

Theosophy and Orthodoxy - Part 1

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ORTHODOXY has two meanings. Etymologically, it means "right doctrine", and in a secondary sense "the genuine doctrines of Scripture". Conventionally, it means that which is currently received or accepted as being true, among a certain portion of mankind, or at a certain period of history. That which is orthodox in one Church or sect is often spoken of as being heterodox in another. In speaking of orthodoxy, this latter is the meaning usually given to the term, and in this sense we find that Theosophy is in direct antagonism with orthodoxy. They are as wide apart as the poles.

Looking at Humanity as a great whole, we find that it is ever on the march. Some call this movement the progress of civilization — others call it evolution. All, however, are agreed that Humanity is moving towards some great end, some consummation of that hope which animates each individual. This hope expresses itself in many ways, but principally it takes the form of what is ordinarily known as religion.

If Humanity were moving forward as one great whole, united by a perfect organization, and a well-defined purpose, it might be possible that such a thing could exist as a universal religion. But such is not the case. It is a familiar saying that one half of the world does not know what the other half is doing. Men are separated from each other by great barriers, partly natural, partly artificial. Differences of race and nationality mark off men into broad and very distinct divisions, among which there is little community of interests, save what is brought about by the necessities of commerce. Within these divisions, again, men are split up into smaller sections and sub-sections, each with some interest for the most part opposed to the interests of the others, while finally, we have the individual unit, who is more or less at war with all his fellows, seeing that it is with them he has to struggle for his very existence, and that they will give him scant pity should he fail in the battle of life. Thus the principle of competition reigns supreme; the fittest (God save the mark !) survive, while the weakest go to the wall.

Thus we see that if Humanity as a whole be moving towards one common destiny, it is rather in spite of itself than by reason of any unity of purpose or well-defined and recognizable goal. Nay, the moment we begin to deal with this subject, and to ask seriously what is the goal of Humanity ? we come [Page 10] face to face with a thousand various solutions of the problem, we come at once into contact with that great controversy which is ever raging round the hopes, fears, and superstitions of poor human nature. Every kind of orthodoxy offers a solution of the problem, but we cannot take one on its own recommendation any more than another.

Theosophy, however, occupies a peculiar position in reference to this controversy. The man who has rightly understood the principles of Theosophy, steps at once into a region where he is unaffected by the strife of religions, creeds, and dogmas. He no longer looks to find *the* truth in any one religion, for he has

got at the root of all religions. He no longer looks at Humanity through the coloured glasses of his own orthodoxy. He has become cosmopolitan in the truest and widest meaning of the term. He looks at Humanity as a whole, and will accept no principle which is not wide enough to cover all the phenomena of human nature in all places and all ages.

Every religion fails at just this point, that is individual and exclusive, instead of being universal. Each one covers only a very small portion of the experiences of Humanity. Not only is this the case, but each religion is constantly undergoing a process of modification and change. Orthodoxy represents the dominant religious opinions at any particular time, but that which is orthodox today may have been heterodox yesterday, and that which is heterodox today is very likely to become orthodox tomorrow. We see, then, that those who accept orthodox dogmas as final statements of truth, lie under a double veil of illusion, for how can that be *truth* which is constantly subject to change ? Truth is eternal, unchangeable, from everlasting to everlasting ; but that which changes is phenomena, not noumena.

The Theosophist recognises and applies this principle to its fullest extent. To him the whole manifested universe is *maya* (Illusion). It is not on this plane that we can stand face to face with truth, for all that we see with our eye, and hear with our ear, is subject to change, decay, death.

"The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve;
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind"

The secret lies in distinguishing between relative and absolute truth, between the *form* and that of which the form is an expression, between the temporal and the eternal.

The Theosophist, equally with the religionist, must formulate his ideas, but the difference between the two is this, that the Theosophist is not bound to any form as a *dogma*, but recognises in the form merely the creation of a passing phase of his own consciousness. Thus all forms of thought are necessary to Humanity as a whole, just as all forms of plant or animal life go [Page 11] to make up the great life of nature. The religions of one age or of one race have no more claim to be a specially favoured part of that great unity which is Humanity in all its phases, than has the flora or fauna of one epoch or one climate to consider itself a specially favoured part of that great unity which we call nature. Each is but the manifestation under different conditions of one and the same thing.

What, then, shall we say of orthodoxy, of that which is constantly subject to change, yet would pose for the time being as eternal truth. We hear much of the conflict between Science and Religion, and are sometimes reminded that there can be no conflict between *true* science and *true* religion. Granted; but if objection is taken to the phrase, let us say "the conflict between science and orthodoxy". Did not this same orthodoxy once teach that the earth was flat; aye, and put men to death for believing otherwise ? Is it science that has had to yield in the conflict or is it orthodoxy ? In the great march of human progress, then, call it by what name you will, we find orthodoxy ever in the rear, calling vainly to men to stand still, doing all in its power to stay the march, clinging to dead formulas and empty rituals. The spirit of orthodoxy is ever the same — narrow, intolerant, self-righteous. Truly it would appear the least desirable

thing in all the world to confess oneself — orthodox.

If we use the word in its etymological sense, it is clear that there can only be one "right doctrine", one truth concerning the Scriptures, but just as clearly that which is commonly called orthodoxy cannot be that truth, for this orthodoxy is ever being changed and modified. In spite of itself, orthodoxy is obliged to follow the great march of Humanity, and is continually taking up fresh ground, which has been cleared by the great reformers of the world. Orthodoxy has at all times persecuted and put to death the noblest benefactors of the race. The history of all reformations, and the fate of the leaders thereof, is one which is ever being repeated.

It would appear to be somewhat a matter of difficulty to say exactly what is orthodox at the present day. The change in religious thought during the present century has been very remarkable and rapid. There would appear to be at least two orthodoxys — the old orthodoxy, now rapidly dying out, and a new orthodoxy, hardly as yet defined, but trying to take its stand on ground which has been cleared for it by science.

But meanwhile Theosophy is disclosing new ground, which is far in advance of anything that has yet been deemed within the reach of human knowledge. Orthodox science as well as orthodox religion refuses to give ear to the new teachings. For it is unfortunately the case that there is an orthodoxy in science as well as in religion. Orthodox science today is materialistic and agnostic; how, then, can it accept phenomena which are apparently "supernatural", that is to say, not explainable under any of the *known* laws of nature? [Page 12]

Yet nothing is more remarkable at the present time than the prevalence of belief in so-called *supernatural* phenomena. Spiritualism, mesmerism, clairvoyance, and occult phenomena in general, claim attention on every hand. Many of the phenomena indeed, are now beyond question, and have been proved by science itself, but the explanation of them is quite another matter. Orthodox religion seeks one way out of the difficulty, orthodox science has quite another theory.

Meanwhile, Theosophy as a pioneer of the new movement has to contend with orthodoxy in every shape and form, and although to the Theosophist it is of little moment what orthodoxy is teaching, it may be useful to pass in review some recent statements on behalf of orthodox religion.

We have before us two books, each professing to be written for the purpose of upholding orthodox Christianity. Each is a remarkable book in its way. The first, entitled, "Earth's Earliest Ages" ("Earth's Earliest Ages", by G. H. Pember, M.A. 1887) — is remarkable as a deliberate attempt to revive the old Calvinistic theology, and the ignorant and superstitious orthodoxy of the Middle Ages. It represents the old orthodoxy, which has nothing whatever in common with the spirit of the age.

Of quite a different nature is the second book, entitled "Natural Law in the Spiritual World". ("Natural Law in the Spiritual World", by Henry Drummond, F.R.S.E., F.G.S., 1887). The writer of this book, boldly seizes on those ideas respecting the universal operation of natural laws which it has been the province of science to demonstrate, and instead of treating them, as has hitherto been done by Christian apologists,

as opposed or isolated from revelation and Christian doctrine, he hails the enlightenment of the age and the fundamental concepts of science as allies to Christianity, and endeavours to plant Christian doctrine on a scientific basis. The premises on which the author bases his argument are thoroughly scientific, and, we may add, Theosophical. So much is this the case, that we often feel puzzled to understand how it is that the author does not state his conclusions in terms of Theosophy, instead of in terms of orthodoxy.

We shall deal with this, however, later on, and in the meanwhile we must glance at some of the statements and doctrines put forward in "Earth's Earliest Ages", which deals very specifically with Spiritualism, Theosophy, and Buddhism.

On closing the book, one verily wakes up as from a dream— a dream of the dark, mediaeval ages of demonology and witchcraft, when men truly believed that the earth was the centre of the universe, and that all science and literature— save that which the Holy Church had sanctioned — was the work of the Devil and all his angels. Indeed the book is a deliberate attempt to revive this notion. Everything that is opposed to the orthodox interpretation of the Bible [Page 13] which the author has constructed, is deliberately and with great care traced to Satan and Antichrist. We awake from the dream and rub our eyes, and ask ourselves can we really have been reading a serious book, are we positively to take the author at his word ?

We turn back the pages, and light upon this passage: —

"There is, however, in the account of this day's work (the second day of creation) an omission which is probably significant, for the usual conclusion, 'and God saw that it was good', is in this case left out. And since the reasons ordinarily given for the omission are unsatisfactory, we venture to suggest the following explanation. May not the withholding of God's approval be a hint of the immediate occupation of the firmament by demons, those, indeed, which are its present inhabitants? Since they were concerned in the fall of man, they must have speedily appeared in the newly-formed atmosphere. May they not, therefore, have been imprisoned in the deep, and having found some way of escape at the lifting up of the waters, have swarmed into the dominion of the air, of which their leader is Prince ? In this case, the firmament might have been teeming with them before the close of the second day, and we need not wonder that God refused to pronounce their kingdom good."

Here is another equally good extract: —

" While Eve was standing near the tree a serpent approached and addressed her. The fact that she was not startled by such an occurrence seems to point to the existence of an intelligent communication between man and the inferior creatures before the fall. But we must not, of course, think of the serpent as the repulsive and venomous reptile to which we now feel an instinctive antipathy", For it had not then been cursed, but held itself upright, the most intelligent and, probably, the most beautiful of all the beasts of the field."

Do not smile, gentle reader; we are not quoting from a comic weekly, but from a serious book on a serious subject. The author is very much in earnest, and evidently believes all this, and much more; a

rapid sketch of which we now propose to give.

We do not think it worth while to controvert the author point by point. He relies mainly upon the verbal inspiration and literal interpretation of the Bible. He lays it down as his first principle

" that the 1st chapter of Genesis, equally with those which follow it, is, in its primary meaning, neither vision nor allegory, but plain history, and must, therefore, be accepted as a literal statement of facts."

If we accept this principle, what follows will be merely a matter of translation and interpretation, for he does not affirm that the English version is literally true, but only the Greek and Hebrew MSS., and he is constantly re-translating for the benefit of his own theories. It would not be difficult to controvert most of his renderings, and the conclusions he draws therefrom, by [Page 14] quotations from authorities and scholars who have as much or more right to be heard in the matter than he has. Anticipating this statement, however, he has guarded against it in the following manner: —

“Are the Scriptures really so inconsistent, or so vague, that a multitude of conflicting opinions and doctrines can be fairly deduced from them ? Were they so, the fact would indeed, be a strong argument against their Divine origin. But we are by no means forced upon such an admission; nay, as soon as we begin to consider the enigma, an obvious and certain solution presents itself. For not the revelation of God, but the expounders of that revelation, are responsible for the diversities of Christendom, the fault rests with the fallen and corrupt nature of man, which so affects him that he cannot clearly discern truth even when it is set before his eyes."

This is begging the whole question in a truly astonishing manner, and leads us to ask what claim the author can make to be above that "fallen and corrupt nature," and why we should accept him as an expounder of revelation in preference to those whose views by no means coincide with his own ?

It is useless, however, to enter into controversy when we are at issue on fundamental principles. Those who accept the author's principles must agree among themselves as to the value of authority in general and the author's in particular. In the meanwhile, not Theosophy merely, but all the best thought of the age, and even, if we are not mistaken, what may almost be described as the new orthodoxy, has rejected the doctrine of the verbal inspiration and literal interpretation of the Bible.

The author says elsewhere:—

“We surely need not accuse the Bible of vagueness or inconsistency in order to explain the diversities of its interpretation. For if we be observant and honest, we must often ourselves feel the difficulty of approaching the sacred writings without bias, seeing that we bring with us a number of stereotyped ideas, which we have received as absolutely certain, and never think of testing, but only seek to confirm."

How far he has himself been able to approach without bias, or how far he is writing merely in support of a

"stereotyped idea" we shall leave it to our readers to judge; in the first place, from the declared objects of the book, and in the second place from the matter which is put forward in order to support these objects.

The book has been written, according to the author's own confession, with a two-fold object: (a) to uphold the "Biblical Cosmogony", and the "plan of salvation"; and (b) "to show that the characteristic features of the days of Noah are reappearing in Christendom, and, therefore, that the days of the Son of Man are not far distant."

We may notice in the first place the ingenious theory advanced in order to get over the geological difficulties with regard to the Biblical account of the creation. [Page 15]

The author supposes that there were two creations, the first of which is briefly referred to in the 1st verse of the 1st chapter of Genesis, while the second is the six days' creation, the account of which begins with the second verse. The first creation he supposes to have taken place ages ago, and to have given us all those geological strata and fossil remains which have hitherto been the great stumbling-block with regard to Biblical chronology. This first creation, however, was afterwards destroyed by God because of the wickedness of its inhabitants; it was reduced to ruins, and left in this state for an indefinite period of time. After this came the six days' creation, of which we have a more detailed account, and which took place some 6,000 years ago. We must quote, however, in order to show what the theory is, and to what lengths the author goes in order to support it.

He says: —

"It is clear that the second verse of Genesis describes the earth as a ruin; but there is no limit of the time which elapsed between creation and this ruin. Age after age may have rolled away, and it was probably during their course that the strata of the earth's crust were gradually developed. There is room for any length of time between the first and second verses of the Bible..... Wherefore had God thus destroyed the work of His hands ? If we may draw any inference from the history of our own race, sin must have been the cause of this hideous ruin..... For, as the fossil remains clearly show, not only were disease and death — inseparable companions of sin — then prevalent among the living creatures of the earth, but even ferocity and slaughter. And the fact proves that these remains have nothing to do with our world; since the Bible declares that all things made by God during the six days were very good, and that no evil, was in them till Adam sinned. The absence in the fossiliferous strata of any vestige of pre-Adamite man is no real obstacle to the view we have taken. For we are totally unacquainted with the conditions of life in that pristine world, which may not have been, and, indeed, probably were not, the same as in our own. For Adam was created after, and apparently in full view of a previous failure..... Hence it may be that death did not touch those primeval men until the final destruction.... It may be that their bodies were resolved into primal elements, leaving the spirit naked, instead of the spirit departing and giving up the body to decay as with us..... It may be that they all perished in what is now to us the deep, and that their remains are covered by the deposit at the bottom of the ocean. Indeed, we find hints which perhaps add some little confirmation to this last conjecture, and tend to link these disembodied spirits with the locality which may have been the scene of their sins in the flesh. At least, there is a prison mentioned in Scripture, which is either in the depths of the sea, or is connected with them and in which we may with probability infer that many demons are already confined, while fresh captives are from time to time placed under the [Page 16] same restraint..... Certainly the knowledge of some such fact seems

to have terrified the legion of spirits from which our Lord delivered the Gadarene; or, otherwise, what meaning can we assign to their agonizing entreaty that He would not command them to depart into the abyss? "

We leave it to our readers to digest as best they may this nauseating mass of conjecture.

After this follows a detailed commentary on the first chapters of Genesis, from which we may give a few extracts to show to what lengths the author goes in building upon the foundation of a "literal statement of facts". We have already given an extract concerning Eve and the serpent; here is the rest of the paragraph:—

"It is an interesting fact that in that remarkable sculpture, the oldest surviving representation of the fall — which is found in the temple of Osiris at Phylae, Eve is seen offering the fruit to Adam, the tree is between them, and the serpent stands by in an erect posture. Perhaps it sustained itself by wings; and, indeed, the epithet 'flying' is applied to the *saraph*, or flying species, in a passage of Isaiah. The creature was then, free from venom, and not improbably winged, while its scales glittered in the sun like burnished gold."

Our readers must refer to "The Secret Doctrine" for the esoteric and symbolical meaning of the serpent.

There are about nine pages in which the author thus works up the situation, which culminates in the final triumph of the tempter. In these nine pages we note that the word "probably", or its equivalents, "perhaps", "it may be", are used eleven times; indeed, from page 19 to page 239, where the commentary on the Biblical account ends, these words occur on almost every page, almost, in fact, in every paragraph. Such an amount of conjecture is worthy to be wedded to those "historical facts" which belong to the period of our childhood.

Here is the author's idea as to the origin of sacrifice:—

" Now, sacrifice as an expiation must have been ordained by God himself. Man could never have thought of such a thing, or have dared, in his worship, to take the life of one of God's creatures, unless he had been commanded to do so. Probably, then, it was at this most appropriate time that the Lord instituted the rite as a type of the great sacrifice to come. He slew the victims, and as he shed their life-blood, Adam and Eve for the first time gazed upon death with affrighted eyes. He then showed them how to lay the carcasses upon the altar, that they might be an offering made by fire unto the Lord. Finally, He took the skins of the slain beasts, and made of them the coats with which He clothed the trembling pair."

Comment would be superfluous, but might we not quote the words of St. Paul :— "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things". [Page 17]

We must now glance at those chapters which deal specifically with Spiritualism, Theosophy, and Buddhism. It will at once strike a reader of the book that the author proves too much in reference to these. In his anxiety to prove that these three movements are in reality but a combined attack on the part of the Devil and his angels, he states the case for each one of them with such clearness that Spiritualists, Theosophists, and Buddhists alike cannot but feel gratified at the testimony which he gives as to the rapid spread of their teachings, and the way in which they are influencing the thought of the age, and breaking down the old and mouldering edifice of ecclesiastical Christianity.

He says:—

“Should any of our readers be predisposed in favour of such a theory (spiritual evolution), we would entreat them to consider its pedigree as given in our chapter on Theosophy; and to note its avowed origin from 'descending angels', who can be none other than those Nephilim which the Bible mentions as having already appeared twice upon earth; and to remember that its acknowledged depositories and guardians have been, not the apostles and church of the Lord Jesus, but the Initiates of the mysteries, the Brahman priests, and the followers of Buddha.”

o this we may remark that both Moses and Paul, not to mention other Biblical writers, were — Initiates of the Mysteries. If our readers doubt it, let them study the “Secret Doctrine,” for the proof lies in the finding of the key which connects the various exoteric religions of the world with the one “Wisdom Religion”, taught only in the inner schools. We are told by St. Jerome, who translated the Hebrew Gospel of Matthew into Greek, that it contained matter which was not intended to be disclosed by the evangelist, and which was therefore omitted by him. St. Paul continually speaks of the *mystery* of Christ, and in 1st Corinthians ii., 2, he says plainly that he “came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the mystery of God”, and in the 1st verse of the third chapter: “And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, as unto babes in Christ.” Then, in the 6th verse of the second chapter, he says : — Howbeit we speak wisdom among the perfect (full-grown or initiated) yet a wisdom not of this world, nor of the rulers of this world, which are coming to nought; but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, even the wisdom that hath been hidden, which God foreordained before the worlds unto our glory”. The rest of the chapter is a statement of the spiritual nature of this wisdom. It is only those, however, who have the key who will understand what Paul is alluding to. In the 15th verse, he says: — “He that is spiritual judgeth all things, and He Himself is judged of no man.” Also (Col. ii., 16) “Let no man judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast day, or a new moon, or a Sabbath day: which are a shadow of the things to come, but the body is Christ's”. Let those who are still judged in these matters consider whether they are not as yet “held in bondage under the rudiments of the world.” [Page 18]

Thanks to a few at the present day, the veil of the mystery has been partially lifted, and everywhere men eager for spiritual truth and enlightenment are grasping the opportunity. We may quote again from the book in evidence of this:—

“If we investigate early Paganism by the light of recent discoveries, we soon perceive that its chief strength lay in its intellectual attractions, and that many of its priests and initiates were distinguished as philosophers and men of science. But — still more strange — if, after an investigation, we glance at the world of today, we see the men of this nineteenth century returning to the wisdom of long past ages, and modern thought sustaining itself on the wings

of ancient lore". Elsewhere he says: — "The manner in which the West is now being replenished from the East is well illustrated by Max Müller's recently published book, 'Biographical Essays'. In the letters to Keshub Chunder Sen, which it contains, the professor regards the East as the parent and teacher of the West, and the Brahma Somâj as being far more likely to modify Christianity than to be absorbed by it."

The following extract will be gratifying to many: —

'It would, therefore, seem that the attack of the Madras Christian College upon Madame Blavatsky has by no means checked the movement in which she has been so conspicuous an actor; and, apparently, the failure is nowhere more manifest than in Madras itself. It was confidently predicted that the High Priestess of Theosophy and Buddhism would not dare to show her face again in the city. Nevertheless, she did so, and, according to *The Theosophist*, received a warm welcome, not merely from the members of the Theosophical Societies, but also from the students of the various colleges, and from many other persons. She was conducted in procession from the shore to the Patcheappa Hall, and was there presented by the students with an address of sympathy and admiration, to which, among other signatures, were appended those of more than three hundred members of the very Christian College whose professors had assailed her. No wonder that a letter appeared shortly afterwards in the *Madras Standard*, January 9th, 1885, questioning the wisdom of attempts to diffuse Christianity by means of a higher education. Hitherto it has been usual to assume that the spread of Western culture would in itself prove fatal to Paganism; but experience and a closer acquaintance with the esoteric philosophy of the East are rapidly dissipating that idea. Satan is now setting in motion intellectual forces which will be more than a match for the missionaries, if they persist in carrying on their warfare in the old way."

Here is another extract:—

"At present, the rapid spread of the Theosophic philosophy, — and which is, perhaps, even more significant — of various ideas, which, harmless, or even good as they may be in themselves, belong to, and tend to unite with its system, is undeniable. Christians who take the trouble to reconnoitre in the darkening twilight, are well aware that hostile forces are converging from various quarters, but with unmistakable concert, upon their [Page 19] camp; while that camp itself is, alas! becoming thinned by the almost daily desertions of those who cease to believe in the Bible as the *only* revelation from God..... We are told that occultism is the wisdom of primal ages, a revival of the only true philosophy, held by all the great teachers of the world, and communicated to the initiates of the mysteries. Now so far as the origin of Theosophy is concerned, we are quite willing to admit the account given by our opponents. .Of course, none but initiates can speak positively on such a subject; but all that can be noticed by one outside would certainly incline him to acquiesce in this statement. But, by comparing the Bible with old mythologies and the opinions of modern Theosophists, we have shown that the whole system of the mysteries was *probably* communicated by those fallen angels who transgressed just before and immediately after the flood. And such a source, though undoubtedly ancient, can scarcely be expected to inspire confidence."

The italics are ours. How far there is any *probability* in this we will leave it for our readers to decide. Thus does the author testify to the rapid and significant spread of a great revival of ancient wisdom and

philosophy, only, for him, the significance lies in the fact that it is breaking down the *orthodox* teachings of the Bible; and so prejudiced is he, that where he cannot deny the inherent spirituality and lofty morality of much of the new teachings, he sees in this factor merely the craftiness of Satan, who appears as an angel of light in order that he may the better deceive us.

In conclusion, we may notice the attempt which the author makes to connect the present age with the prophesy concerning the "latter times", contained in *1 Tim., iv., 1*, arguing that the three-fold movement of Spiritualism, Theosophy, and Buddhism is bringing about its fulfilment. They represent the apostacy mentioned in these verses: — "In the latter times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils " ; while, in order to support the words, "forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats", he does not hesitate to assert that the command to use "the flesh of animals as food (*Gen. ix., 3*) is rejected by many spiritualists, and "by all Theosophists and Buddhists". This is, of course, simply untrue as regards Theosophists, and with regard to Buddhists, we would merely remark that it is no more applicable to the prophesy today than it was two thousand years ago.

The reader should note that the "commandment" to eat meat, given to Noah (*Gen. ix., 3*) is a "cosmic, or universal law", under which head he also classifies " The law of the Sabbath", " The law of substitution, that life must atone for life", "The decree that whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed", that is to say, the law of capital punishment; and, also, " the direction to multiply and replenish the earth" (*Gen. ix., 1*) "and God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them, Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the [Page 20] earth". And yet elsewhere, we find that he gives it as one of the signs of the end, that the population is rapidly increasing.

Our readers will doubtless be greatly puzzled to understand what all this has to do with "cosmic or universal law".

It would be quite out of place here to enter into controversy on any of these points. Every statement made by the author is open to question, quite apart from the standpoint of Theosophy. Moreover, there has never been a time since the prophecy in Timothy was written that it has not been supposed by *orthodoxy* to be on the point of fulfilment. The early Christians themselves expected the second coming of Christ to be an event which would take place almost immediately. Moreover, we are told by the author himself that the Bishop Hippolytes confuted the teachings of the Gnostic sect of the Eucratites, who "never ate the flesh of anything that had lived, drank nothing but water, and abjured marriage", by citing the prophecy in the first of Timothy. He also says in another place, " Nor were the times of Leo the Tenth without resemblance to the days of Noah".

If, therefore, we examine anyone of the points wherein the prophecy is supposed to be near its fulfilment, we cannot find that it is any more applicable to the present time, than it has been at any previous period. Those only can make it so who centre their attention on their own period, nation, or religion, and who colour all their ideas with the formulas of their own *orthodoxy*.

The only legitimate outcome of such doctrines as are to be found in this book is in the Church of Rome, and we might with much show of reason accuse the author of publishing his work as a covert attempt to lead men into that fold, which perhaps, has a better claim than any other to be called the "true Apostolic Church".