

nature are unfolded, so far as we have found the truth of light and love, which is revelation. I know only the eternal now where the truth of God must be wrought out here and the eternal love be wrought out there.

THIS FORENOON SESSION.

The Rev. S. A. Elliot, chairman of the conference opened the proceedings this forenoon, at 10 o'clock. He dwelt entirely on the circumstances leading up to the conference in Denver two years ago, and to the growth of Unitarianism in the West.

Dr. Utter followed with an account of the progress and growth of his sect in Utah.

Mr. Crocker of Montana spoke on the situation in his State.

Rabbi Jacobson then read the following paper:

"INSPIRATION AND REVELATION."

I need not remind you, who are congregated here to discuss religious holdings in the endeavor to seek just recognition for Biblical influences, be it from an orthodox conviction of their immediate divine emanation, or be it from a mere intense deference to their sincere and pure religious genius, that no other historical presentation has been treated with so discourteous unfairness as this matter of revelation. An historical report is summarily dismissed on a priori argument. Its historical value in shaping the character and fortunes of nations and individuals is but inadequately estimated and esteemed, while from a literary standpoint we show more gallantry of regard to Greece and Rome than what we do to deeper working and farther reaching Israel with all her richness of imagery and metaphor, her earnestness of conviction and her flights of poetry, all the loftier and profounder because of her almost rigid exclusion of all that savors of invention, frivolous, sportive or egoistic.

The only explanation of such evident prejudice is to be found in the difficulty of conceiving how the manifestation upon which Israel seeks to commend her spiritual gifts to universal acceptance, could possibly have occurred. But to admit this as an insurmountable barrier is to assume that the same objection does not present itself in our other vital holdings. However, the current philosophy of the "Unknowable," which receives the endorsement of our whole present scholarship and thought as the noblest, fullest and most consistent expression of our loftiest civilization, has demonstrated that absolutely we knew nothing, that Atheism and Pantheism are as unthinkable and meaningless as Deism and that like them Deism itself is illogical, unintelligible and hence untenable. Neither at a God or at no God can we arrive positively through our unaided reason. Our only refuge seems agnosticism; for all our knowledge is but relative. But even agnosticism is illogical, for the very relativity of our knowledge premises some absolute knowledge. Our knowledge of the relations, distinctions and likenesses of things premises our knowledge of something. But of what? "What is mind?" asks Berkely. "No matter. What is matter? Never mind." This is the ultimate to which

all our knowledge resolves itself. And yet our consciousness and reason demand and premise some certainty of knowledge.

But why seek we to know anything, as long as we can make intelligent use of our surroundings? This question finds its answer in man's moral nature and in his dissatisfaction with his surroundings, to which his very consciousness tells him he is vastly superior. In nature there is no analogy to man. Self-preservation is there the only motive; might, the only law. For justice, virtue, love, mercy, duty man finds there no support. He becomes ethical only as he emerges from nature. Even paternal affections he has no basis for in the animal. The brutish parent loves its offspring only as long as that offspring is dependent. As long as that offspring is thus virtually a part and parcel of the parent's own life, a thing, so to speak, of the parent's possession. The young once independent, fledged or weaned, and the relation of parent and offspring ceases, nay, they cross themselves sexually.

Neither can nature in any way mould man. Man moulds nature; he changes the varieties of plants, the breeds of animals, enriching their beauty, their nutrition, their utilities, —to speak nothing of his transforming climates and continents. He however is not directly changed physically, and certainly not spiritually, in which latter direction his innate longing to be different from and superior to all creation most ardently yearns for improvement, enrichment, deepening, heightening. If he be sad, nature may be ever so gay, it cannot chase away his depression. If he be gay, nature may be vested in the thickest clouds of gloom and angry passions, it cannot disturb his serenity or still his exultant notes. Nature is but the mirroring glass of his subjectivity and those who deceive themselves into imagining that nature instructs them have but had reflected back to their lessons which they have learned elsewhere, under other influences.

We are thus drawn back upon our own humanity and our first impulse is to make history, with its account of man's efforts, successes, failures, progress, the instructress that we seek. But Clio is a false harlot, speaking war to the warrior, diplomacy to the statesman, money to the financier, belles letters to the literary man, ethics to the moral philosopher, etc., she is but the echo of ourselves again. History like nature but mirrors and illustrates. For educations both are insufficient.

We turn to psychology and it but tell us that man is man, with his joys and his griefs, his weal and his woe, his good and his evil, his passions and restraints, his reason and his sentiments, making his will of duplex motives, encouraging a belief in a tenfold nature, angels and satan's combined, ethereal and earthly, human and brutish, divine and devilish—at the shrine thus of opposed spirits or demons. Nature with its science, man with his history and psychology, they who credit the senses, or like Descartes distrust the senses and credit but his self-consciousness, all alike falls us in our search for knowledge absolute, for

positive moral principle and for effective spiritual influence.

History likewise demonstrates the futility of the quest. The fruits of man's self-sowing were but superstition and sin, baffled ignorance and unrestrained vice. At the most it yielded Grecian philosophy with its ever recurring materialism and fatalism, and Buddhist asceticism with its utter dehumanization of humanity, whatever morality either of these or any of their intermediate phases evolved was lamentably contradictory, unstable and inextricably alloyed with the shocking immoral.

Israel only had fixed, unambiguous, consistent and wholly pure principles. Could details be entered into here and now, it could be shown against the most scorching criticism that Israel's laws and tenets, not only covered the whole ethical territory, but were also free from any mixture of the debasing, the misleading, the valueless, the shameful and the unworthy. However, the time will not permit it. Suffice it to say, that of all the tribes or nations of antiquity Israel alone strove towards those ideals and struggled in the line of those principles, the pursuit of and the living under which alone distinguish our civilization, not only in degree but wholly in kind from everything pagan or barbarous in the past or present. And that civilization of ours began first only when Israel's so-called divine revelation, in the forms of Christianity and Mohammedanism, reached the world of nations. Those to whom this message, with its claims of divine origin, has not penetrated are today still heathens and merit the designations of savage, unenlightened, half or wholly uncivilized.

You know the old illustration of the astronomer, who by accurate astral calculation concluded that a hitherto unknown planet must be visible in a certain part of the firmament. Directing his telescope thither he perceived it. Had he, however, failed to discover it, in spite of the accuracy of his calculations, would the astronomers therefore abandon all their otherwise substantiated theories, or would they not rather assume its existence, give it even a name, and attributing its non-appearance to some as yet unaccountable obscuration would they not with ever more and more improved instrument be constantly on the outlook for the world which their heavenly mathematics say must be? What must be, is. This is an incontrovertible philosophical axiom. Our relativity of knowledge says that we must have sense—absolute knowledge. Our moral perplexity requires moral positiveness. Our spiritual deficiencies demand spiritual completion, answer and influences. Men and nations alike fail to yield these. Reason and sentiment say they must be. Hence they must come from the superhuman, from the supernatural, i. e., from God, who, as man cannot reach Him through human lines, must come to man through divine lines—not by the mere exalting of man's nature—for that would still be human, but by direct inspiration, how, I care not, as long as I know that it is. For this divine inspiration we must seek. All other so-called divine revelations have had their claim of divinity absolutely disproved. The revela-