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

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

ARTICLE IV.

THE DIVINE IMMANENCE.*

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THAT within a generation there has been in religious thought and teaching a remarkable renascence of the conception of the Divine immanence can scarcely be questioned by any one, whether he is sympathetic with the fact or antipathetic.[1] It is to be recognized that this movement has a philosophical basis, that many hold the truth of the immanence of God on the ground of careful reasoning, and present it in their teaching thoughtfully and helpfully. On the other hand, it is to be feared that the notion of immanence as held by many is completely covered by two sentences, "There is a spark of the divine in every man," and

> "Closer is He than breathing,
> And nearer than hands and feet";

while underneath the repetition of these sentences may lie very variant conceptions from a mere conviction that "Spirit

[1] It is just about a generation since a significant series of articles on this important subject from the pen of James Douglas, D.D., appeared in this Review (1888, pp. 329–355, 487–505, 567–584; 1889, pp. 50–70; 1891, pp. 400–419). These articles show wide reading and clear and full apprehension of the theories of immanence held at that time. Much both good and bad has, however, been thought and said since that time, and another statement may now be in place, in part merely complementary, especially in the survey of the literature of the subject. It will also be found that the present writer presents the idea of immanence and its corollaries, not only independently of Dr. Douglas, but also in a way somewhat different.

with spirit can meet," and that "in him we live, and move, and have our being," to pantheistic notions scarcely distinguishable from Campbell's "God *in* man is God *as* man" and Mrs. Eddy's "All is God, God is all." It is important to bear in mind the cautious reminder of Dr. W. N. Clarke, who says that the word "immanence"

"savours of philosophy rather than of religion, for in this use it is distinctly a modern term, and has not yet had time to win its religious associations. Moreover, it is not without ambiguity, it seems to promise more of definiteness than it really brings to the subject, and in actual usage it has often brought a suggestion of pantheism."[1]

It may be well to take into account, at the very beginning of this discussion, that, so far as religion is concerned, its values are not necessarily affected by changes in the philosophical theories which are currently prevalent. So far as religious values are involved, it is very possible that the truth of the divine omnipresence was earlier presented by many preachers in such a way as to convey all the moral impressiveness now found in the philosophical conception of imma-

[1] Clarke, Christian Doctrine of God, pp. 320, 321. Confusion as to the meaning of the word "immanence" seems more excusable when some of the dictionary definitions are noted. Thus the Century Dictionary says: "In modern philosophy the word is applied to the operation of a creator conceived as in organic [?] connection with the creation, and to such a creator himself, as opposed to a *transient* or *transcending* creating and creator from whom the creation is conceived as separated." The two definitions of the Standard are most confusing. It says of immanence that in theology it is "the essential presence of God in all the universe and yet, as personal being, to be distinguished from it: constituting with *transcendency* the basis of theism as opposed to pantheism," and then goes on to add that the same word means in philosophy "the doctrine that the ultimate principle of the universe is not to be distinguished from the universe itself: a form of pantheism." What could be worse than this contrast between religion and philosophy, making immanence mean in one sphere a form of the very thing to which it is opposed in the other?

nence, later perhaps to be found in some other philosophical conception: that from the thought of omnipresence men formerly drew as much confidence of God's nearness, as much sense of his power of providential helpfulness, as much assurance of comfort, as much conviction of responsibility to a constantly present God, as any, or at any rate many, nowadays draw from the thought of his immanence. Any theory which effectively brings home to men the actual presence of the living God is a sufficient basis for the religious consequences, whatever they should be in any case, comfort, a sense of responsibility, fear, or hope. It must also be remembered that, because presented in a loose and unsystematic way, the idea of immanence may fail of the desired and the expected effect. The thought that God is everywhere has sometimes been put and held so vaguely that men have forgotten that he is now here. In thinking and talking of the universal presence they forget the real presence. In turn, when, with Mrs. Browning, we tell men that each common bush is aflame with God, they may yet fail, for all our words, to recognize or accept the truth we bring. Instead of thinking of God's real presence in the bush, they think no more now of God than before they had thought of the bush. Instead of finding the infinite God in nature, their thought of God too often shrinks to the measure of their previous conception of nature.

It is also to be noted that, while the name of this now reigning philosophical conception is relatively new, it cannot fairly be said that the conception itself is as novel. Allen, in his "Continuity of Christian Thought," traces this idea back to the Stoics, and has found it bubbling up here and there, a fresh and life-giving spring by the side of the often dreary path of theology through the centuries. Without attempting

to retrace the history of theology, recognizing that at different times quite other ideas have been mainly emphasized than either immanence or the constant presence of the divine in the here and now, it may yet be safely asserted that it is easy to overlook the real traces of this great truth, since they are often much effaced, and that it is too common to exaggerate the lack of it and, on this point as on so many others, to caricature the theology of the past. Statements may not infrequently be heard to the effect that it is only within the last generation, at most, that anything like the idea of immanence has prevailed at all, that till within a very few years the notion of "a carpenter God," "an absentee God," was solely regnant in Christian thought. Now, of course, this was the idea of Deism in the eighteenth century, but English theology revolted most strenuously against Deism, and at once, so to speak, argued it down and out. As Forsyth puts it, it was the theory of "the divine immanence which more than a century ago rescued us from a distant deism."[1] A good answer to statements often heard is given by Mead as follows:—

"That God is omnipresent, has never been denied, but always maintained, in the Christian Church. And since it has not been held that he is physically diffused through space, the meaning has been that his intelligence and his power have to do with all things. Moreover, the prevalent tendency of religious thought and feeling has been to see in the works of nature the hand of God — the expression of divine wisdom and goodness. Witness the language of our hymns, such as this,

"'There's not a plant or flower below,
But makes thy glories known;
And clouds arise, and tempests blow,
By order from thy throne.'

The same faith in the universality of God's agency is betokened by the common conception of Divine Providence. When men pray God to give them health and temporal blessings, and when they

[1] Forsyth in Old Faith and New Theology, p. 48.

recognize all their daily experiences as sent to them by their Heavenly Father, they certainly cannot be said to regard him as a God afar off and practically disconnected from the world with which we have to do." [1]

In other words, much that is said about the former prevalence of the idea of "an absentee God," "a carpenter God," is merely a slanderous fiction.

It was not at the end of the nineteenth century, but at its very beginning, or even earlier, that under the impulse of Romanticism poetry began to sing, if not the name, certainly the idea, of the Divine immanence. Where, indeed, in the very latest poets and preachers can be found a clearer setting forth of this idea than in the oft-quoted lines of Wordsworth:—

"I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking beings, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things."

And these lines were composed in 1798!

With Wordsworth's lines may well be compared the following from Goethe's "Gott und Welt," composed in 1816:—

"No! such a God my worship may not win
Who lets the world about his finger spin,
A thing extern! My God must rule within,
And whom I own for Father, God, Creator,
Hold nature in Himself, Himself in nature;
And in His kindly arms embraced, the whole
Doth live and move by his pervading soul." [2]

Romanticism is one of the chief influences which McGiffert

[1] **Mead, Irenic Theology, p. 50.**
[2] **See Allen, Continuity of Christian Thought.**

assigns [1] as contributory to the modern extension of the idea. He does not, however, mention English Romantic poets as specially influential. To the mind of the writer no single force has been practically greater in England and in America than the influence of the poets of the Romantic school from Wordsworth to Tennyson.

Alongside the influence of Romanticism, McGiffert sets the effects of the philosophical tendencies of the nineteenth century, religious considerations, and science. Under philosophical tendencies he names especially the influence of Spinoza and the general monistic tendency which runs through various systems. Much of this influence should be traced to Schleiermacher and Hegel. The former said: "The true essence of religion is . . . the immediate consciousness of the Deity as we find him in ourselves as well as in the world." Hegel even denied the transcendence of God, saying, "God is not a spirit beyond the stars; he is the spirit in all spirit." It is impossible to measure the influence of these two men in the last century, — an influence which seems to have permeated the thinking of many who did not themselves recognize that they were disciples of these German philosophers at all.[2] So far as monistic tendencies are concerned, it is interesting to note that such a thinker as Dr. Strong of Rochester, who came to make what he called "ethical monism" the philosophical cornerstone of his theology, yet barely mentions immanence, laying his stress rather on omnipresence. In fact, while an ill-considered idea of immanence may seem the road to monism or a result of it, it certainly does not re-

[1] Art. "Immanence," Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics.

[2] It may be well to remember that Schleiermacher's most important work, "Die Reden," was published in 1843, and that Hegel died as early as 1831, and that, consequently, these influences in regard to immanence must have been operative at an earlier date than they are commonly traced.

quire it either as cause or effect, and is consistent with almost any form of dualistic philosophy.

Among the chief religious influences contributing to the spread of the idea of immanence, McGiffert suggests the pietistic and evangelical stress on the direct relation between the Holy Spirit and the soul. But he himself largely nullifies the force of his own suggestion by reminding the reader that this experience was thought of not as general,[1] but as special, and consequently could scarcely become the ground of a general doctrine of the universal immanence of God in his world. He goes on to speak of the neglect, not to say repudiation, of those peculiar doctrines of Christianity which Evangelicalism made most of, — such as the Fall of Man, Original Sin, and Vicarious Atonement, — and makes this the result of "the existing tendency to see the immediate presence of God in all nature." Certainly it would be possible to argue that the converse is true, that doubt or dislike of these doctrines at least prepared the way for such a form of the doctrine as has sometimes (for example, in the earlier work of R. J. Campbell) reached an extreme which it is scarcely possible, even if it were desirable, to distinguish from pantheism.

Another element which McGiffert considers contributory to the spread of the idea of immanence is the influence of science. As the development of physical science in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by the discovery of natural laws seemed to render God at present needless in the physical universe; so, he says,

> "the new idea of the universe as an organism suggests a God within rather than without the world process, and, as a matter of fact, one of the most notable consequences of the increasing prevalence of evolutionary ideas has been the rapid growth of

[1] McGiffert's phrase "wholly unique" can hardly be justified.

the doctrine of the Divine immanence at the expense of the doctrine of the Divine transcendence."

All this may be accepted even by those who may hold that science was not responsible for the origin of the doctrine, and had not shown it to be a logical necessity, even though it had fostered its growth.

Years before Darwin, by the publication of his "Origin of Species," set modern science spinning down the ringing grooves of change, James Martineau held strongly and intelligently to the truth of the Divine immanence, calling, in so many words, the external universe "the shrine of immanent Deity." And even earlier Theodore Parker said: "It seems from the very idea of God that he must be infinitely present in each point of space. This immanence of God in matter is the basis of his influence; this is modified by the capacities of the objects in Nature; all of its action is God's action; its laws modes of that action." [1] The same idea comes out even more effectively in an earlier statement in the same paper, the truth and beauty of which have, perhaps, never been surpassed:—

"The fern, green and growing amid the frost; each little grass and lichen, is a silent memento. The first bird of spring, and the last rose of summer; the grandeur or the dulness of evening and morning; the rain, the dew, the sunshine; the stars that come out to watch over the farmer's rising corn; the birds that nestle contentedly, brooding over their young, quietly tending the little strugglers with their beak, — all these have a religious significance to a thinking soul. Every violet blooms of God, each lily is fragrant with the presence of deity. The awful scenes, of storm, and lightning and thunder, seem but the sterner sounds of the great concert, wherewith God speaks to man."

And this was said in 1842! And, lastly, Carlyle had written in 1831 and published in 1833–34 these words: "Then sawest thou that this fair universe, were it in the meanest prov-

[1] **Parker, Discourse of Matters Pertaining to Religion (1842), pp. 169, 170.**

ince thereof, is in very deed the star-domed City of God; that through every star, through every grass-blade, and most through every Living Soul, the glory of a present God still beams." [1]

Another fact is that, long before any one could have developed, on the basis of Darwin's work and its results, the religio-philosophical theory which we are discussing, the writer was taught by his father a full and complete denial of all "second causes" and a correspondingly full and complete assertion that everywhere in his universe God is always the single and sole cause of all action. This teaching was such that when, years after, the doctrine of Divine immanence was presented by name, it could only be greeted as an old friend, believed in, cherished, and loved from boyhood, even if the name was new. How many may have shared these views more than half a century ago, it is vain now to speculate; but it is plain that, as it is difficult to balance the claims made for the various tendencies, literary, theological, philosophical, scientific, which have more or less encouraged the prevalence of the now familiar doctrine of the Divine immanence, so it is impossible to hold any or all responsible for the origination of the conception.

As to the real scope and significance of the doctrine, it will be found, if we investigate, that philosophers and theologians are alike vague and inconsistent. It may be said that no two agree either as to the grounds assigned as a basis for the conception or in the nature and limits of the conception itself, many, indeed, laying down neither with definiteness, but assuming a common understanding which certainly is non-existent. Any survey of attempts which have been made to delimit and justify the proper conception of immanence

[1] Carlyle, Sartor Resartus, bk. iii. chap. 8.

may perhaps best be prefaced with some statements from Professor Bowne, who says:—

"As commonly used, the conceptions of immanence and transcendence are products of picture thinking. There is a desire to bring God into intimate relations to the world, and immanence is the word which meets the demand. But this is so carelessly used as to look toward a pantheistic dissolution of all things in an indistinguishable haze. Or there is a desire to escape this result and vindicate some existence for the finite; and then transcendence is the word. But this is apt to be interpreted as a spatial separation, and the result is to exclude God from the world altogether after getting it started. We escape this result only by noting the true meaning of our terms and by carefully excluding all spatial and quantitative interpretation."[1]

It may be worth while to group and consider various suggestions which have been made as to the nature of God's immanence in the world and the grounds for accepting and asserting it. Professor William Adams Brown says of the word, that, "as used in Christian Theology, it does not mean that God is present everywhere substantially, as a thing is; but in knowledge and power as a person," and later rather curtly asserts, as a "result of modern science," that "the natural is the supernatural, finding expression in forms which make possible the discovery of its permanent meaning and worth. As the natural, God is permanently present in the world in the laws which direct his activity and which express his character."[2] Immanence here seems to rest on the definition of the "natural," and to consist only in presence in laws; and a presence in the laws which ever direct his activity seems scarcely to deserve to be called personal at all.

W. L. Walker tells us that,

"while we must think of God in one aspect of his Being transcendent, we must think of Him as in another aspect immanent. But," he goes on to say, "it is not a *personal* immanence, but such

[1] Bowne, Theism, p. 246.

[2] Brown, Outline of Christian Theology, pp. 202, 229.

an immanence as we behold in the idea or principle of any organism which only gradually becomes expressed and realized therein."

Later he says:—

"The Divine Reason and Love is forever behind it all, and gradually realizing itself in human form in and through it all. But there is no *personal* presence of God *in* the world (that is in the forms of the world's life), or *in* man, till the Divine Idea of the Creation realizes itself in Christ."[1]

It seems scarcely necessary to emphasize either the unacceptable realism involved in the conception of the so-called Thought or Idea of the world, or the unimaginable "kenosis" by which God can be declared to be actually where he is not personally present.

Professor McGiffert says:—

"It is this which constitutes the difference between the modern idea of immanence and the traditional idea of omnipresence. The latter starts with the distinction between God and the world: the former with their identity. Omnipresence asserts only that the infinite God is present and active in all parts of the universe: immanence implies a much more intimate relationship, that the universe and God are in some sense truly one."

No wonder that he adds that "the tendency of the doctrine of immanence is pantheistic."[2]

Dr. Clarke, whom McGiffert criticizes as giving too much significance to the idea of omnipresence, gives, as was reasonably to be expected, a more personal view of immanence and bases it on a more spiritual intuition.

"At present it is apparent," he says, "that the universe operates, or is operated, from within. The forces that are found at work are resident forces. . . . The universe has the appearance of a self-working system. Not only its vastness, but its internal self-sufficiency, forbids us to think of it as controlled from without. If God is the operant force of the great system, and it is operated from within, then certainly he is within, with his operative will and energy."

[1] Walker, The Spirit and the Incarnation, pp. 279, 281.

[2] McGiffert, Rise of Modern Religious Ideas, p. 202.

Here it is only to be noted that the cogency of his conclusion rests solely on our agreement with him as to the way in which the universe is operated, and, also, that the definition is no more definite than "an operant will and energy which is within." [1]

Professor Bowne, whose caution as to conceptions of immanence and transcendence was lately quoted, gives in his work on theism no measured definition of immanence at all. In his book entitled "The Immanence of God," devoted especially to the religious relations and consequences of this conception, he is scarcely clearer or more definite. His ground of assertion is simply this, that

> "the result to which all lines of reflection are fast converging is the ancient word of inspiration, that in God we live and move and have our being. This is at once the clear indication of thought and the assured conviction of faith. In this conclusion, moreover, both religion and philosophy find their only sure foundation." [2]

The special value of these statements seems to lie in the revelation of the rapid drift in his own thought in less than twenty years' time. His definition is, however, even now safely vague:—

> "This doctrine we call the divine immanence; by which we mean that God is the omnipresent ground of all finite existence and activity. The world, alike of things and spirits, is nothing existing and acting on its own account, while God is away in some extra-sidereal region, but it continuously depends upon and is ever upheld by the ever-living, ever-present, ever-working God."

But how far, after all, do we get with this definition, if such it may be called! At any rate, it is all there is of definition on which to hang a hundred and fifty pages of conclusions as to "God and Nature," "God and History," "God and the Bible," and "God and Religion." How far does it really take us, and how much does it contain of the results of clear

[1] Clarke, Christian Doctrine of God, pp. 223, 224.

[2] Bowne, The Immanence of God, p. 3.

thinking, and how much material does it furnish for further clear thinking?

It may well be doubted if any more instructive and stimulating statements in regard to immanence have since been made than were made by A. A. Hodge in his Lectures more than thirty years ago. He then said:—

"God is immanent. He is everywhere present in every part of space and within the inmost constitution of all created things at the same time. God's activity springs up from the central seat of energy in all second causes, and acts from within through them as well as from without upon them. . . . He is the universal present and active basis of all being and action, the First Cause ever-living and acting in all second causes. . . . To the Christian the universe is not merely a temple in which God is worshiped, but is also the ever-venerated countenance on which the affections of our God toward his children are visibly expressed. Everywhere we see God, and everywhere his ever-active and fecund benevolence toward us is articulated in smile and word and deed."

This view Professor Hodge based, first, on "the essential nature of God as omnipresent and First Cause, the foundation of all dependent existence and the ultimate source of all energy"; and, secondly, he says it "is evident from what we see very plainly in the entire sphere and history of the physical universe. . . . There are no broken links, no sudden emergencies of disconnected events, but a continuous sequence of cause and effect everywhere."[1] Upon these statements little of criticism or suggestion need be offered, although this is not the writer's method of approach nor his form of conclusion.

One of the principal discussions which have been especially devoted to this subject is Illingworth's essay entitled "Divine Immanence." One significant element in his approach to his theme is that he starts from what we know best, — if, indeed, it is not all that we can say that we really know, —

[1] Hodge, Popular Lectures on Theological Themes, pp. 21, 22, 26.

the action of ourselves. He finds the point of analogy in the continuing influence of a man through his works, saying,—

"When we speak of a man's spirit surviving in his works, the expression is no mere metaphor; for through these works, even though dead and gone, he continues to influence his fellow men. And when we look at the pictures of Raffaelle, or listen to the music of Beethoven, or read the poetry of Dante, or the philosophy of Plato, the spirit of the great Masters is affecting us as really as if we saw them face to face; it is immanent in the painted canvas and the printed page";

and again, though with a distinct qualification of the analogy, he speaks of

"His immanence in creation, analogous to our presence in our works; with the obvious difference, of course, that we finite beings, who die and pass away, can only be impersonally present in our works; whereas He must be conceived as ever present to sustain and animate the universe, which thus becomes a living manifestation of Himself; — no mere machine, or book, or picture, but a perpetually sounding voice."[1]

It cannot be necessary to dwell upon the failure of the likeness such as it is, to constitute a real analogy on which it is safe to rest a weighty argument. Every one must feel at once the significance of Illingworth's own confession of the difference between the impress of the man on his works and the immanence of God in his works.

But Illingworth has pointed out the road to follow, as did Martineau also, more or less clearly, in his somewhat parallel discussion of causation. We must begin with our own experience, and find a real analogy if one can be traced. It is not necessary to struggle with the problems of modern psychology, mostly problems as yet. Appeal is to be made to our own personal experience and the verdicts of our own consciousness. The appeal is to the convictions of the average man, convinced because he feels the proof in himself. If

[1] Illingworth, Divine Immanence, pp. 80, 81, 87.

we interrogate consciousness, not browbeating it as a hostile cross-examiner, but helping it to tell its story in simplicity and confidence, we shall learn that we know spirit and matter, each of which we call "I," and we shall also learn of energy or force, whatever it may be, which does not belong to matter, for matter is always inert as if dead, and which does belong to spirit, and is let loose to act only in consequence of an act of the will. Consciousness gives report of force due to spirit, and knows no source or channel of force but spirit, finding spirit putting forth power and matter the passive recipient, or at most the mere tool, of force controlled by our spirits, though not necessarily originated by them. When in our own experience we find force at work, we know that it is the result of spirit acting. When we deal with other men, we find that the same is true. We may, must we not, indeed, see and use the analogy and find one law running alike through the microcosm and the macrocosm? Where there is force, there is spirit. The sole force of the universe is the illimitable and universal spirit whom we call God.[1] This analogy once grasped becomes the basis of a conviction of the immanence of God in the material world, an immanence manifesting itself mainly as energy or force.

[1] Fiske reaches the same conclusion by a different road. He says: "What is this wondrous Dynamis which manifests itself to our consciousness in harmonious activity throughout the length and breadth and depth of the universe, which guides the stars for countless ages in paths that never err and which animates the molecules of the dew-drop that gleams for a brief hour on the shaven lawn, — whose workings are so resistless that we have naught to do but reverently obey them, yet so infallible that we can place our unshaken trust in them, yesterday, and today, and forever?" (Cosmic Philosophy, vol. iv. p. 247). "The infinite and eternal Power that is manifested in every pulsation of the universe is none other than the living God" (The Idea of God, p. 166). "No part of the universe is godless. In the swaying to and fro of molecules and the ceaseless pulsations of ether, in the

An interesting statement as to the immanence of God as traced in the field of physiology is found in the following quotation from an eminent surgeon:—

"Is it not true that the biologic divinity never sleeps? Is it not simple fact that for 16 hours a day he lends to our consciousness, as temporary engineer in charge, the marvellous machine we call the human body and brain? Is it not evident that even while we as engineers are in charge, his attention is always present in every bolt and bar, in every organ and every cell? One of his little, but to us as physicians, conspicuous functions we have named *vis medicatrix naturae*, the healing power of nature, the wonderful art of instinctive unconscious repairing, the amazing and perfect proof of the very presence of God." [1]

Extend throughout the universe the conception which underlies these words, recognize alike in cell and star, in moonbeam and earthquake, the activity which proves "the very presence of God," and we have immanence.

It will be observed that this view is independent of all theories of matter, and harmonizes with any of them, though it might be added that, if any of the dynamic theories of matter, as that it consists of vortices of force, should finally prevail, this conception of immanence would peculiarly fit with it. It demands neither monism nor dualism as a philosophical basis; it accepts the apparent dualism, but fits no less with any spiritualistic theory of monism. This theory was reached and has been held by the writer with no direct dependence on Martineau, but an interesting harmony of thought has quite lately been noted. In general, Martineau emphasizes the idea

secular shiftings of planetary orbits, in the busy work of frost and raindrop, in the mysterious sprouting of the seed, in the everlasting tale of death and life renewed, in the dawning of the babe's intelligence, in the varied deeds of men from age to age, he finds that which awakens the soul to reverential awe; and each act of scientific explanation but reveals an opening through which shines the glory of the Eternal Majesty" (p. 110).

[1] **George M. Gould, M.D., Biographic Clinics, vol. ii. p. 22.**

of causality, the present writer that of force; but it will be noted that in the following quotation Martineau uses the word "force," saying,—

"If Force is known to us from within, if it is the name we give to self-conscious exercise of power, then that is just the whole of it as known to us at all: — not '*one* particular case,' leaving 'other such agencies' to be learned in some different way; but the absolute dynamical conception itself, coextensive with every actual and possible instance. Take away 'the consciousness of force' in ourselves, and with the keenest vision we should see it nowhere in nature. Endow us with it; and we have still no more ability than before to *perceive* it as an object in the external world, observation giving us access only to phenomena as distributed in space and time. Nor, from knowing it within, do we acquire any logical right to *infer* it without, except in virtue of an axiom of Reason inseparably present in it, — that 'all phenomena are the expression of Power,' — the counterpart of that power which issues our own."[1]

From this statement there will be no dissent, except to say that the exigencies of his argument have made Martineau put some things negatively which might well be put positively. He also adds: "This it is which constrains us to think causation behind nature, and under causation to think of Volition."

In view of all that has thus far been said, it may now be reasonably asserted that the true conception of the Divine immanence, so far as nature is concerned, is that, instead of a multiplicity of secondary causes and natural forces, God resides in nature as the universal force acting according to his own will. Against this view only two objections, so far as have been noted, have been raised, one being psychological, so to speak, the other ethical. In the same essay on "Nature and God," Martineau said:—

"It is impossible to resolve all natural causation into direct Will without raising questions (we say it plainly, but with reverence) of the Divine psychology. You say, He personally issues all

[1] Martineau, Nature and God, p. 140.

the changes of the universe. Is there a volition for each phenomenon? and if so, what constitutes a single phenomenon? — each drop of rain, for instance, or, the whole shower? or the wider atmospheric tide which includes the other term of the broken equilibrium? or, the system of aerial currents that enwrap the earth, and of which this is as much an element as the raindrop of the shower? or, the tissue of conditions, without which such currents would not be what they are, — including at a stroke, the constitution of water and of air, the laws of caloric, the distribution of land and sea, the terrestrial rotation, the inclined equator, the solar light and heat? Where in this mighty web of relations, are we to fix, and how to insulate, the *unit of volition?*"

The first answer to be made to this difficulty is perhaps best summed up in Dr. Clarke's striking sentence, "God is adequate to his universe, and more."[1] The difficulty which arises from the variety of seeming forces and the multiplicity of relations throughout the world of which we are a part, is due simply to our own littleness in comparison with the universe, and disappears at once and finally when we see God as, at any rate, no less than his universe. If we really hold to the omnipresence of God, which necessarily implies that he is everywhere all that he is anywhere, power and will and, we may add, changeless goodness, this objection becomes absurdly futile; for, speaking of the supposition of the action of the Divine will as "momentary in itself and handing over the prolonged part of the efficiency to a system of means, inert *per se,* but charged with delegated power cut off from its source," Martineau himself said that it "seems to have nothing to recommend it." In fact, he later uses language strikingly inconsistent with his earlier objection, saying,—

"that that Immensity not only looks, but lives: that it is not a presence only, but a power: that the movements of the worlds are his, as well as their distances and numbers: that the lesser and the greater seasons of the earth are a part of his ways: that the speed of the light and the play of the waves, and breathing of the forests are his: that the 'balancing of the clouds,' and the gleam and

[1] **Clarke, Christian Doctrine of God, p. 319.**

glory of the sun and showers are the momentary creatures of his Art." [1]

The ethical difficulty connected with immanence finds perhaps its clearest statement in these words of W. L. Walker:—

"To think of God as personally present and directly acting in the forces of Nature and Life, would make him the immediate agent in all the dreadful things that happen in the world — storms and earthquakes, shipwrecks, famines, pestilences, diseases, etc., and the direct Inspirer of all the appetites and passions of beasts and men, the Former of animal weapons of attack on fellow creatures. It would, in short, make him directly responsible for all the evil in the world, and the very idea of *Freedom* would be impossible." [2]

But to the really thoughtful mind the ethical difficulty is no greater on the supposition of immanent force than of omnipresent and omnipotent Providence. If we sing with Kirke White:—

"Howl, winds of night, your force combine!
Without his high behest
Ye shall not in the mountain pine
Disturb the sparrow's nest";

if we learn from the Great Teacher that "not a sparrow falls to the ground without his notice," then we shall find the same problem whether we think of God as acting directly or as only indirectly acting in nature. We have here a problem for faith which can be solved only by more faith.

"But if God is immanent in nature," says Illingworth, "He must also be in man, since man is a part of nature." [3] There is no good ground for dissenting from this statement if we are careful of our definitions, and do not use nature now in one sense, now in another. Throughout the chapter on "Divine Immanence in Nature," nature was used by Illingworth as meaning the material world, and matter was

[1] **Martineau, Study of Religion, vol. ii. pp. 162, 163.**

[2] **Walker, Christian Theism, p. 248; cf. the similar thought in The Spirit and the Incarnation, p. 277.**

[3] **Illingworth, Divine Immanence, p. 88.**

repeatedly used as a synonym for nature. In that sense man at once is and is not a part of nature. So far as the physical energy of man is concerned, it is reasonable to conclude that it is due to the immanent activity of God, and to hold that when man acts in relation to the material universe he does not create force but only employs it, that his volition cannot cause energy but only direct it. But to assert, as Illingworth necessarily implies, that, so far as man is concerned, immanence in the spiritual realm must follow in the same sense and measure from immanence in the material realm, is to depend on an analogy which is always uncertain. So far as physical energy goes, the analogy may perhaps be safely regarded as sufficient. This will carry with it the conclusion that the force which is let loose by our volitions is only directed, not created, by our wills. They have simply the capacity to turn potential into kinetic energy. Even our wills are not "second causes." So, too, from the same analogy, we may be justified — the writer certainly feels justified — in holding that all power which we exercise in the spiritual realm is not made by us, but furnished to us, and we merely control it. It may be noted, in passing, that the use of the words "force" and "energy" in reference to the spiritual realm is, though practically unavoidable, yet in fact a violent metaphor. We know nothing of the real nature of the life forces, as they have been called, or of the real nature of mental and moral activities. All that we actually know is that, so far as ability is concerned, we say "I can" of the activities of the soul as of the activities of the body.

There has been a tendency of late to carry the immanence of the Divine over into the very nature of the soul, into its most innermost realms; so that the attainment of knowledge, conscience, volition itself, become the activities of the Di-

vine within us. This does not refer particularly to the extravagances of R. J. Campbell, to whom man is but the bay constantly filled from the mighty tides of the ocean, nor is it worth while to quote in detail the frequent popular expressions to the effect that every good idea, sentiment, or aspiration is due to the mythical "spark of the divine," which leaves man a mere nothing with nothing to do. Theodore Parker, for example, in spite of his keen sense of responsibility, which flamed forth with rare vehemence in his anti-Webster, antislavery discourses, yet sometimes used language which, taken in its natural meaning, robs man of all natural ability to see the beautiful, to know the true, to do the good; and these expressions have been widely reëchoed, especially of late, though doubtless in ignorance of their source.[1] Many would do well to carry with them as a charm, to speak, the burning words of Martineau in answer to some of Parker's extravagant expressions:—

[1] Carruth, for example, in the familiar poem "Each in His Own Tongue," says:—

"A picket frozen on duty,—
A mother starved for her brood,—
Socrates drinking the hemlock,
And Jesus on the rood,—
And millions who, homeless and nameless,
The straight, hard pathway plod,—
Some call it Consecration,
And others call it God."

And a later poet, probably only to be considered a mere imitator of Carruth, says more plainly still:—

"The flutter of wings o'er the nestlings,
The life breathed out for the young,
Innocence shielding the guilty,
The Christ with nailed arms outflung,
The staring grief of a mother
For a still form beneath the sod;
Call it the gift of loving,
Give it the name of God."

"What then becomes of the human personality, when all its characteristics are conveyed over to the Supreme Mind? . . . A *reason* that does no thinking for itself, a *conscience* that flings aside no temptation and springs to no duty, *affection* which toils in no chosen service of love, a 'religious sentiment' that waits for such faith as may 'come in' to it, simply negative their own functions and disappear. Of whom are we to predicate the achievements of genius and character that enrich the world? Is Shakespeare only 'by courtesy' the author of Macbeth?"[1]

And more of the same tenor. Nothing is more fundamental in our thinking than our sense of responsibility. Anything which runs counter to this is to be set aside at once, no matter what its apparent claim to acceptance. If this is so, then alike the poetry of the Carruth school and much of the teaching which is supposedly drawn from the idea of the Divine immanence must be set aside at once and permanently. What we may say, and all that we are justified in saying, is substantially this, God continually puts at the disposal of every man power to think, to discern good and evil, to love, and to worship. These powers may be used, neglected, misused. The power is of God, the direction is of man. As it was divine power behind the muscular exertion of Peter's sword-stroke, and Judas's kiss, and Mary's obeisance, and Thomas's confession; so (if the word may be coined) the soulforce is divine which lay behind alike the loyalty and the treachery, the reverent surprise and the adoring faith. But as it was not God but Judas who was traitorous, so it was not God but Peter who was loyal, Mary who recognized, Thomas who adored. Anything else robs us of our value as men; because it robs us of our responsibility, and leaves us not men with reason and free will, as made in the image of God, but mere flutes in which the divine breath makes discord or concord at will, and so, robbing us of our responsibility, discrowns and disworths us completely.

[1] **Martineau, Study of Religion, vol. ii. p. 170.**

Professor McGiffert says: "Perhaps the most striking of all is the effect the doctrine of the divine immanence has had upon traditional conceptions of the person of Christ." This assertion is based on the statement made just before: "Where divine immanence is believed in man is recognized as himself divine. His nature is one with God's, not other than it." So he goes on to say:—

"The deity of Christ resides in the completeness of his consciousness of God. In a true sense all men are divine, for they are but manifestations of the one common reality which appears in nature as well as in humanity.[1] Essentially Christ is no more divine than we are or than nature is. But he knows his oneness with God; . . . He is, therefore, divine in a sense which nature cannot be and in a sense which we are not yet but hope eventually to become."[2]

But who can distinguish this teaching from that of the man whom Bowne quotes as saying that he had no trouble in believing in a divine man as he believed in a divine oyster? McGiffert later gives a sympathetic sketch of various attempts of men who accept immanence to safeguard theism over against pantheism and to hold fast to a God who is more than his universe. It is as possible to hold fast to the uniqueness of the Incarnation. If a doctrine of immanence is held such as is presented above (and what ground have we for more?), then the divine does not relate itself personally to nature or even to man, but only as power, guided of course by wisdom and love, but still remaining power. It may be possible for the divine personality to relate itself also personally to one man at least, and to my mind the uniqueness of Jesus historically demands this unique explanation philo-

[1] Could Indian Pantheism or Christian Science go further or state the idea more baldly?

[2] McGiffert, The Rise of Modern Religious Ideas, pp. 206, 208. The chapter on "Divine Immanence" is a thorough rewriting of the author's article on the subject in the Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics into a much less scientific and trustworthy form.

sophically, and permits no other. In nature the immanent God is power manifesting itself in physical forces; in man the immanent God is power, now mental and moral as well as physical, but with the individual left to live out his personal life according to his own free will, man being in his essential nature absolutely man; in Jesus of Nazareth, the one and only, beyond this common immanent force, we trace as well a blending of the elements of personality, so that the life is always the life of one who was personally God as well as man. It is only confusing to say with Sanday: "If, however, there is truth in the doctrine of Divine Immanence — if, that is, there is implanted in us a seed, that is capable of indefinite expansion, of the truly divine — then we have put into our hands an analogy which may go some way to explain other difficulties of the Incarnation."[1] But we have here only a definition which does not define and the suggestion of an analogy where it can scarcely be said to exist, for, as Forsyth says, "Immanence is only philosophic, Incarnation alone is ethical. . . . The immanence of God in human nature gives you but the development of the divine in man in unbroken unity — which is a mere philosopheme, absolutely fatal to a gospel."[2] Even Reginald Campbell said (and I do not suppose that this is what he now repudiates), "It is of no use trying to place Jesus in a row along with other religious masters. He is first and the rest nowhere; we have no category for him." It is a logical necessity that for a unique phenomenon we should seek unique antecedents. The immanence which explains the rest of the world does

[1] Sanday, Christologies Ancient and Modern, p. 132.

[2] Forsyth in Old Faith and New Theology, pp. 50, 51. Forsyth had earlier said of this theory, "It speculates about a Christ made flesh, but it never grazes the true seat of the Incarnation — a Christ made sin" (p. 48).

not explain Jesus. For him we must take a further step and explain him by the unique personal union which we call Incarnation.

If holding to the philosophical conception of the Divine immanence, it may then be asked, What place is to be assigned to the conception of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the soul of the believer? — a conception which is scarcely philosophical at all, but rather almost purely religious. Perhaps this question is not raised as often as it ought to be, for in these days it is doubtless sadly true that many who still repeat the words of the Creed, "I believe in the Holy Ghost," yet know little, and believe little, about him and his work. Even in those denominations in which emphasis used constantly to be laid on the work of the Divine Spirit, it is now largely ignored. With this lack of stress on the work of the Spirit, and with the constant, not to say one-sided, emphasis on the Divine immanence, which are alike common, it is not surprising that many find no room in their minds for a distinct conception of the indwelling of the Spirit; that, like the truth of the Incarnation, it is regarded as a superseded, or shall we not rather say a superannuated, doctrine. But as only a conception of immanence so extravagant as to be really false, only an ignoring of facts and realities can set aside the idea of incarnation; so only, by a similar process, can the idea of the indwelling of the Spirit in the soul of the believer be crowded out. Of course, it is to be recognized that there are greater difficulties in the apprehension of the Spirit than in the apprehension of the Son. It is part of the great gain of the Incarnation that we have "God with us" in the very likeness of sinful flesh: what was from the beginning, that men have heard, have seen, have handled with their hands. But with the Spirit it is otherwise. Coming, as he does, as view-

less as the wind, to use Christ's own comparison, it follows that he can be known only in his activities, in his fruits, in the results of his working. Now it may not unreasonably be held that all the exercise of divine power takes place through the Spirit, that the forces which work in nature, as the electric energy which men now recognize behind the atom, as chemical attraction, cohesion, molecular vibration, electricity, light, gravitation, as heaving the tides, revolving the planets, swinging systems of suns and satellites in space illimitable, all these, and as well what lies behind the phenomena which we know as life, and all the mental and moral powers and faculties of the soul — all, all are the activity of the immanent Spirit, in whose activity, and in whom alone, though there are diversities of workings, the same God worketh all in all. But the enumeration of such activities does not exhaust our experience. Beyond these phenomena, in all of which we trace the law of cause and effect (a law which, after all, is only the divine habit of working) there are phenomena which involve the element of moral choice, involve character, involve holiness. One of the questions to which every man is bound to find an answer, is this, How can we explain the change in souls from sin to holiness? In the life of the Christian we have not only the manifestation of divine energy in all the forces which belong to man as a part of nature, not only the personal powers which belong to him as a personal being, but we also have the manifestation of personal force in a way which is purely spiritual. There is the same Spirit, but there are diversities of gifts.

To be sure, it may be thought by some that, since God is always "closer than breathing, nearer than hands and feet," there is no need of any special relation, such as the special word "indwelling" would indicate. But whatever our mo-

nistic theories, we must recognize the difference which actually appears between the "material" and the "spiritual"; we must reckon with the practical dualism which we find in ourselves and trace in our experiences. Bowne wisely reminds us that, while

> "it is no uncommon thing to find persons, whose heads have been a little heated by the new wine of speculation, using this metaphysical immanence as implying moral and spiritual character"; yet "metaphysical immanence has no moral significance. It is simply the dependence of all finite things on God, and involves no spiritual likeness or nearness. We may all live, and move, and have our being in God, without any spiritual sympathy."[1]

But that there is an additional divine influence exerted in the moral sphere upon our souls is the confession of most thoughtful Christians as well as forms the basis of the creed of mystics in all ages. It has even found just now a striking expression where it would scarcely have been looked for. In a late book by Mr. H. G. Wells we read:—

> "For the first time clearly he felt a Presence of which he had thought very many times in the last few weeks, a Presence so close to him that it was behind his eyes and in his brain and hands. It was no trick of his vision, it was a feeling of immediate reality. . . . It was the Master, the Captain of Mankind, it was God, there present with him, and he knew that it was God. It was as if he had been groping all this time in the darkness, thinking himself alone amid rocks and pitfalls and pitiless things, and suddenly a hand, a firm, strong hand touched his own. And a voice within him bade him be of good courage. . . .
>
> "'I have thought too much of myself,' said Mr. Britling, 'and of what I would do by myself. I have forgotten *that which was with me*.'"[2]

So, alongside the great metaphysical fact that God is immanent in all that exists, and that all exists only because he is thus immanent, we must put the still greater religious fact that in his Spirit God relates himself to the willing soul by

[1] Bowne, Theism, p. 246.

[2] Wells, Mr. Britling Sees it Through, pp. 438, 439.

activities so profoundly intimate that we can call them by no looser word than "indwelling." When we recognize how his influence is exerted in relation to the deepest, most central, most vital elements of our spiritual life, must we not at the same time recognize that this cannot be better phrased than by saying, with the Apostle, that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

Of the method of indwelling it is of course impossible to speak. We can only say that if inert matter can be so permeated and interfused by the Divine Spirit that it seems to act of itself, still more may, yes, must, it be possible for the same Spirit to find entry into the willing souls which are made even in his image. But it is almost necessary to enter a protest against the strange confusion both of the Divine Persons and as to the nature of the relation established which we find in Sanday's language on the subject. He says:—

"If, or in so far as, the Holy Spirit may be said to dwell in our hearts, it was the same Holy Spirit who dwelt in Christ. The difference was not in the essence, nor yet in the mode or sphere, of the indwelling, but *in the relation of the indwelling to the person* . . . especially the central core of personality, the inner, controlling, and commanding Person. There are Divine influences at work within ourselves; and these influences touch more lightly or less lightly upon the Person, but they do not *hold and possess* it, as the Deity within Him *held and possessed* the Person of the incarnate Christ." [1]

Quite true, except that here there is a strange confusion of persons against which the Athanasian Creed is a permanent protest. While Jesus received the Spirit without measure, and while the Spirit so dwelt in him that we may well say that his Person was "held and possessed," yet Christendom has harmoniously recognized that the Incarnation was the incarnation not of the Spirit but of the Son, and that incarna-

[1] **Sanday, Personality in Ourselves and in Christ, p. 48.**

tion is something more than, because quite other than, the touch of Divine influences, however "less lightly," which Paul teaches us to attribute to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.[1]

The purposes and results of this indwelling there is neither opportunity nor occasion now to discuss. The once familiar words "regeneration," "illumination," "guidance," "sanctification," have perhaps for a long time lost their power to appeal. But the facts for which they stood are as much facts to-day as ever, and in some way some time these facts must again find a place in a theory of the Christian life which shall take into account and correlate all the facts. There may sometimes have been an unreal formalism in the oldtime demand for regeneration: there may have been an extravagant enthusiasm among some of those who looked for the inner light: there may have been a regrettable one-sidedness in the characters and lives of some of those who emphasized the sanctifying work of the Spirit. But just as some men must be called "twice born," so some experiences are inexplicable save as due to the permanent influence of the Holy Spirit exerted by him as he dwells in us. This is the explanation given by the writers of the New Testament, and by Jesus

[1] **After this example of the utter confusedness of Sanday's thinking on the subject, no statement should surprise us. Otherwise we should be amazed to read in the next paragraph, that, if the ideal which Paul expressed in his words "Christ liveth in me" could be conceived as fully realized, "we should say, not that there were two Gods, but that there were two Incarnations." The words which immediately follow are: "I have tried to use all the precision of language that I can." If the language precisely expresses his thought, could his thinking be more confused than in ignoring the difference between the personal incarnation of the Son in Jesus and the influence of Christ on our souls, however intimate and powerful! How can Sanday have thought and written so much and so well, and have never distinguished Divine immanence, the incarnation of the Son, and the indwelling of the Spirit?**

himself. And we have the prophetic word made more sure by the testimony of the saints of God century after century,—not only those who are ordinarily classed as mystics, but uncounted hosts of other believers who have found within themselves what with consentaneous voices they have been moved, indeed compelled, to assert was the power of the indwelling Spirit. Christian theology will have a marvelous enrichment when, with the lately reached fuller appreciation of the Divine immanence, is combined in due accord rightful stress on the assurance of the incarnation of the Son and the regained conviction of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the believing soul, this triad making a chord which will fill Christian thought and life with a harmony "like the sound of a great Amen."