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THE
BIBLIOTHECA SACRA.

ARTICLE I.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF THEOLOGY SURE.

BY THOMAS HILL, D.D. LL.D., FORMERLY PRESIDENT OF HARVARD COLLEGE.

It is difficult for us to distinguish between our most simple and direct inferences and the perceived facts on which we found them; and this difficulty is as real in the case of sensible as of supersensible objects. Nor is it always important for us to make the distinction; it is, in many cases, enough for us to feel the certainty of our knowledge or belief, and the reality of our emotions, without asking the grounds. As Catullus sings:

“I hate, I love; you ask why this I do
My torture only tells me that 'tis true.”

Sundry modern writers attempt to explain the instinctive desires and aversions on the ground of experience; Spencer calling in the experience of the ancestry to explain the fact that these desires and aversions are manifested at the very beginning of conscious life. The fact itself is patent to all observers, whether in animals or in new-born children. The appetites lead the animal directly, without tentation, to the actions which gratify them, very much as if the animal had an antecedent knowledge of the object, and of the gratification which would be yielded by its possession. In the child free to choose its mode of life the desire infallibly leads to the experience; and, although the knowledge is not innate,

it is what has been called inchoate; its foundations are in the soul, and it grows with our growth.

Among the native cravings of the human soul is the craving for sympathy, for human society, which seems to imply, and which certainly develops in the child, at a very early period, a knowledge of human beings, and of its own human nature. We know the existence of our fellow men with a certainty like that of intuition or of direct sight. We are certain of the existence of beings with a nature fundamentally identical with our own—with thoughts and feelings, desires and purposes, and with a power of will like unto ours. The ground on which we base our certainty might be assumed, by some persons, to be the cumulative probability in favor of the hypothesis which would explain such an indefinite number of facts in our experience. But a child, certainly, is never conscious of weighing the probabilities whether his father or mother, his brother or sister, exist; nor does the mature mind look at it in that light. We know, of course, that there is every probability in favor of the proposition; but we drop the question of probability, and know the existence of other men as certainly as we know our own.

This voice of authority within us is the unrecognized voice of the social instincts; its authority is recognized, but not its origin; that is, we do not here, any more than in other instances, argue consciously from the appetite to the existence of the object; yet it is the appetite that gives the intense faith in its desired object. Thus, also, our filial and our parental love, our craving for sympathy, our attachment to friends, our happiness at home, our gratitude to benefactors, our sense of justice, and other sentiments, give us, without conscious inference, a certainty in the existence of our fellow men—a certainty as immovable as that of our own existence.

In a perfectly analogous manner the religious sentiments give to the soul that is vividly conscious of them a certainty of the existence of the objects of that faith. The existence of the religious sentiment is acknowledged by nearly every

writer. Even Herbert Spencer, whose psychology is so inadequate to account for religious emotions, declares that contact for countless generations with the unknowable has produced a hereditary awe of the Ultimate Cause, so that men are now born with an aptitude for religious feeling, and that this native religious sentiment is ineradicable.

But this sentiment, which Spencer confesses to be, in this generation, inborn and of the highest value, cannot possibly have the form assigned to it by that ingenious writer, of a mere awe of the unknowable. The unknown and unknowable cannot excite awe, for it cannot affect our feelings in any manner—a conclusion which would not be affected by conceding Spencer and Maudesley's doctrine of the hereditary accretion of our mental and moral powers. What is wholly unknown and unknowable to the race cannot affect the consciousness of an individual. Were Spencer right in making all religious emotion consist in awe of the Ultimate Cause, that awe would not arise from the contemplation of the unknowable, but of the known. In recognizing the existence of a cause, we just so far know it as a cause. This is precisely the way in which we know all that is known—as the causes of phenomena; we know the causes in the effects. Spencer says that our belief in an omnipresent, eternal Cause of the universe has a higher warrant than any other belief, that is, that the existence of such a Cause is the most certain of all certainties; but asserts that we can assign to it no attributes whatever, that it is absolutely unknown and unknowable. Yet in his very statement of its existence, he assigns to the Ultimate Cause four attributes, viz. being, causal energy, omnipresence, and eternity. And afterwards he implicitly assigns to it two other attributes—repeatedly expressing his faith that the cosmos is obedient to law, and that this law is of beneficent result; which is an implicit ascription of wisdom and love to the Ultimate Cause. By his own principles, it could be shown readily that these six attributes are absolutely known attributes, and that, therefore the being of God, in the Jewish and Christian

sense of that sacred name, is the most certain of all certainties. For when we have arrived at the generalization that the whole universe is moving by intelligible law to the fulfilment of benevolent ends, it is impossible to refrain from assigning its origin to a Being Omnipresent, Eternal, Almighty, All-wise, and All-good. It has, indeed, taken a long course of culture, aided by the sublime word of Genesis, which Spencer ignorantly calls a Hebrew myth, to lead men to this clear perception of the presence of God in the creation; but this does not show that the idea is the mere product of culture. Some of the self-evident truths of mathematics have required thousands of years of the culture of mathematical genius to bring them now to light; yet they were true from before eternity.

The unknown and unknowable are matters of absolute indifference to us; we can be made to feel concerning the unknown only by giving us partial knowledge, and awaking the hope of further discovery. The instincts of reverence and adoration are not called into action, as Spencer falsely supposes, by contact with the unknowable, but by what is known, and particularly by sudden glimpses of the indefinite extent of the knowable. The most profound emotions of the sublime are always called out, as Goddard has shown, by a sudden perception of the vast field accessible to us, and never by the perception that a field is wholly inaccessible. Thus with the sublime attributes of the Deity; the more profound our knowledge of the rational, intelligible order of the universe, the higher will be our amazement at his boundless reach of thought; the more full our appreciation of the beneficence of his work, the deeper will be our gratitude for his ineffable goodness; and the clearer our conception of the moral order of the universe and of the righteousness of its compensations, the lowlier will be our adoration of his holiness.

When these emotions of adoring gratitude and wonder and praise are fully aroused in the soul, they give, without conscious inference on our part, a certainty to our knowledge

of God, such as is given by our social instincts to the knowledge of man; and we are right in saying, I know whom I have believed. It is incredible that the soul should have these sentiments of adoration and gratitude and love planted so deep within it, and that there should be no object to which they cling. The faith in the living God, which the soul aroused in its deepest religious nature feels, is well described by Herbert Spencer, in speaking of faith in a First Cause, as a belief having a higher warrant than any other belief whatever, the consciousness of which cannot be suppressed, without suppressing consciousness itself.

In every ordinary state of consciousness we know both ourselves as conscious, and the external world as producing some effect upon our consciousness. It is sometimes attempted to assume that consciousness is a state of the brain; but that is a notion which cannot be constructed. We know the brain only by its sensible properties. We know consciousness only in consciousness, and cannot in real thought predicate it of the brain. "It would be as practicable to imagine a round square."

In ourselves, in our conscious thought and feeling, we find the capability of indefinite expansion. Our thoughts rush ever in both directions, toward the infinitesimal and toward the infinite. In the mathematics it has been demonstrated that every function is completely determined by determining its infinite and its zero values; and in every department of thought a similar truth is assumed, so that we at once attempt the solution of the infinities. Even Spencer, who declares the infinite utterly unknowable, tells us, with glorious inconsistency, that the evolution now going on has gone on from eternity, and will go on to eternity; thus virtually saying that the secrets of the Infinite, although unknowable to man, are known by him. This is the unquenched spark of divine light within him, shining through his darkness, and not comprehended by his mistaken logic.

As the intellect thus ever seeks the infinite, and, in important senses, finds the infinite it seeks, so the heart yearns

for an infinite wisdom wherein to trust, an almighty arm whereon to lean, an unfathomable love wherein to rejoice. No mortal counsel gives us entire confidence, no human sympathy supports us under every burden, no earthly love gives perfect peace to the heart; we trust in the guidance of the eternal Providence, we cast our burdens on the Lord, we rejoice in the fulness of the divine love. These glowing Christian affections are an unerring indication of the reality of the objects to which they cling, and of the immortality of the being in whom they exist. This yearning for the infinite shows an element of the infinite within us.

The empirics endeavor to show an unbroken series of psychologic states, from the highest saints and sages down to the lowest zoöphyte, and ask, where shall you draw the line? We answer that it is of comparatively little importance. It were more reasonable to admit the immortality of ascidians, about whose psychical state we know nothing, than to deny the immortality of man, concerning whose psychical state we know so much, and whom we find ever turning with heart and mind toward the infinite and the eternal, clinging with ever-strengthening hope and faith to the conviction that he is permitted to read a part of the thoughts of God expressed in the order of nature, to understand some of his purposes, to share in the warmth of his illimitable love. Even were the wild dream of a development of the human brain from the diffused nervous sensibility of an acephal true, it would not make any approach toward identifying the conscious self with the brain it uses; much less would it make any approach toward answering the questions suggested to us by these thoughts and affections which lay hold of the infinite. Experience gives us only the finite; imagination can build no more than the indefinite; but reason and affection overleap both experience and imagination, and cling to the eternal and the infinite with an earnestness which is a pledge to us both of the existence of God and of our relationship to him.

There are, doubtless, difficulties in the doctrine that men are made in the image of God. We have just alluded to

one, the difficulty, namely, of drawing any sharp distinction between the intellectual and moral attributes of the lowest men and of the highest animals. Another difficulty is found in the reflex action of the brain upon the mind. Our feelings and our judgment vary with our state of health, and we cannot draw any sharp line as the boundary of insanity. The phenomena of delirium, madness, and double consciousness are therefore appealed to as proof of the purely physical origin of thought.

A slight consideration of a special sense, as vision or hearing, may make this difficulty less formidable. In normal sight, the retina is excited by rays of light. In normal imagination of a visible thing the retina is affected by the imagination, and may in certain cases be so much affected as to cause a perception or vision of the thing imagined. But a third case arises, in which the excitement of the retina, from some other cause than the reception of light, causes impressions as of light and color, and then very faint and even unconscious imaginings may give definite form and circumscription to these impressions, thus making images or visions. When myself suffering, many years ago, from undue excitement of the optic nerve and the appearance of visions, I could in general account for the particular form of the vision by recalling what I had been looking at, or thinking of, just previous to the attack. Thus it may be in delirium and insanity. The cerebral excitement is doubtless from physical causes; but its form arises from the effort of the mind to control it; and it may be that a part of the organ obeys the mind more perfectly, a part less so, and thus arises the apparent double consciousness. The difficulties of the subject are great; but they are vastly greater on the purely material hypothesis, and less on the spiritual hypothesis.

We may not be able to decide whether the human mind spontaneously originates the idea of perfection, or whether the idea has come through the Mosaic and the Christian revelations. But, be that as it may, the moment that the idea of

perfection is presented to the human mind, we rush to the conclusion, and cannot be moved from it, that the Creator is perfect, that is, that nothing can, in imagination or reality, be added to his attributes or taken from them.

Of course, we can form only a rational or intellectual concept of perfection; not an image, or sensible concept. We may, with Erigena, say that the Deity is not wise, because he is more than wise, nor good, because he is above all goodness. We cannot say what he is, because he is more than all that we can say. It was in a spirit of the deepest reverence that Erigena added, "*Deus ipse nescit quid ille sit, quia non est quid.*" Yet we know that the perfect knowledge must include all our knowledge, that the perfect love must be the fount of all earthly goodness, and the perfect holiness give us our inspirations of virtue. Herbert Spencer, refusing to assign attributes to the First Cause, still expresses his faith in the truthfulness, faithfulness, wisdom, and beneficence of the order of nature. The human mind which has once received the idea of moral perfection in God cannot free itself from that idea by any verbal quibbles concerning the infinite. We know that God is wise and good, in exact proportion as we know what wisdom and goodness are, since he embraces all perfections.

When we have arrived at the recognition of God's presence, and of his moral attributes, we long to speak to him, and cannot be content without thanksgiving, praise, and prayer. The reason, puzzled by the infinite character of the Deity, brings objections to these acts of piety, suggests that forgiveness is impossible, penalty inevitable, thanks and praise indifferent to the Infinite One, grace and mercy out of the power of an unchangeable and eternal Being. Still, the heart, when deeply moved, always sweeps away these objections of reason, bids her reconsider the problem, and be sure that God is our God. This testimony of the heart is surely of more weight than any of the flimsy deductions of pantheistic logic. There is nothing in sound reason to prevent the heart receiving the comforting assurance of that

word which was made flesh in Bethlehem, that God is our Father, ready to forgive our sins, and to help us in our weakness, upon the simple and reasonable conditions of turning from our sins, with faith in his holy Messenger.

Let us now turn to the objections urged against religious doctrines on account of what is called the relativity of knowledge. Every correct form of reasoning or inference may be described as essentially the same process. We start with two truths that are either absolutely self-evident, or else that are truths of conclusion previously established. From their self-evident relation arises a third proposition, which is the inference. Knowledge thus consists wholly of truths which are either self-evident, or connected with self-evident truths by self-evident steps.

But what truth is self-evident? The experiential school answer that we give the name self-evident to truths which we cannot, even for an instant, suppose untrue, and that this inability arises from a uniformity of experience in ourselves and in our ancestors; that, for example, we think two straight lines cannot inclose a space, because neither we nor our ancestors, from the days when they were zoöphytes, ever saw two straight lines inclose a space; an explanation which explains nothing, but merely covers the problem with words. Whatever is the object of direct sight, that is self-evident. Forms of matter are the objects of direct sensation; forms of spiritual truth and forms of space and time are the objects of direct intuition. What is thus seen by the inward or the outward sense is self-evident; we believe because we see.

But all human seeing is a partial seeing. The image in our mind is affected by many circumstances, by qualities not in the object, but in the medium, and in the subject, the seer. What is seen depends much upon him who sees; and this is one doctrine of the relativity of knowledge. Our knowledge bears a relation to ourselves, and is necessarily affected by our own state. All that we know, or can know, it is affirmed, is, how things look to us, not what they really

are. How much less, therefore, can our views of the Ultimate Cause of all have the faintest likeness to the object!

But space and time and number are conceived clearly in proportion to our ability and our culture; in other words, our knowledge of them is relative. Nevertheless, we have absolute knowledge of their properties—that the extension of space includes distance in manifold directions, and the protension of time points only to the future and to the past. Thus, also, in things visible, our senses never deceive us; we are deceived by our judgment, our reasoning, on the sensation, and, by sufficient care, we can correct our judgment. It is a vulgar error to suppose that those born blind have more acute hearing, and those born deaf sharper sight, than others; it is not that their senses are more sensitive, but that their judgment on their sensations has been more exercised, and is therefore better trained. Sense always gives a true report, and it is we who sometimes misinterpret the report. Of this liability to error we should not complain, since the pleasure of success always lies in the possibility of failure.

Thus, also, in spiritual things, our intuitions give us truth so far as they give us anything, and that truth is related as directly to the object of intuition as it is to us. We know the elements of psychology and theology positively, by direct intuition, and cannot suppose there is any uncertainty concerning them. But our inferences from these intuitions may be very far from correct, unless we have proceeded with cautious, sound judgment.

Our intuitions make us absolutely certain of the likeness of other men to ourselves; yet we may fall into gross misjudgments of men, unless we limit this truth of intuition by the observed truth that men also differ from us and from each other.

In arguing from truths of consciousness to the attributes of the Deity, we should, of course, be still more cautious. We see that there must be an Ultimate or First Cause, Almighty, Omnipresent, Eternal, Omniscient, Holy, Benefi-

cent, from whose attributes our own feebler powers and virtues by his inspiration spring. These grand truths are not subjective illusions ; they are not the projection of our own likeness on the misty universe, and mistaken by us for the likeness of the Creator. The invariable and universal laws of nature, the expressions of the divine thought, were in nature, intelligible, rational, conforming to the *a priori* laws of space and time, countless ages before man's poor geometry and algebra partially deciphered them. Man is, then, the child of God ; we know with absolute certainty that our minds, seeing the laws of space, have some likeness to his mind who subjected matter to those laws ; and we believe with immovable faith that our hearts and souls partake in the same divine likeness. We are, however, to take heed lest we deserve the reproach which the Psalmist represents the Lord as uttering : "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself."

But modern speculators on the infinite and the absolute, instead of reproving the wicked for thinking the Lord altogether such as they, reprove sharply the righteous for thinking that the best man can have any likeness to the Deity. It is as degrading to the Infinite Being, they tell us, to pronounce it spiritual, wise, or holy, as it is to pronounce it sensual, foolish, or wicked.

Yet wisdom, holiness, love, will, are positive powers, of which we can conceive indefinite increase, and to which we see no inevitable limit ; while sensuality, folly, malice, sin, are in their own nature limited. We cannot conceive their indefinite expansion, for, if we imagine them increasing indefinitely, we see that they lead rapidly toward an utterly insane or idiotic condition of mind. The Satan of Milton, even the Mephistopheles of Goethe, have many fine qualities. Without this blending of goodness in the bad, the poet could not paint a devil, any more than the artist could produce a portrait, using only black pigment, upon a black ground.

While, therefore, no conception of the Infinite Cause can be adequate, and no human language can make a statement

concerning him that shall be wholly true,—that is, incapable of being misunderstood,—it is yet more emphatically true that no deductions from our definitions of the infinite and the absolute can be valid, unless by accident; and that the validity of such deductions as have been made by Kant, Hamilton, Mansel, and Herbert Spencer, from the nature of the infinite, are to be tested by the inductions of natural theology, rather than the inductions by such deductions. The only ground on which the validity of the inductions and intuitions of natural theology can be assailed is that of the relativity of knowledge; and to make the assault seem successful, the position of the assailant must be taken so far to the left as to leave him in utter and complete scepticism, doubting the axioms of mathematics, and uncertain of his own existence.

If we have any warrant for believing in our own existence, in the reality of space and time, in the certainty of their relations, in the existence of matter, in the certainty of its simplest laws, in the being of our fellow-men, or in their general likeness to us, then we have the same warrant for inferring some likeness in man to his Maker. The First Cause is not wholly inscrutable; and blended as our ideas of him may be with errors of our own, they must contain also something of his truth. Our ideas of God may not be as adequate as our ideas of space and time; but they contain truth concerning him, and concerning our relation to him. All thinkers concede that human reason is competent to discover the existence of an Ultimate Cause, to form the inductions of its Being, its Causal Energy or Power, its Omnipresence, and Eternity. Our warrant for these inductions is what Herbert Spencer calls his universal postulate. We cannot, even for an instant, imagine that there is not a Power which causes all things, everywhere and always acting.

All writers (if we except the eccentric pessimists) also concede that “there is no vice in the constitution of things” — that intelligible law rules throughout all the universe,—

to the furthest stars, in the minute intricacy of molecular structure, in the relation of part to part and of all parts to the whole, — precisely as if the whole universe, both of mind and matter, were the expression of mathematical, physical, and moral ideas. The human mind, seeing this perfect intelligibility of the effects, cannot refrain from assigning intelligence to the cause; seeing the rational order of all motion, cannot doubt that the movement is ultimately guided by reason. There is a necessity upon us of adding to the four attributes of Being, Power, Omnipresence, Eternity, that of Knowledge or Wisdom.

But, said a friend to us, "You have not tried long enough. The positive philosophy is still young. After sixty or seventy thousand years of effort to refrain from this teleological absurdity, we shall be able to refrain easily, and acknowledge the First Cause as wholly inscrutable." We reminded him that his supposition was invalidating the universal postulate of his idol. "Very well," he replied, "let it fall." Then everything falls; we are in chaos; we do not know our existence, nor that we doubt our existence; there is no argument for or against any truth whatever; the height of philosophy has become the height of folly. To suppose that what has been demonstrated as true to human thought to-day can be false to human thought in any future, is to deny the possibility of any knowledge of anything, now or hereafter.

Herbert Spencer himself brings to bear a different argument against teleological views. He says that the Infinite, Ultimate Cause is without the necessity of planning, deliberating, contriving; these are implied in thought; therefore we must not degrade the Ultimate Cause by attributing thought to it; that he calls a carpenter theory of creation. But this is a trebly unreasonable attempt of Spencer to invalidate an induction sanctioned by his universal postulate. He uses a contemptuous nickname, instead of argument; he assails an induction which by the universal postulate is as certain as an intuition; and he attempts to test it by deduc-

tions from the infinite — deductions that can be true only by accident, if true at all.

The fallacy of his argument may be shown by a parody of it. We only know a finite universe, finite in time and space; the universe cannot therefore be produced, as Spencer says it is, by an Infinite Ultimate Cause; for such a Cause could only produce infinite effects; it is degrading to an Infinite Cause to suppose it creating the finite world revealed to our microscopes and telescopes.

The same friend, an admirer of Herbert Spencer, who thought that we must try for sixty or seventy thousand years to make his absurdities seem sensible before we could pronounce them absurdities, furthermore thought that the intelligible order of the cosmos need not be attributed to an intelligent Ultimate Cause, but to intelligence in the atoms. In other words, after theology has painfully arrived, by thousands of years of culture, at a firm, intelligible monotheism, this friend wishes to leap back at one bound to a fetichism incomparably more confusing and inconceivable than any that ever entered the untaught mind. He would take Leibnitz's sublime and wonderful monadology; but, before accepting it, strike off the head of that marvellous hierarchy, and reduce it to chaos — a chaos in which, however, there is the marvellous order that each one of the innumerable atoms, or monads, is possessed of immeasurable wisdom, so that each guides itself by a law that embraces the action of the whole.

To recapitulate: Our knowledge must consist either of truths which are self-evident, the direct objects of sight, or of truths inferred from self-evident truths by self-evident steps of reasoning. By these processes of direct perception and of logical inference we have built up the mathematical and physical sciences, and made some advances in historical, political, and psychologic sciences. But when we attempt to proceed in precisely the same manner in theology, we are sometimes told that our labor will here be vain; that we cannot arrive at any knowledge of divine things; that all

knowledge is relative — not cognizant of things, but only of their relations — not even of relations in themselves, but only as related to us; and the knowledge of the relations of finites could not, if attainable, lead to any knowledge of the infinite God.

But all this outcry against teleological arguments, and against natural theology, arises from a confusion of thought. The objectors argue from the infinite to show that the theologian should not argue to the infinite; whereas, as the example of the mathematics illustrates, arguments from the infinite are never trustworthy, while arguments to the infinite are frequently sound and valuable.

We cannot know relations without knowing, to some extent, the things related. The fact that we cannot know things except as related to each other and to us and to our modes of apprehension, does not destroy our knowledge of ourselves and of our surroundings. We know ourselves as thinking, feeling, hoping, fearing, loving, hating, desiring, willing, — all which imply objects, and imply some knowledge both of ourselves and of the objects. We know space not in its infinite extent, but in its parts, as we divide it in an act of imagination, stimulated to that act by the perception of motion. We know space only as its parts are related to each other in distance and direction; but this implies some knowledge of space, of distance, and of direction. We know matter only in its relations to its own parts and to our sensations; but this does not deny, but implies, a knowledge of matter; so far as we know the relations of any thing, we know the thing in its relations.

Thus, also, we reply to the further objection, that we do not even know the relation of things, but only the relation of the relation to us. If science shows that greenness arises from a mechanical condition which causes light to be returned from a body in waves of a specific length, then science only shows that the testimony of the eye is more valuable than we had before supposed. When the chemist dips a platinum wire into a substance and thrusts it into the

flame, the new play of colors which arises tells him just what the eye alone can tell, and told before the noon of this century, namely, the shades of color in the flame; but it also tells him, now, the chemical constituents of the substance into which the wire was dipped, and the lengths of the waves produced by each element thus excited by heat. The old testimony of the eye to the shades of color is not invalidated by the new inferences which science draws from the shades. And if sixty or seventy thousand years hence the human eye has altered to perceive new shades, or to be color-blind to those now seen, that will not affect the truth that to the normal eye of to-day the shades are what they seem to be. As to the colors having no likeness to the chemical elements, greenness no likeness to grass, what of it? No one supposes that by saying grass is green we mean to say anything else than to say that when grass is seen, in common daylight, it affects us in a way that makes us say it looks green.

Still, the objection is urged, that even if the things perceived by sense have any objective reality, they are nevertheless only relations of finites, and give us no glimpses of the Infinite. The Infinite and Absolute cannot stand in relation to the finite; for that would render him finite and relative. Again we reply, that the objector, urging the impossibility of our knowing the Infinite, assumes, nevertheless, that he knows it; for he argues from its properties. He thus is guilty of the fault of which he falsely accuses us — the fault of assuming to know the Infinite.

All the finite things which we see have the character of effects; and we see, by direct intuition, that they are the effects of a cause. All the universe, as far as we know it, is in perfect unity, under the domain of universal laws; and we are thus irresistibly impelled to ascribe all effects ultimately to a single First Cause. The telescope reveals no limit to the visible universe; and we naturally rush to the conclusion that, even if the universe be limited, the First Cause is unlimited and infinite. The moral instincts lead to the induction that the Infinite One is in all attributes per-

fect—an induction confirmed by the unconquerable strength with which reason clings to it when once formed. But if, when we have arrived at the belief that the First Cause is infinite and absolute, we infer hence that it can stand related to nothing finite, we stultify ourselves; destroying the very foundations on which we had built our conclusion. A cause must stand related to its effects, and to each effect, whatever may be our perplexity in attempts to picture the Infinite. The First Cause stands related not only to the whole universe as its effect, but to each part of the universe. This is self-evident, and its truth cannot be overthrown by the not more true induction that the First Cause is infinite.

The First Cause is related to all its effects. The order of nature is rational and beneficent; hence we infer wisdom and love in the Creator. Our conceptions of wisdom and love are inadequate; but they give us something real, something valuable, and something which, like the conception of color, can be gained only from consciousness. All that we can know of a fellow-man's wisdom and love is by observing his acts, and interpreting them by our own consciousness. We assume a likeness in his consciousness to ours, because there is a likeness in his acts to ours. There is no valid objection to taking the same line of argument, *mutatis mutandis*, in reference to God. Thus much we indubitably know: we know that all things in the universe are related together, not only where there is a genetic relation of secondary causation, but also in parts in which we cannot see the possibility of genetic connection. All things are related together by the presence in all of the same *a priori* ideas of space and time, the same abstract ratios of number. We know that all effects are produced with the least possible expenditure of force; that all means are most perfectly adapted to the accomplishment of the effected ends. Why, then, hesitate to conclude that this intellectual form of the universe came from intellect; that the means were intended to accomplish the ends, the forms and laws to embody the ideas? We also know that these ends are beneficent, and

that the more thorough our examination of the course of nature and of history, the more firm our faith in the adaptation of all things to the highest development of man and the greatest happiness of lower creatures. So manifest is this excellence of the universe in its relation to our needs, or of the adaptation of our needs to the universe, that a majority of philosophers, including many of no mean power, have maintained that the adaptation is the most perfect possible. Shall we repress our swelling feelings of gratitude and love and loyalty toward the First Cause of all, who has made this world so beautiful, so commodious, so full of instruction, so full and varied in opportunity, so majestic and inspiring?—shall we repress our thanks and adoration, because our understandings cannot comprehend how the Infinite and Absolute One can stand related to our special surroundings, or to our individual souls?

To do so would be to affront the best and holiest instincts of our nature on the strength of a mere inference—an inference, too, which we have no logical warrant to draw from the premises. Man is the child of God, and may justly argue from his own thoughts and feelings to the intent and purpose of his Creator. It will require, of course, great care in our analysis of our own powers to decide which can and which cannot be logically carried to an infinite extent, and assigned to the Deity. It may be a task beyond the ability of mortal man to show precisely where the dividing line between the spiritual and the sensual runs. From this difficulty of deciding where, in the gradual ascent from sensuality to spirituality, the passage is made, some persons infer that there is no real division, and that the apparent spirituality of our higher thoughts is only a refined and sublimated sensuality; that in the highest flights of devotion we are simply modifying and recombining impressions of sense.

In reply to this argument drawn from the apparent blending of the two parts of human nature into one connected series of functions and faculties, we must first observe that

this argument, so popular at the present day with writers on natural history, is not to be implicitly trusted. The forms of the elastic curve, beginning with a straight line, lead by an infinite series of imperceptible variations, through fantastic figures, to a circle. The circle may then lead, through all the conic sections, to two intersecting straight lines. The circle may thus stand at the dividing point between two series of wholly dissimilar forms, and belong to both series; and if the two series are arranged as one, no eye can detect a break anywhere in the whole. Thus with the series of thoughts and feelings which lead from sensual to spiritual states, we may not detect the exact position of the ambiguous point; but we know that there is a break somewhere, since the antithesis between mind and matter is the fundamental distinction in philosophy.

The sensational school try to persuade themselves that the capacity for conscious thought lies latent, diffused through matter, called into manifest action through organization; organization being effected by some general force. But no man persuades himself that the unorganized clod is thinking or feeling. Nor can any amount of effort make even a sensationalist think of consciousness as a mere mode of motion — a power entering into the equations of the correlation of forces. Mind and matter are separated from each other by the whole diameter of being; and, although we cannot image to ourselves a spirit wholly disembodied, yet it is even more impossible to image to ourselves spirit as merely material, or matter as having spiritual powers. Yet both spirit and matter are always recognized in every act of consciousness; our imagery is all drawn from sensation; and, while we are compelled to believe in the supersensible, we cannot image it. This is the truth which misleads Herbert Spencer into his grand error of saying that because we can form no image of the First Cause, therefore the First Cause is unknown and unknowable. We form no image of ourselves, as distinct from our body; yet we know ourselves in consciousness as perceiving, feeling, desiring, willing, ruling

matter, and not ourselves material. We know ourselves, through consciousness, as to a limited extent, lords of that world of matter which we know through sensation, and to which we cannot attribute consciousness. We form designs by the intellect, and then, by a decision of the will, bend the forces of matter to the fulfilment of our designs. Our spirit thus asserts its supremacy over nature, and takes, to a limited extent, the control of its surroundings. On the other hand, our surroundings to a limited extent control us. Fatigue brings sleep, or even syncope; disease brings delirium, coma, and death. Drunkenness, poisoning, and the hygienic effects of diet, are further evidences of the control which physical conditions have over the brain and other bodily organs of our conscious life. Comte, the French founder of what he called Positive Philosophy, argues that because the functions of life depend upon the physical forces, therefore they are produced by those forces; but the argument is transparently weak; the conditions necessary for the manifestation of an effect are not to be assumed as the cause of the effect. The fundamental antithesis of philosophy, the discreteness of mind from matter, stands unassailable by any discovery of inductive science. And of these two, spirit and matter, spirit is master — master, so far as our spirits are concerned, to a very limited degree, yet to a degree wonderful and grand to our limited sight.

These two kinds of substance, mind and matter, are the only kind revealed to us in consciousness; and the classification seems exhaustive, since a thing is either capable of conscious thought or incapable. If capable, we call it spirit, however high it may stand in the scale of being above our spirits; but if incapable of conscious thought, we call it matter, however much it may differ from things sensible; as the ether.

The universe of being we thus necessarily divide into spirit and matter; and we cannot hesitate to which we ought to assign that Ultimate Cause, whose existence we must assume so long as we assume our own. Spiritual causes approximate

more nearly to the First Cause than mechanical causes can. There is no argument concealed in Spencer's nickname of the carpenter theory. He not only acknowledges, but maintains that it is impossible to avoid believing in the existence of a First Cause. But we are under a logical necessity of assuming that every existent being is either conscious or unconscious, and it is evidently and incomparably more reasonable to assume that the First Cause is conscious. Spencer asks, Why not suppose the Ultimate Cause has a mode of being infinitely transcending the human modes of consciousness? We do suppose it; all theists suppose it. We only say that it is unreasonable to assume that the Being who infinitely surpasses all our conceivable modes of consciousness can be unconscious. Therefore, under the necessity of our minds to assign some attributes to a being whose existence is pressed upon our attention, we assign consciousness, rather than unconsciousness, to the First Cause. And, under this logical compulsion to recognize the likeness of our souls to the Infinite Creator, our hearts swell with more than a mere awe of the unknowable; they swell with gratitude, reverence, adoration, and loyal love. We are not to assign our weaknesses and defects to God; and we must carefully apply the test already alluded to, and not assign to the Deity any attribute which, like sensual appetite, or hatred, or malice, is incapable of indefinite expansion. The moral instincts are also a guide; for we cannot, without violence to our highest intuitions, assume aught else than perfect holiness in God.

The recognition of moral distinctions, in their highest sense, implies the freedom of the human will; and, inasmuch as Herbert Spencer, who at present seems to be a prominent leader in the English and American anti-theistic schools, denies its freedom, it may be well to pause a moment to look at his twofold argument. "Psychical changes," he says, "either conform to law, or they do not. If they do not conform to law, this work, in common with all works on the subject, is sheer nonsense; no science of psychology is

possible. If they do conform to law, there cannot be any such thing as free-will." This is his first argument, in his own language. It rests on the assumption which every tyro in mathematics knows to be false, that fixed laws admit no choice. The number of roots in an equation may even be infinite. Organic bodies are mostly in unstable equilibrium, and may turn in any direction, and yet obey one law.

His second argument is still more astonishing in its weakness. "Either the ego," are his words, "which is supposed to determine or will the action, is some state of consciousness, or it is not. If it is not some state of consciousness, it is something of which we are unconscious—something, therefore, that is unknown to us,—something, therefore, of whose existence we neither have nor can have any evidence,—something, therefore, which it is absurd to suppose existing."

What a wonderful series of false inferences! "If not some state of consciousness, it is something of which we are unconscious." And this from a realist, who believes in the outward world! According to this argument, he should be a thorough idealist, claiming that our state of consciousness is all of which we are conscious, and that it is absurd to suppose anything else existing, either ourselves as either knowing or doubting, or any other being knowing or doubting, in our state of consciousness; the present state of consciousness, according to this argument, constituting not only the actual, but the potential, universe.

Let us, however, pass this, as a slip of attention in our author, and take up the second inference. "Something of which we are unconscious—something, therefore, which is unknown to us." Would Spencer, when not dazzled by the red rag of theology, maintain that our knowledge is limited by consciousness—that we have, for example, no knowledge of the sun, no knowledge of oxygen? Material things of which we are unconscious are known by their effects, or property of producing effects, of which we are conscious. Thus with the ego. We are not directly conscious of the

ego; but we are conscious of its effects in the state of consciousness. We know ourselves, precisely as we know material objects, by the attributes or properties. The object has the property of exciting the sensation or suggesting the thought; the ego has the property of feeling the sensation and entertaining the thought.

The third of this extraordinary series of inferences is still more glaringly false: "Something that is unknown,—something, therefore, of whose existence we neither have nor can have any evidence." That is to say, no advance in knowledge ever has been, or ever will be, possible for the human race.

And the fourth step is equally monstrous. "Of whose existence we can have no evidence—something, therefore, which it is absurd to suppose existing." In other words, all possible existence lies open to human knowledge—a large assumption, especially for one who rebukes the theologian for presuming to have some faint perception of verities that lie above the reach of the outward senses.

These are the two arguments by which Herbert Spencer attempts to show that our human consciousness of freedom and sense of moral obligation are illusions. He adds a third consideration, which is too verbose for quotation, and which we therefore condense, and, for the sake of greater brevity, translate into theistic language. It amounts simply to saying that if man were free, he could interfere with the beneficent purposes of his Creator. This is, however, a fallacy, since it assumes that freedom is unlimited freedom, and the power of the will is unlimited power. On any hypothesis, human freedom and human power are completely subjected to the general plan and order of the universe; they affect greatly the individual man's happiness or misery; but single volitions of man do not control the destinies of the race. Our liberty is small; but it is real. We insist on it, because we see it, and cannot submit to hearing its existence denied. Consciousness affirms the freedom of the will; the moral judgments of conscience imply it; and we can neither

persuade ourselves nor be persuaded, even by Leibnitz and Jonathan Edwards, much less by such fallacies as those of Herbert Spencer, that this affirmation of consciousness and of conscience is an illusion and a falsehood.

The vast majority of the anti-theistic speculators of our day admit that the movement of the universe is evolving the most beneficial results for man, that all things are adapted to our use and our education. The theist derives from this conceded fact the inference that the Creator intended all things for the good of man. The heart asks for more than this; it longs for assurance that the order of events is designed for the highest benefit of each individual, as well as of the race. The Jewish and the Christian scriptures sanction this longing of the heart, and teach that God deals with men as a father with his children, approving or disapproving their conduct, and loving them according to their individual fidelity to their highest convictions of duty.

On the other hand, we are told by some that this hope of the favor and love of God is a remnant of childish superstition; that, as God is without body or parts, so is he without passions or emotions; that his beneficence is in all respects impartial, acting only through the inflexible laws of nature. In other words, they contend that the infinitude of the Deity excludes the possibility of his passing moral judgment on men, hearing their prayers, or forgiving their sins. But their argument is fallacious; we might as well contend that the infinitude of the Deity prevents our ascribing to him the creation of the finite universe, with its separate nebulae, separate stars, diverse planets, different elements, and so on; these facts being just as irreconcilable with an infinite First Cause as the doctrines of prayer and forgiveness or the hopes and aspirations of piety can be. But we must not argue from the infinite in any case.

All men of deepest religious feeling, in cultivated nations, long for an infinite love whereon to lean, comfort themselves with the hope of forgiveness, and delight themselves in the hope of God's approval. So tender do the relations between God

and his children seem, that both Jewish prophets and Christian apostles compare it not only to the parental, but even to the marriage, bond. It must, however, be acknowledged that many of the exceedingly complex emotions of friendship and love which bind us together upon earth will be wanting in the society of heaven, and that many of the emotions which can well be supposed to swell the hearts of the saints above must be absent in the love with which God looks upon his children. The holiest and sweetest part of human love, whether here or in the world to come, is the recognition of the divine image in the beloved, the perception of our friend's superiority in some point of spiritual character to us. This is the reason why the tenderest love takes the form of adoration. In this form — the recognition of superiority — it, of course, ceases with finite spirits. But there is no reason to limit the recognition of worth, of character, to finite spirits, or to deny that God approves the victor over temptation, and loves one who strives after virtue. God acts, indeed, through universal law. But what is a law? It is an intellectual idea, embodied or expressed in a multitude of particulars. The mind which originated the idea and embodied it in the whole, embodied it in each particular instance. The intellect which planned the world planned its minutest details. We stand before him as individuals, and he knows each individual's wants. He gave us freedom, so carefully guarded that we cannot frustrate his designs, yet so real that we rejoice before him in the liberty of his children; and he loves and approves us according to our use of his unspeakable gift.

Every cause, even the Ultimate Cause, stands related to all its effects. Impossible as it is for us to reconcile the predicates assumed with those declared, in that proposition, we are compelled to admit both by a sterner logical necessity than that which would attempt to drive us to the reconciliation. The cause stands related to its effects. Utterly inscrutable as the Power which formed the Universe may be, it still remains certain that the Cause which produced the goodly whole was able to exert mechanical force, and to

guide matter according to *a priori* laws of space and time. Utterly unknown and unknowable as that First Cause may be, it still remains certain that it could produce, on this earth, at least, intellects which recognize these geometric and algebraic laws, and find delight in tracing the paths in which worlds and atoms are moving to obey them. Impossible as it may be to assign any attributes whatever to the First Cause, we know that it made these intelligent observers capable of a myriad of other forms of happiness. We may not assign to it any attributes; but we know that it also inspired these happy intelligences with longings after virtue and excellence, and with longings for communing with eternal and infinite wisdom and goodness. In other words, however inscrutable the First Cause of all, it was able to call the world into being, and guide it by wise laws; to create man, and inspire him with an expanding mind, with lofty virtue, with longings and hopes that lay hold of eternity, with loves that fill him with unutterable bliss, with a love that takes in indefinitely wider and wider circles of acquaintances and friends, and grows also indefinitely stronger and stronger in its attachments.

The reasonable induction from these facts is, that the First Cause is the All-wise, Almighty, All-holy, All-loving God, whose condemnation of sin, whose approval of goodness, whose tender yearnings of love towards each individual one of his countless children, are but faintly echoed in our moral judgment, faintly imaged in the holiest affections of our most tender relations to each other.