

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

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

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



Buy me a coffee

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



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php

THE
BIBLIOTHECA SACRA.

ARTICLE I.

REVELATION AND INSPIRATION.

BY REV. E. P. BARROWS, D.D., LATELY PROFESSOR OF HEBREW LITERATURE.
IN ANDOVER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

No. I.

It is proposed to discuss, in a series of Articles, the related subjects of *Revelation* and *Inspiration*, not so much in their details as in their fundamental underlying principles, and with special reference to the errors of modern times.

The Terms defined and distinguished.

It is necessary, at the outset, to have a clear idea of the meaning of these several terms. This will give at once their relation to each other, and their difference.

Revelation (Latin, *revelatio*, from *revelo*, to unveil, throw back the veil; Greek, ἀποκάλυψις, from ἀποκαλύπτω, to uncover, lift off the cover) properly signifies the act of un veiling, and so disclosing a person or thing that was before hidden. So the scriptures speak of "the revelation of the righteous judgment of God";¹ and of "the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ."² Then, by an easy transition, the word is

¹ Rom. ii. 5, and so often.

² 1 Cor. i. 7; 2 Thess. i. 7; 1 Peter i. 7 13. But in 1 Cor. i. 7 our Version uses the word *coming*, and in 1 Peter i. 7 the word *appearing*.

applied to the *truth itself* which is revealed. Of this latter usage we have some examples in the New Testament. "When ye come together," says the apostle, "every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation," where "a revelation"¹ is manifestly something revealed by God's Spirit. So when he speaks of "visions and revelations of the Lord,"² and of "the abundance of the revelations,"³ the word comprehends the things made known to him by the act of revelation. So also the last book of the New Testament is called "the revelation of Jesus Christ,"⁴ as containing the future events revealed by him. In this secondary sense the word "revelation" is exceedingly common in theological usage.

In neither its primary nor its secondary usage does the word "revelation" refer to the manner of the disclosure. It insists only upon the fact that it is something that was before hidden. It is therefore, as theologians say, eminently *objective*. It directs attention to something existing without the mind, which is in some way uncovered to its view. The agent of revelation may be man ("Unto thee have I revealed my cause,"⁵ Heb. רָצַף, Gr. ἀπεκάλυψα), but in New Testament usage is exclusively God; and it is with divine revelation alone that we are now concerned. It is further to be noticed that the scriptures do not employ the word "revelation," or its corresponding verb, of truths known to man by the light of nature, although they represent God as the author of such light. Instead of this they use other terms, as, "God hath manifested it unto them"⁶ (ἐφανερώσασ, a word which is also used of supernatural manifestation). They restrict the words *reveal* and *revelation* to disclosures which God makes to men by his immediate interposition, that is, in a supernatural way.

Inspiration (Latin, *inspiratio*, from *inspiro*, to breathe into),

¹ 1 Cor. xiv. 26.

² 2 Cor. xii. 1.

³ 2 Cor. xii. 7.

⁴ Rev. i. 1.

⁵ Jer. xi. 20; compare Ecclesiasticus xiii. 1 (Eng. version, xli. 23)

⁶ Rom. i. 19.

in its application to the human mind, signifies primarily a *breathing into the soul*; that is, the communication to it from without of thought and feeling in a spiritual and invisible manner. Even in its lower usage, as when we speak of the inspiration of a scene, it retains this idea. In theological usage it denotes *the inward illumination of the soul by the Holy Spirit in the knowledge of divine truth*, and thus includes not simply the communication of new truth, but also the illumination and guidance of the mind in respect to truth already known. Our Saviour said to his apostles: "When they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate; but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye; for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost."¹ The Holy Ghost would be given them not to supersede the rational exercise of their own faculties, but to enlighten and guide them in using these faculties. If they needed, they should receive new revelations. But more commonly, we may well suppose, the gift of what they should say in such circumstances consisted in a supernaturally communicated fulness of remembrance, clearness of vision, and correctness of choice in respect to truths already known. This office of the Divine Spirit is very distinctly stated by the evangelist John: "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."² We must not confound with the gift of inspiration the ordinary illuminating and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit, though both are alike supernatural. In the first place, the primary end of the two is different; that of the former being the communication of truth to men, that of the latter the salvation of men through this truth. In the second place, the gift of inspiration raised the apostles and evangelists above error in the communication to men of divine truth, whether orally or in writing, as we shall endeavor to show in a future number. No such infallibility can be claimed by

¹ *Mark xiii. 11.*

² *Jno. xiv. 26.*

ordinary Christian teachers. In this respect the apostles had no successors. The ordinary influences of the Holy Spirit do indeed guide men wholly in the direction of truth. But no man, since the days of the apostles, can claim that he enjoys divine illumination and guidance of such a kind as to raise him above all error. In the beginning of the gospel infallible teachers were necessary, but they are not needed now, since we have in the apostolic records a sure and sufficient rule of faith and practice.¹

From the above definitions the distinction between the terms "revelation" and "inspiration" is manifest. Since the former has no reference to the manner of the disclosure, it does not necessarily imply any inspiration. The very highest forms of revelation recorded in the Bible were purely objective; that is, addressed to men in an outward way. Such was the giving of the law on Sinai; for "all the people saw the thunders and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking";² and the ten commandments were spoken to the whole assembly "out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice."³ Such also, in a most emphatic sense, was the whole revelation made to men by Jesus Christ. To call him a prophet, speaking by inspiration of God, would be a low and inadequate view of his office. He was more than a prophet; he was the Son of God, who dwelt from eternity in the bosom of the Father, knew all his counsels, and came to testify to men what he had seen and heard with the Father.⁴ On the other hand, we have examples, among many others, of revelation by inspiration in its purest form, in the case of Samuel, who foretold to Saul, with circumstantial minuteness, the incidents that should befall him on his journey homeward;⁵ of Elisha, who had an inward vision of all that Gehazi did when he ran after Naaman's chariot;⁶ and of Philip the evangelist, to whom the Spirit said; "Go

¹ See in the Appendix, Note i.

² Deut. v. 22.

³ 1 Sam. x. 2-6.

⁴ Ex. xx. 18.

⁵ Jno. v. 20; viii. 38, 40.

⁶ 2 Kings v. 20-27.

near, and join thyself to this chariot.”¹ Between such simple forms of inspiration and revelations that are purely outward and objective, there are, in the manifold wisdom of God, many gradations, — visions in trance, visions in dreams, voices from the inner sanctuary and from heaven, appearances of angels, and the like, — in respect to some of which it would be difficult to say whether they are to be regarded as objective or subjective; nor is the decision of this question necessary, since the end in all cases is the communication of divine truth.

More important is the distinction between *particular* and *general* inspiration. For the accomplishment of special ends the Divine Spirit has sometimes used unholy men as his instruments. So the Spirit of God came upon Balaam, and he uttered prophecies concerning the covenant people which the church has always regarded as a precious legacy of truth. But Balaam had no general illumination and guidance from heaven, such as Moses enjoyed, when, for example, he addressed the people on the plains of Moab and recorded his exhortations in the Book of Deuteronomy; such also as Isaiah had when he described the future glories of Zion; and the apostles, when they preached and wrote concerning the Saviour and his gospel. When we come to discuss the question of the inspiration of scripture, it will be shown that such men enjoyed a constant illumination and guidance from God, which raised them above error in the communication of truth, and thus invested their writings with divine authority.

Order of Investigation.

This is of the highest importance; and we have endeavored to indicate it by the title given to this series of Articles: *Revelation and Inspiration*. We cannot begin by saying: This book is in the canon, and therefore it is of divine authority; for how do we know that it ought to be in the canon? Nor can we begin with the affirmation: This book is inspired, and therefore it is of divine authority, and as such has a right to

¹ Acts viii. 29.

be in the canon ; for how do we know that it is inspired ? We cannot receive its inspiration on the simple testimony of the writer. In connection with the seal of heaven his testimony is indeed of the weightiest character ; but even Christ himself did not demand men's faith without a heavenly attestation. To the Jews he said : " The works which the Father had given me to finish, the same works that I do bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me " ;¹ and again : " If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works ; that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him. " ² Nor can we receive the inspiration of a book on the simple testimony of " the church " ; for then we must come at once to the Romish dogma of the infallibility of the church, which is but resting our faith on a merely human foundation. Nor, again, can we receive a book as inspired simply from the character of its contents, however important as an element of judgment this may be. For if we rest our belief on such a ground alone, we virtually set up human judgment as the test of inspiration, and this is rationalism. Looking at the question on every side, we shall find ourselves constrained to inquire first of all : Has God made to men a supernatural revelation, and have we an authentic and reliable record of it ? Here we must proceed according to the acknowledged laws of evidence, not anticipating the particular question of inspiration. Having established by irrefragable proof the fact that God has made to men a revelation of himself in a supernatural way, and that the record which we have of this revelation is authentic and credible in the common acceptance of these terms, we shall then be in a position to go further, and demonstrate the inspiration of this record. After this will naturally come the question : What particular books have the seal of inspiration, and are, on this ground, entitled to a place in the sacred canon. The robust English common sense of the writers who, in the last century, defended Christianity from the assaults of infidelity

¹ Jno. v. 36.² Jno. x. 37, 38.

naturally led them to adopt this rational method. They did not begin at the outset by flourishing the doctrine of inspiration in the face of men who denied revelation, and with it the facts on which the proof of inspiration rests; but they met them on their own chosen ground, the question whether God has made a revelation of himself to man; and having fairly won this field, they found it easy to win the whole. It is a sign of the times, portending not evil but good, that the enemies of revealed religion, open and secret, are again mustering their forces on this old battle-ground, where they have been so often routed. They have found out that they cannot admit the genuineness and authenticity of the Gospels and the Pentateuch; for if they do, the day is lost to them, since these two citadels command the whole ground, and whichever side has possession of them is victorious. Here then we must meet them as good soldiers of Jesus Christ; for here the battle for and against Christianity is to be decided.

False a priori Assumptions against Revelation.

Before proceeding to consider the direct proofs of revelation, we shall examine, in the remainder of the present number, two false assumptions by which unbelievers attempt to set aside *a priori* all possible evidence of a supernatural manifestation of God to men.

1. *The pantheistic assumption against the possibility of the supernatural, and therefore of revelation.* In outward form pantheism has many modifications. But its essence consists in the identifying, or at least the confounding, of God with nature. He who assumes that God is nature, or that nature is God, identifies the two formally and perfectly. He who assumes, with Spinoza, that God is substance — the only real substance — and that everything particular and phenomenal is the modification of an attribute of this substance, makes God not the free author of nature, but simply the ground in which its modifications inhere; so that, according to this scheme, substance, with the modes of its attributes, constitutes

the indivisible whole of nature, above and beyond which there is absolutely nothing. And since substance cannot, according to this philosophy, produce substance, there can be no such thing as creation, but only a perpetual and necessary flow of phenomena without beginning or end. He who assumes, again, with modern impersonal pantheism, that God is the absolute Spirit in the process of self-evolution; that he does not possess self-consciousness as absolute, but first comes to self-consciousness in the finite human spirit; and that the universe is only this self-development of the infinite spirit, comes substantially to the same result as Spinoza—the denial of creation, true liberty of will, and final ends.

We notice, first of all, the close affinity of this impersonal pantheism with various heathen systems which were once supposed to have become superannuated. Its relation to Grecian polytheism, as held by men of a philosophical turn of mind, is nearer than one might at first suppose. For though the Greeks had “gods many, and lords many,” these were neither self-existent nor independent deities, but were all subject alike to the control of fate. And what was this fate to which gods as well as men were subject? In mythology, indeed, the poets personified it in the persons of the three sisters, Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos; but as a philosophic dogma, it corresponded very well to the unconscious, absolute spirit of modern pantheism; only that the Greeks did not carry out the idea of this absolute principle that controlled all things in the universe to the logically consistent result of making all things, gods and men included, an evolution from it in a pantheistic way.¹ But this is done in Brahminism, according to which nature is only a determination of Brahma to definite forms in quantity and quality—a self-limitation, and thus a self-evolution of Brahma, the only reality, which must ultimately absorb all things again into itself. It is manifest, therefore, that Brahmanism, to say nothing of Buddhism, has a remarkable agreement with

¹ See in Appendix, Note ii.

modern pantheism, only that the latter system, under the unacknowledged influence of Christianity, has cleared away the myriads of gods which belong to the former, and left only man as that evolution in which the absolute Spirit first attains to self-consciousness. According to both systems, as also Buddhism, the universe is but a perpetual evolution without beginning or end, under the concatenation of natural cause and effect, in which the element of free creative, and therefore miraculons, power has no place.

We notice, again, that the system now under consideration, like every other form of pantheism, rests on a basis of pure hypothesis. The pantheist sits down in his study and dreams out a system for a universe. He then writes a volume, assuming throughout that this is the true system of our universe, explains what he can in accordance with his system, and denies everything that is contrary to it, no matter what may be the weight of evidence by which it is sustained. He insists on the necessity of coming to the investigation of this great question without bias (*unbefangen*); yet who more biased than he? He has formed his system *a priori*. He has made his Procrustean bed, the universe must be laid into it, and everything that exceeds its dimensions, as supernatural creation and revelation plainly do, must be lopped off. The necessity of an *a priori* position for the comprehension of nature is not denied. Without it nature will be only a mass of phenomenal facts, not an intelligible system. But no man may thrust upon us his *a priori* system, his system of the universe in its subjective idea, without substantial grounds of proof. On what ground, then, can the Hegelian pantheist ask me to believe that God is the absolute Spirit in the process of eternal self-evolution, becoming objective to itself in nature, and returning to itself through the human spirit, in which it first comes to self-consciousness, and that all reality is only an element in this process of self-evolution? The three possible grounds are *intuition*, *demonstration*, and *probable argument*. The first of these we may dismiss summarily, since neither Spinoza nor Hegel, nor any other pan-

theist has ever been astride of the universe, and able to look through its principles intuitively. Spinoza, in his *Ethica*, pursued the method of rigid *demonstration*, after the manner of geometry, from definitions and axioms. But his definitions, with the propositions based upon them, are fatally defective, and fail to furnish any true comprehension of the actual universe. The seventh definition, for example, of his *Ethica*, Part i., allows to *absolute substance* (which in his system is God, the only reality, of which all forms of finite being are only modes without any real substance) merely an outward freedom — freedom from determination in its operations by anything without itself — but no real inward freedom, such as belongs to a self-conscious person, who does not act from necessity, but freely determines his own acts in the light of his own reason. He expressly denies that will in God or finite beings can be free. God's operations, which are but the operations of the universe, are fast bound in the adamantine chain of natural cause and effect, each operation flowing necessarily from a preceding operation, and so backward without end (*Ethica*, Part i. Prop. xxxii). God acts from the necessity of his own nature, without any power to forbear acting, or to act otherwise, just as it follows from the nature of a triangle from eternity to eternity that its three angles are equal to two right angles (*Ethica*, Part i., Prop. xvii. and Scholium). It follows by logical necessity that God cannot act in view of final ends (*causas finales*), or indeed in view of any end (Appendix to *Ethica*, Part i.).¹ Thus he allows no real ground for holiness in God, or for holiness and sin in finite beings. In all essential results modern impersonal pantheism agrees with the scheme of Spinoza. It is but atheism dressed out in a philosophical garb, admitting God in name, but denying him in reality. It is built on baseless assumptions, and therefore the demonstrations to which it pretends are baseless also.

If now we look to *probable argument* the case stands thus: That any *a priori* scheme of nature may claim our respect,

¹ See in Appendix, Note iii.

it must give an intelligible account of nature in both her constitution and course; since nature from her inmost depths cries out that she is not her own interpreter, but must be interpreted in the light of a power above her and independent of her. That an *a priori* system of nature may command our assent, it must, once more, admit the reality of holiness and sin in finite beings. But this involves the reality of finite, and therefore created, substances, which are neither parts nor modifications of Deity. We may add that an *a priori* scheme of nature ought to be in harmony with both the course of human history and the true wants and instinctive cravings of humanity, and not fatally out of joint with both. Let us apply these tests to the pantheistic scheme, everywhere placing in contrast with it the scriptural doctrine of one absolute, free, personal God, who is before nature, above nature, independent of nature, the free author of nature, and in whom nature finds both an intelligible explanation and a final end.

First, a true system of the universe must give an intelligible account of nature. Nature is not a simple essence, but a complicated *system*, having innumerable parts, between which there is manifest *adaptation*, that is, *the fitting of part to part* for the accomplishment of an end. This is but saying that nature is throughout full of the marks of a designing mind; for relations that are not in themselves necessary need an explanation, and if they be relations that accomplish an end, we refer them at once to an intelligent cause; since the very idea of an end includes that of a designing mind that proposed to itself this end. But the modern pantheist, having confounded nature with God, and made God an absolute impersonal essence, first coming to consciousness in man, precludes himself from every possible explanation of the innumerable proofs of design with which the universe is filled. To him nature is an endless evolution of being, bound together by the chain of natural cause and effect — not intelligent, free, creative cause, choosing and determining its ends, but blind and necessary cause. He can see that the cause A

produces the effect B; that B, becoming in turn a cause, produces the effect C; that A and B acting together produce the effect D; and so on without end. But of the series itself, in which the marks of design are everywhere manifest, he can give no account. The attempt to explain nature as a whole by reasoning from cause to effect, is as if one should think to give the whole account of a complicated machine by explaining how its parts act upon each other; whereas it is the existence of the machine itself that is to be accounted for. To make nature, with its ceaseless evolutions, eternal, does not help the matter. It only makes the marks of design eternal, and then an eternal designer is needed. An eternal evolution of nature no more explains itself than one that is finite in duration. Though the pantheist introduce into his system any number of gods and demigods, as does Brahminism, these are only parts of nature, and cannot help to explain nature. His system knows nothing outside of the chain of natural cause and effect, and therefore his gods need to be accounted for as much as any other phenomena in his universe.

That we may have, then, a true comprehension of nature, we must rise to the conception of an absolute *person*, who is before nature, above nature, and the author of nature; upon whom nature is dependent, while he is absolutely independent of it; of whose power nature is a *product*, but is not a *part* of his being. To this eternal, uncreated Spirit we customarily ascribe the power of causality, but in a very different sense from the causality of nature. The causality of nature is unconscious and blind, but the causality of God is self-conscious and intelligent. The causality of nature is necessary, every one of its operations being absolutely determined by preceding operations, — every *causa causans* having been first a *causa causata* — so that the idea of true liberty does not belong to it. The activity of nature can be called free only in the sense of being unobstructed; as water is free to flow down an open channel, or the worlds are free to move through empty space. But God's causality is inwardly and

morally free. He acts in the light of his own infinite reason, when he chooses and as he chooses. All truth is ever before him, and he acts in view of truth. But we must not conceive of motive in the divine mind as if it were analogous to the moving forces of nature; for these forces are themselves the causes, and they determine the effects that follow in a necessary way. But in the divine action God himself, the free personal Spirit, not truth, is the cause. The causality of nature constitutes an endless chain, in which every link is conditioned by the preceding. No link explains itself, and therefore the chain as a whole must have an explanation from without itself. Not so the free, self-originated, and self-controlled causality of God. His acts are not conditioned in a necessary way by previous acts. He can begin to act where there has been no prior action. By his eternal, uncreated power he can, as the absolutely free Spirit, bring into being a system of nature, and impose upon it such laws as he sees good. If this system of nature be our universe, with all its powers and activities, then it finds at once an explanation out of itself in its great author. Thus we come to a comprehension of nature in both its constitution and its final end. It is what it is by God's power and for his good pleasure. Considered in its several parts, nature has many subordinate ends. The inorganic mass is subservient to vegetable life, and this to the animal kingdom; while all these lower orders of being minister to man, the appointed head of this world. But man himself, and in man all nature, is created for the glory of God; so that God himself is the final end of all things.¹

The objector may say: You have not succeeded in eliminating from the universe the incomprehensible. You have only shifted it from nature to him whom you make to be the author of nature. We answer: That something must be eternally self-existent, and therefore incomprehensible, all admit. The real question is where we shall place the incomprehen-

¹ See this subject discussed in an able and fundamental way in Hickok's *Rational Psychology*, Part iii.

sible; whether in nature, where it manifestly involves contradiction, or in God, where no contradiction can be alleged against it. Nature is complex. She consists of parts having innumerable relations to each other, which are obviously not necessary, and therefore demand explanation. Nature is a vast system of adaptations as means to ends, which is only saying that nature is the product of intelligent mind. We might as well say that a fount of type arranged for the compositor's use, or a page of type ready for the press, is to be received as an ultimate, incomprehensible fact, without an attempt at explanation, as that all the adaptations of nature, with the beneficent results accomplished by them, exist somehow in an incomprehensible way. The arrangement of the type demands an explanation; and so nature from her inmost depths cries out: I must and will be accounted for. But no man in his sober senses will ascribe to the infinite, self-existent mind complexity of parts. If some Christian writers have spoken of the *adaptations* in the divine mind, of the nice *adjustings* and *balancings* of his faculties, they have used language which is either very poetical or very false. Adaptations, adjustings, and balancings belong to a *system* that is planned and put together by a higher intelligence. God is not a *system*. He has no parts, and therefore no adaptations of parts. Borrowing language from the lower sphere of nature, we do indeed speak of God's different attributes. But we are not to conceive of them as parts that could be added or taken away, and therefore adjusted to each other. We say of God that he is self-existent, eternal, and unchangeable in his being. These are only different sides, so to speak, of viewing the same absolutely simple essence. Who supposes that God could be self-existent without being eternal and unchangeable? We might as well attempt to separate length in matter from breadth and thickness, as one of these attributes of the eternal mind from the other two. We ascribe to God, again, intelligence, power, and love. But if we speak understandingly, we mean that the same absolute, uncompounded, free Spirit knows, acts, and loves. Nature

is *designed*. She demands that an account be given of the innumerable adaptations of means to ends which are found in her. But God is the self-existent, eternal *Designer*. In his being there are no traces of *adaptation*—of the putting together of parts which can be conceived of as existing separately for the accomplishment of an end. Of him no account is to be given. He is the everlasting I AM.¹

It has sometimes been argued that if nature requires for her explanation a designer higher than herself, much more must the being of God, who is higher than nature, be explained by the assumption of a still higher designer, and so backward without end. This is true pantheism which makes the universe, God himself included, to consist of an everlasting chain of necessary cause and effect. If a man cannot rise above this law, which binds together in its adamant chain all the operations of nature, to the conception of a free, intelligent author of the universe, who gives origin to a law of natural cause and effect, but is not himself included in that law, then the objection holds good. His pretended God is not God, for he has no real freedom. He causes by an inward necessity of his nature, and is himself caused by a necessity lying back of him. He is a part of nature and not her free author. But when we have risen above nature to the conception of a free author of nature, we are not required to go further. All arguments from the excellence and greatness of God's nature to the necessity of a cause above him are simply impertinent. It is not because of the greatness and excellence of nature that we infer her origin from a designing mind, but because nature is a vast and complicated *system*, filled throughout with marks of design. Self-existence, eternity, and simplicity of essence do not by any means imply a low nature. On the contrary, we naturally think of the uncaused cause of all things as spiritual and infinite—“a Spirit infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.” Here our reason is satisfied, and we ask not to go further.²

¹ See in Appendix, Note iv.

² See further on the argument from design in the Appendix, Note v.

A strong argument might also be made from the *course* of nature as indicated by geology. This science shows conclusively that our earth was once in a state of igneous fluidity incompatible with the existence of vegetable or animal life. These must, therefore, have had a beginning, which implies creative power; for the only rational conception of life is that of an immaterial entity endowed by the Creator with an organizing and formative power over matter. That any possible juxtaposition and arrangement of dead atoms — and this is all that purely material organization means — should constitute or produce life is an absurdity. Organization is the product of life, not life of organization.

Geology further reveals the fact that there have been repeated catastrophes in the history of our planet, destroying the previously existing systems of life, after which new systems have appeared. Here again we see the hand of a Creator. So far as the argument from design is concerned, it is not necessary to feel any anxiety in view of the fashionable theory of development. If established, it would only throw the immediate creating and adjusting agency of God further back in the system. The proofs of design would all remain intact. Should a mass of metal come without any visible agency into a fount of type, and these, again, into a set of pages ready for the press, we might say that the whole process took place through an inward law of development; but we should be compelled to refer the law itself to a designing mind. Just so the internal law which, according to some, has developed the materials of nature into the present orderly system must be accounted for, and this can be done only by going back of the law to a free, intelligent Author of it.¹ But this theory is not sustained by the facts

¹ Since the present article was written, Prof. Bascom's Article on Cause and Effect, published in the April number of the *Bibliotheca Sacra* for the present year, has come to hand, in which this matter of development is well handled. The substance of his argument is contained in the following sentence: "If matter in its qualities, forces, involves order, — measured, systematic, related action; if it holds inlocked a physical universe, then does this thought, this wisdom, uttered in and through matter itself, springing from it centrally, rather than laid

of nature, and is utterly incompetent to bridge over the gulfs by which her successive systems of life are separated from each other. This can be done only by the creative energy of a personal God, such as the scriptures reveal to us. Here much might be said; but after the full discussion of the evidences of a designing mind with which nature is filled, it is not necessary to enlarge further.

In the second place, a true system of the universe must be in harmony with the great fact of *the existence of holiness and sin in finite beings*. If any truth whatever shines by its own light, it is that of the eternal distinction between right and wrong, and consequently between holiness and sin; for holiness is the free, conscious, intelligent conformity of a personal being to right, and sin is his free, conscious, intelligent departure from it. Our idea of right and wrong is not that of an abstract difference which exists somewhere in the universe, but of a moral obligation which rests on us personally to do the one and avoid the other. The ground of this obligation — or, if one prefers, the necessary condition of it, — we intuitively see to be our real inward freedom, with the solemn responsibility that comes from the possession of it. We are made in the image of God. As such we are true free agents. We have not the absolute freedom of God any more than his absolute knowledge and power. But we have freedom in reality, not in name only; and this is the ground of the commands, threatenings, and promises addressed to us in the Bible. If we deny our freedom, conscience gives the lie to the denial. We know that our acts of holiness and sin are our own in such a sense as nothing else in the universe can be called ours — our own, because we are the real free authors of them. We know that guilt is a terrible reality, for we feel in our consciences the venomous stings of remorse,

upon it outwardly, require explanation, and bear back the mind to a personal, intelligent being, the seat of this reason, the source of the wise way in which these forces are matched one against another, are bound one with another" (p. 310).

which no sophistical reasonings can avail to pluck away. With the clear insight of reason we see also that our fellow-men are free, responsible beings like ourselves, and we always treat them as such.

But the idea of a person endowed with reason and conscience, who is a free cause, and as such capable of holiness or sin, is that of a true spiritual substance, created indeed by God, and therefore finite and dependent upon him, but no part of his being. Here scriptural theism and pantheism are at direct issue. Pantheism knows no substance but God. Everything finite is but an evolution of the absolute being, and can have no separate being of its own; and if no separate being, no separate efficiency. In a pantheistic universe there can be sin only in name, since what men call sin is only an evolution of Deity itself. It is sin only to our finite apprehension, but considered with reference to the whole, "whatever is right," in the most literal sense, for it is a self-determination of God himself. According to the phraseology of modern impersonal pantheism, God first comes to self-consciousness in man. Man is, therefore, the very highest evolution of Deity in this world; and if man sins, then Deity sins in its highest manifestation, an absurdity not to be tolerated. Hence the inevitable tendency of pantheism to resolve all sin into apparent error; error which is such only in a finite view, and which will rectify itself in the progress of the evolution of Deity.

This great fact—the reality of sin, which has its roots deep down in the reality of created, finite, spiritual substance, of which, with its high endowments of reason and moral freedom, God is the author, but which is not itself a part of God; which acts by virtue of the power that God has given it to act, while its acts are its own and not God's; and which in its finiteness may act wrong, and thus bring upon itself guilt and desert of punishment—this great fact is the rock upon which every form of pantheism, open or concealed, must make shipwreck. All schemes of philosophy which have for their object to bring the human will, whether in a covert or open

way, under the law of natural cause and effect, thus depriving it of real inward freedom and responsibility, however stoutly freedom and responsibility may be held in name—all such schemes, when traced to their ultimate principles, will range themselves under some form of pantheism, personal or ~~im~~personal. Good men sometimes favor such a philosophy in the interest of some scriptural doctrine, as that of men's dependence on divine grace, or that of God's universal sovereignty. These are precious truths to be firmly maintained. But in the manner of maintaining them we are not at liberty to set aside another truth which shines by its own light, and which God assumes as the basis of his dealing with men. If we can reconcile the great fact of human freedom and responsibility with these plain doctrines of scripture in a metaphysical way, well and good. But if not, we must still hold them all together in the humble assurance that the comprehension of their inward philosophical relation to each other involves, not contradictions, but intuitions beyond our present power.¹

In the third place, a true system of the universe must be in harmony not only with the course of nature, but also with *the course of human history*. Since men are moral beings their union in society makes a moral system, to be administered by moral means and influences. Such a system must, of necessity, have progress and a history. Since, moreover, men are not all good or all evil (the ultimate grounds of which fact we do not propose to consider here), the history of human society must exhibit a perpetual conflict between righteousness and wickedness. The point now insisted on is that the course of human history furnishes abundant evidence that the destiny of man is not left simply to itself, but that all along the line of its progress there is an overruling Providence, which guides and shapes it in the interest of truth and righteousness. This superintending hand of a personal God is not so clearly seen in short periods of time as in those

¹ See in Appendix, Note vi.

which are of great extent. In the language of scripture : " One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." The divine plans are so vast in extent of time, so complicated, and carried forward by such unsearchable methods, that it is impossible to affirm what will be the immediate fate — fate as apparent to our limited view — of any good or bad enterprise. The cause which has justice, and therefore God, on its side, may be subjected to crushing defeats, such as shall seem for the time to annihilate all hope ; while the cause of wickedness and oppression triumphs, and goes on gathering new strength for a long period of years. But sooner or later there will come, as a French writer has remarked, a fifth act in the tragedy, in which righteousness triumphs and wickedness is overthrown ; and then this fifth act will be seen to have grown out of the calamities of the previous acts. If there be in the beginning of the conflict more than one Bull Run, there will come at last a Gettysburg, a Vicksburg, and a Five Forks. And these Bull Runs and Five Forks may be separated, not, as in our late civil war, by a comparatively short interval of time, but by dreary centuries, since God's eternal government makes but little account of long and short.

This is a vast theme, on which volumes might be written ; but we content ourselves with the above brief hints. The impression which the course of human history, viewed on a broad scale, makes on the mind of every candid observer is expressed in such passages of scripture as the following : " Even as I have seen, they that plough iniquity and sow wickedness reap the same." ¹ " He made a pit and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made. His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate." ² " The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance ; he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked. So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous ; verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth." ³ " The righteous shall see it " [the

¹ Job iv. 8.

² Ps. vii. 15, 16.

³ Ps. lviii. 10, 11.

providence' of God as described in the preceding verses] "and rejoice; and all iniquity shall stop her mouth. Whoso is wise and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord."¹ We waive the question of the inspiration of these passages. We quote them simply as in harmony with the course of human history; as giving the true impression which the observation of it makes on the thoughtful mind. Cold, dreary pantheism knows no providence. It consigns the destiny of the world to blind fate, or, at best, to the successive generations of man, in whom the absolute substance of Deity in its endless self-evolution "first comes to consciousness." It is wholly out of joint with the reality of human history, and this marks it as a false theory.

Finally, a true system of the universe should be in harmony with the real wants of humanity. If this argument be considered indirect, its logical validity cannot be denied. It rests on the principle of induction. Adaptation is the great law of the universe.

"Beneath the spreading heavens
No creature but is fed."

The true wants of sentient beings are everywhere provided for. The world itself, with all that it contains, is in harmony with man's intellectual nature. Light is not more perfectly fitted to the eye than is nature to the human understanding. If the body finds in nature the food which it needs for its sustenance, so does she furnish the mind also inexhaustible stores for its instruction, development, and discipline. But man, as a spiritual and moral being, has a dignity and excellence to which nature can lay no claim, and has wants high above the capacity of nature to satisfy. In the deep yearnings of his spirit he longs after a nobler good than can be found beneath the natural heavens, even the spiritual good of communion with a heavenly Father who can care for him in the weakness and dependence of his finite nature; to whom he can go in trouble for help and comfort; to whom he can

¹ Ps. cvii. 42, 43.

confess his sins with childlike penitence, that he may receive forgiveness for them ; with the contemplation of whose infinite uncreated glories he can refresh, strengthen, and purify his own spirit ; and who may be his everlasting stay when flesh and heart fail. *Our Father in heaven* — this is the keynote of the gospel, and the keynote also of man's spiritual nature. The personal God of the Bible satisfies all the wants of humanity. Nothing but sin can alienate the human spirit from him. To the good man his presence is "as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds ; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain." It warms, cheers, and vivifies his soul, and fills it with pure and serene gladness.

But pantheism buffets in the face all these deep, spiritual cravings of humanity. Its deity is an impersonal substance that can be neither loved, confided in, nor approached in prayer. To pray in trouble is natural to man. But pantheism sends man to himself for prayer ; since it is in man that the absolute substance called deity first comes to self-consciousness. We ask pantheism for bread, but it gives us a stone ; we ask of it a fish, but for a fish it gives a serpent ; we ask of it an egg, but it offers us a scorpion.

We have seen how scriptural theism gives a true comprehension of nature in both its constitution and its course ; how it is in harmony with the great fact of holiness and sin in finite beings, with the course of human history, and with the deep spiritual wants of humanity ; and how, in all these respects, pantheism is utterly wanting. Considered as a philosophical system (and in this light alone we now contemplate it) pantheism must be rejected as self-condemned, and the theism of the Bible received as the true system of the universe. But the moment we rise to the conception of a free personal God who is before nature, the author of nature, and independent of nature, all assumptions against the possibility of the supernatural vanish. He who made nature can act above nature ; that is, he can act in a manner which is, qualitatively considered, creative. This is the true

idea of miraculous power, whether its particular form be that of the creation or annihilation of substance, or the suspension, counteraction, or intensification of the laws of nature.¹ In truth it is as *natural* to man to believe in the *supernatural*, as in the being of a personal God. It is only pantheism that would do violence to nature without man and in man. Uncorrupted human nature has its home in scriptural theism; and we may say of all pantheistic attempts to drive it from its blissful habitation :

“*Naturam expellas furca tamen usque recurret.*”

2. *The assumption against the proof of miracles from the alleged fallibility of all human testimony.* Here we encounter at once Hume's famous Essay on Miracles, the gist of which lies in the following assumptions : Our only guide in reasoning concerning matters of fact is experience ; miracles are contrary to universal experience ; it is not contrary to experience, on the other hand, that human testimony should be fallible ; therefore a wise man, who proportions his belief to evidence, cannot allow the infallible experience of the world against miracles to be overcome by the fallible testimony of men in their favor. Foreseeing, however, the monstrous conclusions to which these assumptions logically carried out must lead, he is careful to qualify them by the remark that no testimony can have such force as to prove a miracle, so as to make it a just foundation for a system of religion, and adds : “ I beg the limitations here made may be remarked when I say that a miracle can never be proved so as to be the foundation of a system of religion. For I own that otherwise there may possibly be miracles, or violations of the usual course of nature, of such a kind as to admit of proof from human testimony ; though perhaps it will be impossible to find such in all the records of history.” His aim in this distinction is, as we shall presently see, the denial of the supernatural, and not of what is contrary to all known human experience. He stands therefore, in reality, on the panthe-

¹ See in the Appendix, Note vii.

istic platform, and he virtually acknowledges as much when he says of miracles resting on a religious foundation: "But should this miracle be ascribed to any new system of religion, men in all ages have been so much imposed on by ridiculous stories of that kind, that this very circumstance would be a full proof of a cheat, and sufficient with all men of sense, not only to make them reject the fact, but even reject it without further examination. Though the being to whom the miracle is ascribed be, in this case, Almighty, it does not, upon that account, become a whit more probable, since it is impossible for us to know the attributes or actions of such a being, otherwise than from the experience which we have of his productions in the usual course of nature." The reader will notice the cool assumption here made that the Deity has manifested and can manifest his attributes only "in the usual course of nature," which is the very question at issue. If, then, there be a personal God, and he determine, in his wisdom, to manifest himself in a *supernatural way*, — one that is properly *miraculous* — Hume decides that it is impossible; and directs us not only to "reject the fact, but even reject it without further examination." This decision of Hume against "religious miracles," as he calls them, must rest either on the pantheistic theory already reviewed, according to which a true miracle is an impossibility, or on the ground that Hume knows that a personal God, who made nature and is independent of nature, never did and never will manifest his attributes in a supernatural, that is, a properly miraculous way. This last assumption is so absurd that it needs no labored refutation. We might, therefore, well content ourselves with opposing to Hume's sophistry the proofs of a personal God. But we propose to examine the chief points of his argument:

First, we inquire what he means by *experience*. From some passages in his Essay we should naturally infer that he meant *personal* experience — the experience of each one's senses. But the absurdity of this is manifest. Unless a miracle were wrought in the heavenly bodies, enduring, more-

over, through the space of a natural day, it could not be a matter of personal experience to the mass of mankind. And then it would be personal only to that generation; the next generation would be compelled to receive it on testimony alone. Hume himself virtually admits that by universal experience he means the experience of mankind as confirmed by universal testimony, so that he comes at last to human testimony to rebut human testimony; and this he often does in the course of the *Essay*, weighing evidence against evidence. "A miracle," he tells us, "is a violation of the laws of nature; and as a firm and unalterable experience has established these laws, the proof against a miracle, from the very nature of the fact, is as entire as any argument from experience can possibly be imagined." And again: "There must, therefore, be a uniform experience against every miraculous event, otherwise the event would not merit that appellation." The correctness of his definition of a miracle we will not here discuss. It is sufficient to remark that "a firm and unalterable experience" and "a uniform experience" can be known only from the universal testimony of mankind. He comes, therefore, to the absurdity of opposing against miracles the testimony of *all* men in *all* ages — for this alone is the testimony of "a firm and unalterable" and "a uniform" experience — to the actually existing testimony of *some* men in *some* ages. In other words, he first assumes that there has never been any experience of miracles, and then opposes this assumption to all testimony in their favor.

Secondly, we inquire what he means by a miracle; for on this point the *Essay* is confused and inconsistent. He sometimes applies the term to what is simply unprecedented; as that, to use his own illustration, there should be in a given month and year "a total darkness over the whole earth for eight days." This he thinks could be established by human testimony, because it might be explained from natural causes. But immediately afterwards he affirms that no amount of testimony could convince him that a dead person, after being interred for a month, had again appeared alive; evidently

because such an event could not be accounted for by any law of nature ; in other words, would be truly miraculous. And he adds that if this miracle were alleged in the interest of any new system of religion, " this very circumstance would be a full proof of a cheat, and sufficient with all men of sense, not only to make them reject the fact, but even reject it without further examination." His reasons for this extraordinary principle of action will be presently considered. Here we notice only the distinction made by Hume between an *apparent* miracle, which he admits might be established by competent testimony, and a *real* miracle, which he would reject in the face of all possible testimony. To make all plain he adds, in a note: " A miracle may be accurately defined *a transgression of a law of nature by a particular volition of the Deity, or by the interposition of some invisible agent.*" For reasons already given we do not regard the word " transgression " as appropriate to the definition of a miracle. It is rather the immediate act of God *above* nature, preventing the effect of nature's laws, or accomplishing results to which these laws are not of themselves competent. And as to miracles " by the interposition of some invisible agent " other than God, they are rather superhuman than miraculous events. It is only in loose and popular language that they can be called miraculous, as being above both the sphere of nature and of man. But not to criticise further Hume's definition, we accept, as of vital importance, the distinction between what is only unprecedented and seemingly miraculous, and a true supernatural interposition made by God himself, or by " some invisible agent " *under his direction.*

Thirdly, we notice Hume's glaring inconsistency in regard to the argument from " uniform experience." His hypothetical so-called miracle, " a total darkness over the whole earth for eight days," is as contrary to uniform experience in any intelligible sense of the words, as anything can be. But here he holds that the fact could be established from the united testimony of the men of the age in which it occurred. But

the same united testimony would not establish the fact of a resurrection from the dead, especially if alleged in the interest of a system of religion. Why this distinction? Because in the former case the event might be explained from natural causes, but not the latter; in other words, because Hume assumes that a real miracle is impossible, which is precisely the assumption of pantheism. He knows better, therefore, than to rest his argument against "religious miracles" on that "uniform experience," the validity of which he has just denied in the case of his assumed miracle of "a total darkness over the whole earth for eight days." Deserting the argument from uniform experience, he proceeds to impeach upon entirely new grounds the testimony by which the miracles recorded in history are sustained. This carries us to an entirely new field of inquiry, which we hope to consider at length in a future number. At present we briefly remark that if the existence of a personal God, who is before nature, above nature, and the author of nature be once admitted, it is absurd to affirm either that he cannot manifest himself to man in a supernatural way, or that he cannot give to men satisfactory proof of the fact. As to Hume's allegation that there is in mankind a fondness for the marvellous which leads to self-delusion, it is sufficient to reply that if this be a genuine instinct of humanity, it is reasonable to believe that there is provision made somewhere for its legitimate gratification; though, like every other instinct, it is liable to abuse and perversion. It only proves that God has made man in harmony with the supernatural system to which he belongs. As to Hume's further attempt to disparage all "religious miracles" on the ground of the multitude of impositions practised on the world by designing men, we may well ask: Does anything valuable exist in this world that is not counterfeited; and does not the counterfeit imply the reality? Why have we counterfeit bank-notes? Because the genuine notes exist and are so valuable. Why have we pretended philanthropy? Because there is such a thing as true philanthropy, and the world honors it. If we hear a man declaiming against all

goodness as simulated and unreal, we infer at once, not that no goodness exists, but that he is destitute of it. Let the same reasonable rule of judgment be applied to the question of miracles, and we are satisfied.

Fourthly, we notice Hume's false assumptions in regard to human testimony. In accordance with that false materialistic philosophy, which restricts all human knowledge to the testimony of the senses,¹ he affirms that our belief in the veracity of human testimony rests on experience alone. The very opposite of this is true. It is natural for men to speak the truth. In doing this they only follow the law of their being. Falsehood, on the other hand, is something artificial and unnatural, something invented for selfish purposes. Men speak the truth simply because it is the truth, but they never utter falsehood for its own sake. They are either deceived by a hasty judgment, or they seek to deceive others for base ends. It is natural moreover, for men to believe testimony. It is only by experience that they learn to distrust the word of others; and then always on one of the two grounds above stated — a hasty judgment or an attempt to deceive for selfish ends. When we can be assured that a man has had full opportunity to form a correct judgment in a given case, and that he has no interest in deceiving us, we always give credit to his words. With regard to the correctness of his judgment, we decide partly from the nature of the event to which he testifies, and partly from what we know of his character as an accurate or a careless observer. With regard to the honesty of his purpose, we judge partly from his known moral character, and partly from his relation to the thing affirmed. If it be something in which he has a personal interest, we hesitate. But if it be something in which he has no such interest, or which is against his interest, we give him full credence for meaning to speak the truth.

Thus far we have considered only the isolated testimony of individuals. But when the testimony of separate and

¹ See in Appendix, Note viii.

independent witnesses is combined, its force may be increased as every one knows, not in the simple ratio of their number, but a thousandfold, or even a millionfold, so as to be raised high above all reasonable doubt. It is not even necessary in all cases to inquire concerning the moral character of the witnesses. The concurrence of testimony may be itself of such a nature as to preclude every possible explanation except that of the truth of the event in question. To discuss this matter at large would be to write a treatise on the laws of evidence, a work which we do not propose to undertake. We simply add that it is by no means necessary that the event thus certified should come within the range of any past experience. We can conceive, for example, of a populous island in the Pacific Ocean on which a meteoric stone has never fallen, and the inhabitants of which have no tradition of such an event as having occurred there or elsewhere. To them the descent from the sky of a mass of iron would be contrary to uniform experience in any intelligible sense of the words. But every one knows that it could be established beyond doubt by the testimony of a comparatively small number of witnesses. The man who should seriously attempt to oppose to their testimony, the "firm and unalterable experience" of the past would only be laughed at for his folly. If afterwards the inhabitants of that island should learn that the descent of meteoric stones is not uncommon, when a large portion of the earth's surface is taken into account, they would indeed be able to refer the particular phenomenon on their island to some general law of nature, and thus to anticipate its possible recurrence among themselves; but their conviction of the truth of the event would remain the same as before. They did not believe it because they could bring it under a general law of nature, but on the ground of unimpeachable testimony.

Let us next suppose that a man appears claiming to be a messenger sent by God to perform for men an important work and to communicate to them important truth in respect to their spiritual and eternal destiny; that, in support of this

claim he performs a series of works which are manifestly miraculous — heals by a word withered limbs, instantly restores paralytics to their full strength, opens the eyes of men born blind, raises the dead to life — that he performs these and other like miracles from day to day openly and in the presence of friends and enemies, and that the severest scrutiny only compels foes as well as friends to admit their reality. Why should any man deny that such a series of miracles could be established beyond all reasonable doubt by human testimony? Not on the ground, certainly, that they are contrary to “a firm and unalterable experience”; for so was the descent of iron from heaven to those islanders, and so also was the supposed “total darkness over the whole earth for eight days,” which Hume admits could be established by human testimony. The only remaining ground for denying them is the assumption that a true miracle is in and of itself incredible; and here we come back again to the pantheistic position of the impossibility of the supernatural, and therefore of the miraculous. To the man who believes in the being of a personal God there can be no such impossibility. He who made nature can reveal himself to men in a supernatural way. Whether he has ever done so is a legitimate question for human testimony. That testimony in *some* circumstances is fallible, is a true proposition. But that testimony in *all* circumstances is fallible is false. There can be a concurrence of testimony of such a character as to establish anything that does not involve a contradiction, and that without respect to the question whether it has ever come within the range of known experience. Can there be any greater absurdity than that one should admit the being of a personal God who made nature, and yet deny that he can reveal himself in a way that is above nature, and thus properly miraculous? And if he can thus reveal himself, has he indeed no power to certify to mankind the fact? “Professing themselves to be wise they became fools,” says the apostle. What greater fool in the garb of a philosopher than the man who, admitting the being of God in the scriptural sense

of the word, affirms that he either cannot make to men a supernatural revelation, or cannot certify it by credible testimony ?

In the next number we propose to consider some of the popular assumptions of the present day against the necessity and reasonableness of a supernatural revelation from God ; and this as prefatory to an exhibition of the direct evidence that God has made such a revelation.

APPENDIX.

NOTE I.

Singularly enough, rationalists and high-toned evangelical men sometimes meet, not in their metaphysical speculations alone, but also on other ground. There is a class of naturalistic theologians who find no difficulty in admitting that David and Isaiah, Jesus and Paul, were inspired. But so also, according to their theory, were Homer, Socrates, and Plato, Dante and Milton ; for with them inspiration is only the exaltation of the natural faculties. Thus they dilute inspiration into a nonentity. On the other hand, we have heard men earnestly maintaining that all Christians are inspired, because all enjoy the supernatural illumination and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Their intention, doubtless, was to exalt in human apprehension the heavenly gift of the Spirit. But they did it in such a way as to confound things which differ essentially. This is not the error of the Montanists, for they believed in a true, ecstatic, inspiration of their prophets. It is rather the error of misusing a necessary theological term in such a way as to obscure a distinction of great importance. Although the *idea* of inspiration is found abundantly in both the Old Testament and the New, the noun *inspiration* does not once occur in the Bible, and the corresponding participial adjective but once : 2 Tim. iii. 16 : " All scripture is *inspired of God*" (Gr. *θεόπνευστος*, which the Vulgate well renders *divinitus inspirata*). The terms *inspired* and *inspiration* have become household words in the church, because they are needed to express a definite scriptural idea. To this they ought to be restricted.

NOTE II.

In the Prometheus of Aeschylus, for example, Prometheus, by virtue of the prophetic spirit which dwells in him, foresees the fated order of events, in accordance with which Jupiter, through a marriage into which he will enter unaware of its results, is to be hurled from his throne ; and he boasts

of this in the presence of Io and the Chorus. Mercury is sent to demand of what marriage he speaks, but he refuses to tell. Then Jupiter in his rage can only hurl upon him his thunderbolts, without the ability to extort from Prometheus the dread secret, or to change the irresistible order of Fate, to which he is himself subject, in common with all things else in the universe.

NOTE III.

The seventh definition of Spinoza's *Ethica*, Part ii., reads thus in the original: "Ea res *libera* dicitur, quae ex sola suae naturae necessitate existit et a se sola ad agendum determinatur: *necessaria* autem, vel potius *coacta*, quae ab alio determinatur ad existendum et operandum certa ac determinata ratione." In what sense God is a *free cause* he explains in two corollaries appended to his seventeenth proposition, that "God acts from the laws of his own nature alone, and without compulsion from any one":

"COROLL. I. Hinc sequitur 1. Nullam dari causam, quae Deum extrinsece vel intrinsece praeter ipsius naturae perfectionem incitet ad agendum.

"COROLL. II. Sequitur 2. Solum Deum esse causam liberam. Deus enim solus ex sola suae naturae necessitate existit (per. prop. ii. et Coroll. 1. prop. 14), et ex sola suae naturae necessitate agit (per. prop. praeced.). Adeoque (per. def. 7) solus est causa libera; q. e. d."

Notice *how* he makes God to be a free cause. It is "by definition 7" given above. He immediately proceeds in the scholium which follows to deny to God all true moral freedom, making all things to flow from the infinite nature of God under the law of strict necessity, in the same manner as it follows from the nature of a triangle that its three angles are equal to two right angles. He also denies to God intellect and will; or affirms that if they pertain to the eternal essence of God, they must differ *toto coelo* from our intellect and will, and can agree in nothing but name; just as the living animal dog differs from the dog as a celestial sign. Thus much for pantheistic freedom. It is baptized with the name of bread, but is in reality a stone. See further his arguments against free-will, divine or human, and against the idea that God acts in view of final ends in Prop. xxxii. and what follows to the end of Part i.

NOTE IV.

They tell us that there can be no philosophy of the absolute; that beyond the finite personality can have for us no significance. If they mean that we cannot comprehend the absolute in the mode of its existence, this has always been admitted. But if they mean that we cannot apprehend the absolute as having a real existence, the proposition is false. Absolute duration and absolute space are to our finite minds incomprehensible; but

we apprehend them both as necessary existences. In like manner we can apprehend the being of an absolute personal God, though we cannot comprehend the mode of his existence.

We have not an *ultimate* comprehension of anything *finite*; as, for example, the great law of gravity, the chemical affinity of atoms, the organizing power of life, the power of the will over the muscles of the body. But we apprehend these things as incomprehensible facts. Let us be reasonable enough to apply the same distinction to the question of a personal God.

The objection, moreover, is a two-edged sword, which cuts both ways alike. If I cannot comprehend how there can be an absolute personality, neither can I comprehend how such a personality may not be. How absurd to limit the possibility of being by my finite comprehension! And what shall we say of the pantheistic scheme which makes the universe an eternal self-development of the absolute, itself impersonal and unconscious, but first coming to consciousness in man? Is that comprehensible? It is not on the naked ground of incomprehensibility that we reject the pantheistic system, but because of its manifest contradictions.

NOTE V.

The proposition: *Design implies a designer* is, properly speaking, a truism; since the very idea of design is of that which has been designed by some one, who is of course the designer. It is desirable to ascertain by an analysis wherein lies the essence of design. Design, then, belongs only to those relations which may be called contingent, that is, which are not in and of themselves necessary, and which precisely for this reason need to be accounted for; and which, moreover, accomplish intelligible ends. To necessary relations, that is, relations which we cannot conceive of as separable, we never ascribe design. Let us take, for example, a molecule of matter. Waiving the question whether its existence is itself proof of a Creator, we remark that however small we choose to make it, it must still have, from the very idea of matter, the three dimensions of length, breadth, and thickness. We cannot conceive of either of these as separable or absent. Consequently in these three relations we have no evidence of design. If the molecule is to exist, it must exist as long, broad, and thick; that is, it must exist in space. If there be in the molecule design, it must be back of this necessary relation to space in the idea of matter as a conception of the divine mind. Again, the molecule must exist somewhere in time, and in one of the two states of motion or rest. If, moreover, there be two molecules, they must have towards each other some relation of distance and direction. In such relations, which cannot be conceived of as absent, we do not find the marks of design. But now let us take a fount of type. Both the regularity and the diversity of form in the different

letters give unmistakable marks of contrivance. But passing by the argument from this source, let us suppose that we see the different letters all regularly arranged in separate compartments. We know at once that this arrangement is neither necessary nor accidental; that is, we know that it is the product of intelligence. How much more when we see the letters put to actual use in a page of type ready for the press.

Precisely the same argument for an intelligent author is furnished by nature, only upon an immensely higher and grander scale. The ultimate atoms of matter — ultimate so far as analysis can go at present — like the letters of a fount of type, have different properties, and thus different offices. These properties are not necessarily inherent in matter; for if they were, all atoms of matter would have the same properties. They accomplish, moreover, by their combinations, intelligible ends without number. It is then an imperative demand of reason that they be referred to an intelligent author. Oxygen and hydrogen, for example, uniting in their atoms, form water; oxygen and calcium form quick-lime; oxygen and silicon, silicic acid, which in its comminuted form is sand; oxygen and carbon, carbonic acid. Water and quick-lime, again, by their union form hydrate of lime, and this united with sand, by the help of more water, forms mortar; carbonic acid and quick-lime uniting form carbonate of lime, which in its compact form is marble; marble and lime together enter as materials into the structure of the stately edifice. And so we might go on without end. Under the formative power of life, the combinations among the primitive atoms are immensely more complicated and wonderful; and every new combination, in respect to either proportion or kind, gives new properties and new uses. Thus starch, by successive additions of oxygen, becomes first sugar, then alcohol, then vinegar. In this way material nature, in her ultimate elements, gives irrefragable proof of a designing Author who not only moulds matter, but who gave to matter originally its inmost essence. And if we rise from dead matter to the living orders of nature, we see everywhere immense systems of adaptation, which we instinctively refer to the same designing Author.

But if we rise to the free, uncreated, personal Author of nature, there is in his nature nothing that is contingent and separable; nothing, therefore, that bears the marks of adaptation from a source without himself. He is simply incomprehensible.

NOTE VI.

There are some definitions of human freedom given by men at the farthest possible remove from anything which they would have regarded as pantheistic in principle, which, nevertheless, we must hesitate to admit. Such is the following: *The will is as the strongest motive.* If this means the motive which actually prevails, it is a truism; if the motive which is intrinsically the strongest, it is false; for the strongest intrinsic motive is always

on the side of righteousness. If it be said that the strongest motive is that which appears the strongest, this brings us to another definition: *The will is as the greatest apparent good*. Here again we must ask how much is included in this good? Is it mere sensitive gratification in the widest sense, or does it comprehend also the high spiritual and moral good of doing righteousness? If so, this always appears to reason and conscience as something imperative; something which ought to be chosen before all sensitive gratification for the sake of its own supreme excellence. Moral choice always lies precisely here, being exercised between objects differing in kind, and not simply in degree. When we do a base and wicked act we feel at the time and afterwards a sense of self-degradation and guilt — *remorse*, which bites like a serpent in view of our having acted not simply imprudently and unfortunately, but wickedly. If it be said that when a man sins his mind is engrossed with the contemplation of the lower object to the exclusion of the high spiritual good of holiness, we answer: Granting this to be so, it is because he has voluntarily turned away his mind from the imperative claims of righteousness, and this is free sinful action. There is one other scheme which virtually makes God the only efficient agent in the universe, and all human exercises, holy and wicked alike, the product of his creative power. God himself produces right or wrong volitions in the human heart; and these, it is affirmed, are free, because God creates them free. But this is a contradiction in terms; as if one should affirm that a crooked line is straight because God creates it straight.

Spiritual bondage to sin, the bondage of sinful passion and habit, is an awful reality. That we may be delivered from it we need the help of divine grace. But we should never forget that God holds us responsible not only for *being* in this bondage, but also for *continuing* in it, because, as conscience testifies, we thus continue as the free, responsible subjects of his law. Let us beware of confounding *motive* in free, rational beings with *motive force* in nature. In nature the motive force does everything, and the effect follows of necessity. But in the moral world the man himself acts freely in view of the motives which are before him, making his election among them; and — to anticipate the truth of revelation — God holds him responsible under the high sanctions of heaven and hell, to make the election according to righteousness. If the songs of heaven and the wailings of hell be a fiction, then may we begin to raise the inquiry whether human freedom be not also a fiction — a thing of name and not of substance, as too many metaphysicians have made it. But if heaven and hell be realities, then must human freedom and responsibility be confessed to be realities also.

NOTE VII.

The essence of a miracle is the exercise of God's immediate power above nature, such as he employs in creation, although the result may not be the

production of new substance. How the waters of the Jordan were arrested in their course when the Israelites passed over we cannot tell. The scriptural narrative seems to indicate that they impinged against an invisible, immaterial wall, by which the waters that came down from above were brought to a stand, "and rose up upon a heap very far from the city of Adam." But for anything that we can tell, this wall may have been the pure will of God, so that here was a counteracting of the laws of nature by power of the same quality as in creation, but not creation itself. When the Saviour fed vast multitudes with a few loaves and fishes there would seem to have been creation in the literal sense of the word. How he instantaneously healed maladies of all kinds, and raised the dead to life by the exercise of his divine power we cannot explain. It is sufficient for us to know that he did all that was in each case necessary. When we attempt to explain the particular mode of miraculous operation in a given case, we involve ourselves in inextricable difficulties. Take, for example, the miracle recorded in the Book of Joshua, by which the sun and moon stood still in the midst of heaven. Respecting the mode of this there has been much speculation. Some have affirmed that the earth was arrested in her diurnal revolution. Undoubtedly God could stop the earth on her axis, and with this all calamitous effects; for he could arrest and control every particle of her substance at the same instant. But it does not follow that this was the way which his divine wisdom chose. If the rays of the sun and moon were so deflected by his divine power as to reach the earth in a constant given direction, then to human vision — and this is all that the *end* of the miracle required — the sun and moon would stand still in the midst of heaven. We have not the presumption to affirm that this was the way; but we simply set the hypothesis over against another, which appears to us less probable. A reverent spirit will receive the fact of a miracle upon sufficient testimony; but when the inquiry is concerning the mode of its operation, it will answer: "O Lord God, thou knowest."

NOTE VIII.

We do not perceive with the senses *cause* in nature, but only *sequence*. Hence the astounding error of materialism in confounding antecedent and consequent with cause and effect. Again, we do not perceive human veracity, but only human statements and their accordance with facts. Hence, in like manner, the denial of veracity as an original principle of human nature. But after all the materialist runs his ship on the very rock which he seeks to avoid. Whence that belief in the uniformity of the laws of nature on which he insists? It is not given by the senses, but by the understanding. It rests on a deeper belief in the reality, permanent being, and unchangeable properties of finite substances; all which ideas are gained through the understanding, and not through the senses.