which pertain to the Messiah himself, whether symbolized in the bleeding sacrifice of Abel, or drawn in characters of light by the burning pencil of Isaiah. Now turn from prophecy to history for their wonderful fulfilment, as time unrolls the scroll of destiny, and discloses the characters which have been inscribed by the finger of omnicience. See Assyrian and Babylonian, Greek and Roman, successively carrying out the purposes of Jehovah, and preparing the way for the coming of him, to whom all the prophecies pointed, and the chosen race itself miraculously preserved in Egypt, in the wilderness, and by Babel's stream; still as a distinct nation, with records untouched, and genealogies unbroken, and still with temple service and smoke of morning and evening sacrifice, until the final oblation of that sacrificial lamb, "slain from the foundation of the world," who though of the city of David and tribe of Judah, was as described in prophecy, "the Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."

But apart from miracle and prophecy, there is in the antiquity and wonderful preservation of the Sacred Scriptures and their connection with the ordinary facts of Jewish history, a remarkable confirmation of their truth. We have here an unbroken record, going back to a period long anterior to that when profane history is lost in the twilight of fable, and long anterior to the era of Roman, and Greek, and Babylonian, and Assyrian civilization, tracing the origin and migrations of a singular people whose after-history is connected with that of all other nations—a record supplementing all other history and itself remarkably confirmed by the testimony of profane historians—a record of the origin of institutions which are still existing, and of the promulgation of a body of laws, which has moulded the civilization and controlled the destiny of the world.

But why linger upon the outer walls, to tell the towers and mark the bulwarks of Zion, or survey the outer glories of the Temple, when we may enter "the Holy of Holies," and behold overshadowing the mercy-seat, the miraculous Shekinah which symbolized the Divine presence? Why pore over dusty records for proofs of the Divine origin of the Scriptures, when we may see impressed upon each page, the signet seal of the Eternal? In our search after truth, we may apostrophize this Book in the language of the disciple to our Lord, "Master to whom else shall we go: thou hast the words of eternal life." To what other book can we go for any proper conceptions of the Divine Character—his unity, his omnipresence, his justice, his infinite purity and holiness—his unity as thus set forth—"I am the Lord and there is none else, and there is no God beside me"—his omnipresence—"Whither shall I go from thy spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy presence?"—his justice—"justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne; mercy and truth shall go before thee"—his holiness—"Thou art of purer eyes, than to behold evil and canst not look upon iniquity." Other religions have only deified the attributes of our nature,—made some apotheosis of martial virtue in Mars, or of human love in Venus. The fountain has not been able to rise above its source, nor the best creations of the unaided reason above the common passions and frailties of our nature. But in the Holy Scriptures, we have revealed a Being whose exalted attributes furnish the only proper object of love and adoration—a Divine Saviour, in the person of whose deified humanity we have that pattern of holy things shown to Moses on the Mount, the exemplar, upon whom we may remodel and restore our lost and ruined nature, and through the illumination of the Spirit aspire to higher and higher degrees of perfection.

But with the most exalted conception of the Divine Character, the Scriptures also exhibit the most profound knowledge of the human heart, disclosed not merely in parable and proverb, but in the moving panorama of everyday life—in the sins of David and the transgressions of Solomon, the weakness of Peter, and the guilt of "that base Judean, who threw the precious pearl away." With such conceptions of God and with such estimates of man, can we wonder that in the Scriptures are disclosed the only true theology and the only pure morality that the world has ever seen.

This Book begins with Paradise and ends with Paradise, and as it discloses the lineaments of that Divine original which has been lost, and the features of our present marred and defaced humanity, it reveals also a remedial system by which man may regain his original brightness, and primal bliss, and be restored to a brighter home than Eden—that new Heaven and new earth, and that holy city which John saw come down from Heaven, "which had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it, but the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." It is thus as revealing the only proper object of love and adoration, and as disclosing a remedial system, which, whilst harmonizing the divine attributes, is itself in most wonderful harmony with our present intellectual and moral constitution, that the Holy Scriptures exhibit their most distinguishing characteristics, and the most striking proof of their Divine origin.

I have left myself, my friends, very little time to speak of the literary attractions of the Bible—as a book of learning no less than religion—as the basis of civilization, no less than of salvation—as a charter of right no less than an oracle of faith and manual of devotion. "Books, says Lord Bacon," as ships pass through the vast seas of time, and make distant ages participate of the wisdom, inventions and illuminations, the one of the other," and what scholar does not recollect the burning words, in which an eloquent essayist tells us how much the world and civilization owe to the immortal influence of Athens, even when exhibited "by the lonely bed of Pascal in the cell of Galileo, and on the scaffold of Sidney." But how insignificant in character, and how feeble in influence are the productions of Grecian and Roman genius, when compared with this Book, compiled by prophets and law-givers and apostles, which, whilst it is the oracle of God, is also the highest monument of human civilization— which taking its origin in the fountains of a remote antiquity, like some noble river has been rolling down its fertile flood through each successive century enriched by the contributions of every age, and itself quickening into life the arts and civilization of every nation—overcoming national prejudices, giving laws itself to great communities, varying in every conceivable diversity of language, race, manners and customs, and controlling the revolutions of thought, the progress of society and the changes of civilization. How wonderful this Book in its origin, its preservation, its richness and variety of its contents! What infinite variety of thought and style, of subject and authors, yet what pervading unity—in the clear, vivid narratives of Genesis, in the touching simplicity of Ruth, in the melting sweetness of David, in the pregnant wisdom of Solomon, in the serene majesty of the Gospels, in the burning eloquence of the Epistles, in the rapt vision of the Apocalypse—all attuned to the same high note, but with cadences as varied, and harmonies as changing as the strains of some sweet Eolian lyre. Here is poetry more exalting, than his of "Soi's rocky isle," history more captivating than "Livy's pictured page," eloquence more overpowering than his who

"Falmied over Greece,  
To Macedon and Artaxerxes' throne."  
Here are lessons to win the ear and captivate the fancy of childhood; themes to stir the soul and test the intellect of manhood, and draughts of consolation to soothe the wearied spirit of age. Here the scholar may draw something of that inspiration which "touched Isaiah's hallowed lips with fire," or prompted that immortal song whose high theme it is, to "vindicate eternal providence and justify the ways of God to man." Here the orator may find a full armory of weapons to reach the popular heart—the burning invective, the swift-winged metaphor—images as varied as nature, which touch all the chords of early association, and awaken responsive echoes, in every heart.

But what shall we say of our own glorious English version, with its marvellous beauties, lingering in the ear like the sound of church-bell or the strains of some half-forgotten melody—a version which growing with the growth and strengthening with the strength of our language in the successive versions of Tindale and Coverdale and Crammer, and in the Geneva and Bishop's Bibles, finally seized its beauties at their full efflorescence, fixed and anchored fast our noble Saxon idioms, and made the dialect of Bacon and Shakespeare, and Spenser and Sidney, as immortal as the truths which it enshrines—a version which has brought the consolations of religion to the homes and hearts of our people—which has sent the arrow of conviction with the winged words of prophet and apostle, and awakened the tears of penitence or the notes of thanksgiving with the sweet strains of the Psalmist—a version which lingers in the memories of childhood, is associated with the joys and sadness of manhood and whose seraphic strains shall usher the departing spirit into a glorious immortality.

With such conceptions of this Heavenly legacy—these precious pearls, these priceless jewels, these seeds of immortal Truth—can we doubt as to our obligations to disseminate them far and wide. The spirit of the gospel is a missionary spirit, instinct with love, love to God and love to man, all embracing, all pervading, as high as Heaven, as wide as Humanity. Would we carry out the spirit of our Divine Master, we must disseminate his Divine Word. "Go preach my gospel" is the command, and the promise is that they that "turn many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars forever and ever." With Heaven's own appointment means the Christian Church, these Bible societies are the great agencies to usher in that glorious millennial morn, when "earth keeps jubilee a thousand years."

"Yes, Truth and Justice then  
Will down return to men;  
Mercy will sit between,  
Throned in celestial sheen,  
And heaven, as at some festival,  
Will open wide the gates of her high palace hall."  
"Rise crowned with light, imperial Salem rise  
Exalt thy towery head, and lift thy eyes.  
See a long race thy spacious courts adorn,  
See future sons and daughters yet unborn,  
See barbarous nations at thy gates attend,  
Walk in thy light and in thy temple bend,  
No more the rising sun shall gild the morn,  
Nor evening Cynthia fill her silver horn,  
But lost, dissolved in thy superior rays,  
One tide of glory, one unclouded blaze,  
O'erflow thy courts—the Light himself shall shine,  
Revealed, and God's eternal day be thine!  
The seas shall waste, the skies in smoke decay,  
Rocks fall to dust, and mountains melt away,  
But fixed his word, his saving power remains,  
Thy realm forever last, thy own Messiah reigns."

A CURE FOR CHILLS.—About two years since, says the *Columbus (Ga.) Inquirer*, we stated that a citizen of this vicinity had told us that he had broken and cured a spell of chills and fever by the use of pure apple vinegar, drinking about a wine-glass full at a time, at intervals before the time for the return of the chill. *Rome (Ga.) Courier* reports cures by the same course in its neighborhood. It says that a lady friend has known this receipt to be used in many cases, and has never known it to fail in curing chills and fever: "Take a wine-glass full of the best apple vinegar for nine mornings in this way. Take it three successive days, then omit it three days, and so on until the vinegar must be a first-rate article of apple vinegar."

GIVING THE DEVIL HIS DUE.—A pastor was making a call upon an old lady who made it a habitual rule never to speak ill of another, and had observed it so closely that she always justified those whom she heard evil spoken of. Before the old lady made her appearance in the parlor, her several children were speaking of this peculiarity of their mother, and one of them playfully added, "Mother has such a habit of speaking well of everybody, that I believe if Satan himself were the subject of conversation, mother would find out some virtue or good quality even in him." Of course, this remark elicited some smiling and merriment at the originality of the idea, in the midst of which the old lady entered the room, and on being told what had just been said, she immediately and voluntarily replied: "Well, my children, I wish we all had Satan's perseverance and industry."

We must pass through this world to unlock the mysteries of the next, and it is only in the next that we can find a key to unlock the mysteries of this.