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whose highest manifestation was in Gethsemane and on Calvary. What thanks are worthy of such love? The thanksgiving of a perfect obedience and of a constant consecration would leave us still in immeasurable debt to Him whose service is perfect freedom and unutterable joy.

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#### ARTICLE IV.

#### PASCAL THE THINKER.

BY PROF. JACOB COOPER, LL.D., RUTGERS COLLEGE, NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J.

To direct the thoughts of cultured minds is the highest prerogative of human intellect. And whether this be effected by original ideas, or the presentation of such as have already become trite in a form which compels attention, the impress of the master workman is equally apparent. For it requires as much grasp of mind to form striking combinations from ideas which have long been common property as was required for their first elaboration.

The exercise of abiding and controlling influence upon thinkers falls to the lot of but few. Indeed, there have been more Alexanders, Caesars, and Napoleons than emperors in the realms of thought. Many, it is true, have aroused the attention of their contemporaries, and have powerfully directed the spirit of their age. But this is usually owing to a happy combination of circumstances bearing them along on the highest wave of a revolution in the minds of men. This may be seen particularly in the case of popular authors and statesmen, who have shrewdness enough to divine the public taste, and sufficient pliancy to shape their own course accordingly. Such are the product of their age, but one that is perishable. They have no influence in moulding public opinion, but are its servile creatures. Hence their influence does not extend below the surface, and when the seething and froth settles all their greatness has evaporated. An

original genius, on the contrary, is seldom in sympathy with his age, and the true prophet is unhonored in his own country. But he grasps hold of the roots of things. His thoughts are seeds, which contain in themselves the powers of an endless life. Yet these are planted deep, and require a long time to fructify; they are usually unrecognized by the men of the thinker's day, or else rejected as dangerous innovations. Like Bacon's reputation, they have to be willed to other ages and nations. Milton was neglected and Shakespeare unappreciated, because no one was found able to interpret them to the common ear.

Again, a thinker may be an acknowledged power during some ages, and then be neglected to such degree that his works are well nigh lost to the world. Aristotle was long looked up to as a master by the philosophers of Greece, then fell so nearly into oblivion that only one copy of his works remained; and even this was lost sight of for many years. Again he reappears, reasserts his authority among the higher order of thinkers, and his dicta are awarded nearly as much reverence by the schoolmen as the holy Scriptures. From his height of honor he descends again, and it becomes the fashion with metaphysicians who never took the trouble, or else had not the ability, to read his works, to ridicule him as absurd and useless. But to-day the Stagyrte is studied with avidity. For when scholars see what he actually said, rather than the perversions of ignorant opponents, his words strike a chord in our intellectual nature which is ever ready to vibrate to the touch of a master. Now, when the thoughts of an author live from age to age, and even after burial come to life again, this is because he thinks for his fellow-men. They follow him because he is the interpreter by whom the universe of knowledge is clearly revealed to them. This imperishable influence is for him an all-sufficient *raison d'être*, and his patent of nobility among thinkers.

Blaise Pascal is one of those kings of thought who have by their native force compelled the attention of men. From early childhood he was precocious to a degree which seemed

to elevate him above human nature. Before he was out of his teens he had achieved a European reputation for his mastery of the most difficult sciences, his important discoveries in mathematics and natural philosophy, and the advancement of almost every branch of knowledge. The powers exhibited so prematurely went on increasing in brilliancy until the lamp burned out its feeble taper, and he succumbed to disease, labor, and fasting, in the year 1662, at the early age of thirty-nine. In this brief period he set in motion influences greater than those exerted by any or all of the wonderful men and women who composed the charmed circle of Port Royal. He was the head and front of the greatest reformation ever carried on in the bosom of the Catholic church against the monstrous assumptions of the hierarchy and the scandalous immorality of the Jesuits. His example is of the utmost value to Protestants as an argument against Papacy. For he clearly showed the impossibility of reforming this church from within, because it does not contain a sufficiency of truth in its doctrines and practices, as they are developed in modern times, to be quickened into life. He was the confusion of the Jesuits, who have never been able to recover from the staggering blows he gave them in his Provincial Letters. Here he spoke by authority. He was, in a certain sense, "a prophet of their own." For of all devout Catholics he was the most sanctified. He believed in the authority of the Fathers, and even in the infallibility of the church when expressed in the decisions of general councils. He illustrated the virtue, or vice, of penance carried to the highest degree of bodily mortification. But it was as a defender of the faith against the attacks of unbelief that he showed himself greatest. Few, if any, uninspired men ever grasped the true issues of divine revelation with a power equal to his. He is the stumbling-block in the way of every infidel — one that must be met, whichever way the doubter turns. At the same time, his logic is like the net which encircles the bird so completely that no avenue of escape is left open, and which is so transparent that the snare is not

seen until the victim feels itself held fast. The ability to hunt down a crafty and unscrupulous adversary, to deliver stunning blows in courteous language, is shown in the Provincial Letters more effectually than in any other controversial literature. As we all feel that it must have been a real pleasure to that fish which was fortunate enough to be hooked by good Izaak Walton, so the dexterous skinning of the casuistic eels in Pascal's hands is delightful, at least to the bystander. Unbelievers, moreover, like Condorcet and Voltaire, felt that the *Pensées* were a perpetual plague to their theories of infidelity; and, as they could not be answered by fair means, this must be done by foul. Accordingly, they publish editions of this work on Christian Evidences. Behold the satanic press resolving itself into a Bible society; and Voltaire, the wretched old sinner of eighty, holding forth a garbled and mutilated edition of the *Pensées*, with a complacent smirk over his answers to what Pascal did not say!

In the enunciation of his thoughts the author exhibited unequalled skill in throwing aside that which is unnecessary, and seizing upon the essential. But his conceptions of the truth were too clear and strong even for his friends. For truth is invested with error in proportions corresponding to the character of the mind and heart which conceive it. Few persons are able to realize practically that there can be no concord between light and darkness; and hence most thinkers, like bats and beetles, they move chiefly in the twilight. But since truth can have no fellowship with error, no compromise is possible, because one excludes the other. The majority, however, think it necessary to frame their life by shifts, concessions, and expedients; losing sight of the fact that when we deflect from the straight course of truth one compromise begets another, but never rectifies what is crooked. Such conduct ends in what is called acting from policy or expediency, but which is nothing else than the abandonment of all principle. Hence Pascal, who looked at truth as able to stand by itself, and therefore in no danger from

a plain exposition, was too outspoken for his friends, who feared, because they were "of little faith." So when his great work, the *Pensées*, fell into their hands after his death, they were afraid to publish it without toning down the boldest and most pungent utterances in such a way as to meet their own ideas of expediency. The result was that which so often occurs when the works of genius are revised by mediocrity. It was the spectacle of a hymn-book committee, who to their own astonishment, and contrary to an obvious maxim,<sup>1</sup> have suddenly become poets, — sitting on the exquisite lyrics of Watts, Doddridge, and Wesley. Port Royal, though full of choice talent, possessed none that approached Pascal in the superhuman grasp with which he comprehended the problems of human destiny; and hence nobody could edit the work properly, save by publishing it just as the author left it. But, as its fragmentary and unconnected character seemed to them to preclude this, they thought it must be reduced to some regular order. However, it was chiefly dread of incurring the hatred of the Jesuits, and endangering the fate of Port Royal, that induced the editors to recast the work by omitting some of the most vigorous thoughts, and emasculating many that were retained. Guided by these purposes, Arnauld, Nicole, the young Duc de Roannez, and Madame Perier, sister of the author, prepared and published the *Pensées*. And nothing can better prove the power of this book than the fact that, despite all its wretched mutilations, it still remained a work of unexampled power in grappling with those questions which have always been the rocks of offence to metaphysicians and the slough of despond to anxious religious inquirers. With unimportant variations, made by Colbert in 1727, and by Father Desmolets in 1728, this remained the only text as it passed through numerous editions, and was made the basis of many translations to be read for more than a century throughout the civilized world. In 1776 Condorcet, by a comparison of the several editions, — which, as we have seen, were almost

<sup>1</sup> *Poeta nascitur, non fit.*

identical, — and by the addition of a few “Thoughts” from private copies still in manuscript, pretended to give a more complete exhibition of the great work. But this editor, though able and fair in everything save his attitude toward Christianity, and though he praised Pascal in terms of unmeasured eulogy because of his fearless advocacy of free thought and opposition to the Jesuits, still was false to his trust in suppressing the most effective passages favoring the Christian faith, by which the essential character of the work was changed. Following in his track came Voltaire, who as early as 1734 had expressed his desire to attack the mighty champion of Christianity, plainly declaring that he considered him its greatest defender among men. Hence, with the avowed purpose of “tearing the skin of Pascal so as to make Christianity bleed,” the old reprobate, in 1778, with one foot already in the grave, discharged his Parthian arrow at the faith he so much hated. He published a few of the Thoughts, under the false name of editor, merely that he might have an opportunity the better to circulate his own poisoned and scurrilous commentary as a pretended refutation.

During all this time, embracing more than a hundred years, the genuine manuscript of the *Pensées* had lain neglected. Yet two or more copies, agreeing in every essential, — one the autograph, and the other a faithful transcript, — had been known to exist. And yet one editor followed another, seeking, it would seem, every source of information for a correct text, save the only one which could furnish it. In the collected works of the author, published by Bossut in 1779, and by Neuchateau in 1819, while recourse was had to the autograph mss. for the other treatises, still the *Pensées* did not enjoy this long withholden right. Meantime, the autograph copy and at least one other ms. faithfully transcribed, found their way to the *Bibliothèque du Roi*. In 1835 M. Frantin of Dijon published a new classification of the *Pensées*, and called attention to the necessity of a thorough revision of the text. Interest appears to have been awakened for the first time, extraordinary as it may

seem, to the propriety of examining the autograph itself to learn what Pascal said, rather than the editions which timid friends or bitter foes, each from his own stand-point, had published. This was done effectually, in 1842 by M. Victor Cousin, who reported to the French Academy that a new edition had become a necessity, and indicated the means of supplying it. In this report there were rectifications and additions derived from the autograph placed side by side with the *textus receptus* of the *Pensées*, by which the glaring discrepancies could be clearly seen. Cousin did a good work in calling attention to this great need; but he did a still better by leaving the task of editing to a man who was able to sympathize with Pascal's religious views, and through these discern his true elevation of soul. Cousin was a critic of a high order, a theorizing philosopher wise in this world, with a reputation to guard and heighten by all his work. But he was not in harmony with Pascal's convictions. He had neither his spirituality nor the strong convictions arising from a "faith which overcomes the world." He could not interpret the thinker's earnestness, because he had nothing in common with his serious view of the sinner's helplessness when without an atoning Saviour. Blunders in criticism, even when the critic is equal in ability to the author handled, are not uncommon. M. Taine is undoubtedly one of the ablest writers of this age, equal in his own walk to Tennyson in his. But there is no bond of sympathy in their modes of thought. Hence, when the historian of English literature sneeringly says that *In Memoriam* "is the sorrow of display, such as becomes an accomplished gentleman, whose gloves are perfectly new, and who dries his tears with a cambric handkerchief,"<sup>1</sup> it is plain that this judgment arises from a total incapacity to understand the tenderest and noblest utterances of grief. The critic, looking only at the external features, and measuring words exclusively by his artistic canon, loses sight of the life which quickens and

<sup>1</sup> Lib. v. ch. vi. § 3. Son long poème est froid, monotone et trop joliment arrangé. Il mène le deuil, mais en gentleman correct, avec des gants parfaitement neufs; essuie ses larmes avec un mouchoir de batiste.

transfigures this incomparable elegy. Under Buffon's dissecting knife, and this plied exclusively in the interests of anatomy, even Madame Récamier would have become disgusting as any other subject.

But though Pascal had waited long for an editor, had suffered by having his thoughts misinterpreted to a degree never experienced by any other author, yet he was especially fortunate in the scholar who finally accomplished the work. M. Prosper Faugère sought, first of all, the autograph itself. This consisted of an immense number of small bits of paper, written upon sometimes one side, sometimes both, and pasted together, seemingly without any order, in the sheets of a large folio. It appears that the author had been accustomed to write down his thoughts at the moment they occurred, as memoranda, with the view of composing a work on Christian Evidences. These thoughts were occasionally revised and remodelled, but generally left as they had been first written. They were often fragmentary, sometimes breaking off in the midst of a sentence; at other times they were only a catch-word or two, evidently jotted down to arrest the author's attention on a point for farther elaboration. Added to this, in many instances the chirography was wholly illegible; and in a few places the thoughts were written by some one who acted as amanuensis, it is supposed, during the paroxysms of pain to which Pascal was always liable. This temporary amanuensis would seem to have been a servant—at least, was ignorant of spelling and grammar, and more incapable than most persons who have been the avenue through which these immortal thoughts have found access to the world. Still, the reading of this autograph was a labor of love to M. Faugère because he was in full sympathy with the author, and capable of appreciating his grand conceptions. In his own words, he “studied the ms. line by line and word by word.” He compared all the editions, all the copies of the ms., whether complete or fragmentary, unearthing some for the first time; together with all the letters and memoranda possessed by friends, which might shed the least light upon

his work. The result was that in 1844, one hundred and eighty-two years after the author's death, we are enabled to know for the first time what he actually said — a fact unparalleled in the history of literature.

The character of these Thoughts has been indicated. They are fragmentary of necessity, because they were intended by the author only as material, often memoranda only, to be worked out afterwards into a regular system. What the master mind did not do when he had the plan of the projected structure clearly laid out, no one else can accomplish. For it would require equal genius with the originator and a mastery of his plan, both which conditions can never be met, to arrange them in their appropriate places. Hence the egregious failures of all who have attempted a systematic arrangement. The diversities of the several plans show that each one is at fault. What we have are precious stones, diamonds of the first water, with their facets cut and sometimes polished. Here also are the gold of Ophir, the cedars of Lebanon, the brass of Tarshish. What a temple would there have been, if this king of thoughts had lived to dedicate it to God!

These Thoughts are occupied with two subjects, viz. the evidences of Christianity and, What constitutes the ultimate basis of all knowledge? The latter theme is subservient to the former; for everything that Pascal here writes turns as naturally to religion as the needle to the pole. While exact classification, for reasons already apparent, is impossible, still, the general purpose of the author is always manifest. Like the work of God in creation, wherein "all things are made double, the one over against the other," even so in the *Pensées* was it conceived as a duality, and its parts co-ordinate. We have the infinite greatness of the universe contrasted with the infinite littleness displayed in the divisibility of matter; the exaltation of man as a thinker, with his helplessness amid his surroundings; his exaltation by participating in the divine nature, and his meanness by reason of sin; the clearness with which God is manifested to those who seek

for him, with his concealment from those who do not desire to know him; the helplessness of the sinner arising from his total depravity, with his all-sufficiency by virtue of Christ's help; the impossibility to know anything by natural reason, with the capacity for infinite knowledge when Christ opens the blind eyes by the gift of faith. Now, all these pairs of opposites, when viewed in their mutual relations, appear to involve contradictions, and Pascal has often seemed inconsistent, or as believing nothing. Still, we must admit that these contrasts exist in fact; and every one who takes a comprehensive view of the universe of matter and spirit must embrace each of them. No other view can be more than partial, because the facts of personal consciousness and the phenomena of nature disclose both. All the mistakes in the journey of life arise because men look only on one side of the guide-boards which are set up along their path. The structure of duality obtains everywhere in the organs of sense; but they are united in one effort of the mind and will. So it is in those things which seem to be contradictions in morals and metaphysics. There would be no contradiction, however, if we had the power to grasp them in their higher unity. For when both facts which appear to be contradictory are severally capable of demonstration, then there can be no incongruity, since truth is always in harmony with itself.<sup>1</sup> Greek, Sanskrit, and other philosophical languages recognize this co-ordination by the dual number, which denotes those things necessarily thought of in pairs, because the idea of the one involves the other. And while in the double act of sensation we can trace the impulsion along the nerves to the brain, and find that both concentrate there, still, not even the most advanced naturalist can explain how the dual impression becomes lost in the single idea. Scientists demonstrate to their own satisfaction that mind cannot move matter, though their pen gives the lie to their assertion while they write. One says that moral influences

<sup>1</sup> Aristotle, Ethic. Nicom., ix. 1 8 τῆ μὲν γὰρ ἀληθείᾳ πάντα συνῶνται τὰ ἐπ' ἀρχοῦντα.

cannot control physical, while we see all around us the fruits of Christian progress. It is affirmed that the creation of something out of nothing is impossible; and yet the world must either have made itself, or been made, or else never have existed. The first involves a physical impossibility, and the last a contradiction to admitted fact. In the domain of religious belief these apparent contradictions occur. God is the sovereign Arbiter of human destiny on any strictly logical and consistent assumption. Yet the idea of guilt implies liberty to act, and this doctrine is corroborated by consciousness. These two co-ordinates of human destiny are recognized by revelation: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." The mind is limited in its operation by the extent of its tether, and what lies beyond cannot be made to walk in our furrow and harrow our clods. In multitudes of examples, even in those which are held to be the most exact of sciences, the strict application of logical or mathematical formulæ produces results which we know to be false. The asymptotes in geometry, the indivisibility of matter *ad infinitum*, the race of Achilles and the tortoise are familiar examples, where our minds cannot escape from the dilemma by process of reasoning, yet somehow we are convinced that the opposite of what is proved is true. Hence we must conclude that the fault resides not in the nature of things, but in our methods; that as our minds are finite, and since they cannot comprehend their own processes, or detect their own fallacies, they cannot undertake to pronounce either that one of two apparent contradictions is false, or that they do not agree in a higher unity which lies beyond the domain of our powers.

These various contradictions enumerated above, which form the staple of the *Pensées*, all cluster around two leading ideas, viz. the perfections of God and the misery of the sinner. How the sinner can know God through the mediation of Christ is the key to unlock the meaning of Pascal in all his speculations. The restoration of man from the ruins

of sin is the end after which every one who realizes the significance of his own destiny must strive. It is not this or that school of philosophy for which the thinker labors; it is not to show his subtlety, to maintain a theory, to found a school of speculation, but how man may come to Christ. Hence he treats of those difficulties which are wont to meet every earnest inquirer. There is no phase of doubt or difficulty that has ever beset the tossed soul when seeking a resting-place among the quicksands of speculation, no cry of anguish ever uttered by the alarmed conscience, that is not embraced and answered in some of these pregnant sentences whose meaning is exhaustless. Amid so much that is weighty, only a few utterances can be noticed. "God has given evidences of himself, visible to those who seek for them, and invisible to those who do not seek for them."<sup>1</sup> This thought appears several times under slightly different forms, and was evidently one on which this profound seer delighted to dwell. The reason of this is not far to seek. For to a comprehensive mind, who feels the needs of human nature, certain ideas will occur with a frequency proportioned to their importance. Now, of all subjects which can claim a serious person's attention, the evidences of God's existence must be pre-eminent. And this, the head, is so indissolubly connected with all that concerns our weal or woe, that everything else must stand or fall with it. It is, indeed, the turning-point of doubt, the exposed bulwark of our faith, the crucial question of our destiny. Hence it is ever meeting us, ever claiming a solution, and refusing to be quieted until answered, and the response accepted in childlike faith, or the conscience stamped out by persistent obduracy. This utterance seems so simple and clear that we wonder why we never thought of it in these same words. For every earnest mind has fashioned for itself some mode of expression for this idea. Doubtless to many this sentence will not at first

<sup>1</sup> Havet, i. 48. Note. The references are to Havet's ed. rather than to Fanger's, because the latter is out of print, and hard to obtain, and the former is quoted by Littré in his 'Dictionnaire.'

seem profound. The strong and clear-headed Scotchman, after listening to one of Macaulay's speeches, on being asked what he thought of it, replied: "I think I could make as good a speech myself." The reason of this reply is clear. The orator, who possessed a royalty of the king's English, had such a vivid conception of his subject, and expressed himself in language so appropriate, that all was transparent. He was the Scotchman's deliverer of the idea struggling for birth. It is the rare privilege of the truly great to be, like Socrates, the midwife for the mind. They comprehend the wants of human nature which are floating vaguely in the mists enveloping ordinary minds. They pour down the intensity of their own conceptions by the direct ray of clear speech, and at once we see the idea stand out so plainly before our minds that each thinks he created it for himself.

Who has desired to see evidences of the being and goodness of God, and been disappointed? The ever-living Architect of more than St. Paul's may well say: "If you wish to see my memorial, look about you." On the contrary, he who does not desire to retain God in all his thoughts may pass through the world, and see no evidences of his Maker; may be fed by providential bounty, and never look up, any more than the swine, to see whence the food descends. If the light within thee *give out darkness*, how great is that darkness! Still farther, this evidence which God gives of himself increases in clearness precisely in proportion to the use we make of it. If we go out into the open sunlight, and exercise the eye, it becomes stronger. If we shut ourselves up in the dark, the organ in time loses its power of vision. The sun, however, is none the less bright; and if all the intelligent creatures in the solar system should belie their nature so much as to deny that he exists, he would not be blotted out by the falsehood, or cease to shine upon the unjust. Honest doubt concerning the existence of God or the great facts of revelation does not exist. Many apologists for the Christian faith think it necessary to yield too much to those who under the pretence of honest inquiry cover up a determina-

tion to be hostile, and not accept any proof that may be offered. Doubt is not the posture of mind which engenders knowledge in any department of inquiry. The mind must believe as a necessary condition of obtaining facts and building up a system of truth, physical or moral. We learn more during the first five years of our life than all the rest, however extended the span may be ; and childhood is the age of undoubting faith. The child seeks to know because he believes, not inquires that he may overthrow accepted facts. Destructive criticism adds nothing to the sum total of human knowledge, and should be treated with no tenderness when it lays its impure hands upon our holy religion. If the doubter was willing to be satisfied with reasonable proof, he need not go far to find it. But men who love darkness rather than light will not seek enlightenment ; and because they do not wish to find God they will not, though he be not far from every one of us. And since they do not wish to retain him in their thoughts, they are given over to such strong delusions that seeing they yet see not, and hearing they do not understand.

That there are difficulties in the way of obtaining a clear comprehension of the great truths of revealed religion is not to be wondered at, since the same fact holds good in all departments of knowledge. No matter where we turn, we can know but in part, and understand but in part. Had the Scripture said there would be no difficulties in the way of the unbeliever, then the fact that these do exist would prove the falsity of revelation. But it anticipates precisely those which prove stumbling-blocks in the way of unbelief, and declares that wicked men will wrest its utterances to their own destruction. Still, there is no kind or degree of difficulty which does not give way before a candid examination conducted in the spirit of docility. Hence Pascal so often refers to that declaration of the Bible that God hides himself : " *Est Deus absconditus.*"<sup>1</sup> The knowledge of God is arrived at by precisely the same methods that the truths of nature are made to reveal themselves to our comprehension ; that is, by the ready

<sup>1</sup> *Havet*, i. 136, 171 ; ii. 61, et *passim*.

acceptance of self-evident truths, and then making these the basis for farther investigation. No man arrives at the full comprehension of any science *per saltem*, and no one makes progress in that knowledge which he despises. Labor is the price at which God sells the knowledge of nature; and we can expect no other principle to hold good respecting the knowledge of himself. Hence, we assert, it is not want of evidence, but the unwillingness of the unbeliever to see it when offered, or search for it when hidden. No one ever sought God in the way he has pointed out,—that is, by combining obedience to his will with desire for and earnest search after farther light,—and yet was left in darkness. But had he sought in any other way, and found God, then this would falsify the Scripture, which declares that he is *Deus absconditus*<sup>1</sup> to those who believe not.

If such an amount of proof were required as to force the intellect to accept it, despite the desire and determination to reject, then the act of faith would be divested of all moral quality. The condition of a man under such constraint is akin to that of devils, whose intellectual assent is enforced by their acquaintance with the divine attributes through punishment, but whose moral nature is alienated by utter perversion. Hence it would be just as easy to convert the demons of Gadara to Christianity as that man who passes through this world, which is enlightened by the proofs of natural religion and sanctified by the doctrine and life of Christ, and yet shuts his eyes against the evidence.

Again we have the thought: "All discords in the universe become concords in Christ Jesus."<sup>2</sup> Had we only the proofs arising from natural theology, the evidences of creation, design, and superintending providence would be undeniable to every honest and fair-minded inquirer. True, the character of the Creator and the special purpose of his government might perplex us in many cases, however much his power and presence might be acknowledged. The general prevalence of sin, the success of crafty iniquity, the bodily miseries

<sup>1</sup> Isa. xlv. 15, Vulgate.

<sup>2</sup> Havet, ii. 7.

which make up the greater part of life, the antagonism amongst the highest orders of being, the frequent failure of honest and well-directed effort, and, above all, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the heads of innocent children, would be incapable of solution. Such have always proved maddening problems to those among the heathen who paused long enough in the whirl of life to take their own bearings. But after we are taught by the doctrine and example of Christ that discipline is the order of life, that life itself is only a preparatory stage, and that vicarious suffering is the plan of divine government, both in natural and spiritual things, then all becomes plain. Christ is the reconciliation, the harmonizing influence which pervades all things. The violation of God's law can be satisfied in no way but by the exaction of a due punishment from one who is able to bear it without being destroyed. The tendency of sin to punish itself, and lead through repentance to purification, is intelligible only by an atonement. For without this medium, the only result of sin punishing itself would be unending misery; since sin cannot beget holiness, nor punishment make the offender better. For that most difficult of all problems for natural religion,—visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children,—which the stoutest unbeliever cannot gainsay, we have a complete solution in the vicarious suffering of Jesus Christ. These lines of argument, and every other touching the moral government of the world, converge in Jesus Christ, and show that he is our peace, reconciling us to God, and harmonizing all that is discordant. While the government of the world, viewed by itself, would be inexplicable, and leave the mind doubtful in many, if not the majority of instances, whether God were a malevolent or benevolent being, as a consequence our judgments would vibrate according to our tempers and surroundings. This is shown in the sombre coloring given by all systems of speculation which do not embrace Christianity as an element. The best that can be offered is a balancing of probabilities with a tendency to despair, which pervade the Epicureanism and Stoicism of the

classical nations, and culminate in the fatalism of Confucius and Mohammed. But when Jesus Christ is viewed as a Mediator, participating in both the divine and human natures, so that by the one he may be able to endure the punishment of violated law, and by the other offer the encouragement of a brotherly experience, then the discords are all silenced in the sweet harmony of redemption.

Descending from the loftier thoughts relating to the existence of God and the mediation of Christ, Pascal discourses of human nature. He is fond of contrasting man's greatness with his littleness. This creature "man is but a reed, the weakest in nature, but yet a thinking reed."<sup>1</sup> It is not necessary that the entire universe arm itself to crush him. A breath of air, a drop of water, suffices to kill him. But were the universe to crush him, man would still be more noble than that which destroys his life, because he knows that he dies; while his destroyer knows nothing of the advantage it has over him. Thought is the mark of man's greatness, the stamp of his sovereignty. By this he lives in the past and future, is omnipresent, and sets influences at work which control the material world. Nay, more; he directs his glasses to sweep the heavens; he weighs the sun and stars in his scales; he foretells their phases a thousand years hence, when his own dust will have mixed with earth, and stranger eyes will behold the phenomena. And yet this man, so great by his prerogative, makes himself so little by his actions, that the most trivial thing in nature may wholly disconcert his gravity, and shatter his dignity to atoms.<sup>2</sup> The philosopher in his study may be meditating the deep things of the soul, when a fly buzzing about his nose causes the great thought to miscarry. The judge who has just decided a case of law involving the weightiest principles of right and the fate of thousands will afterwards go to church in a pious frame of spirit, hoping for undisturbed communion with God. He is the cynosure of all eyes. Every tongue is loud in praise of his dignity and wisdom.

<sup>1</sup> *Havet*, i. 10.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, i. 82.

But the squeaking voice of the preacher — a thing trivial in itself, not under the control of the speaker, and neither wrong nor having the least bearing on the importance of the message he utters — makes this councillor of state lose his sense of propriety, while his devotional thoughts are scattered to the winds. Again, there is something, “*Je ne sais quoi*,” inexplicable, which controls us. One of the strongest influences in the world is physical beauty. This builds up or overthrows empires. It lays Troy in ruins; it controls the courts of princes; it often declares war, and perhaps sometimes makes peace. It elects more popes than the college of cardinals. Without arms, it is more powerful than all the weapons which nature gave to the animals.<sup>1</sup> Yet wherein does beauty consist? “*Je ne sais quoi*.” True, had “*Cleopatra’s* nose been half an inch shorter, the face of the world would have been changed.”<sup>2</sup> But the same would have been true, if her chin had been half an inch longer, if she had had only one eye, or a blemish from nature on either cheek. Madame Récamier kept Chateaubriand, the Ampères, father and son, — the first men in intellect and worth which France could boast, — not to mention hundreds of commoner clay, fluttering around her, as charmed birds about the serpent, even when they and she were trembling with age. The explanation of this fascination is, that she was the most beautiful woman of modern times. Perhaps this is enough to account for their conduct, but at the same time it proves the infinite littleness of human nature, over which imagination exerts such a controlling force.

No people have ever cultivated their satiric vein so successfully as the French. Lucian, with his sour face, poured forth sarcasms on things human and divine, and with such bitterness that each utterance would seem enough to have blistered his tongue. Aristophanes’ broad face was always puckered up into a grin at the follies of the Athenians. Juvenal and Persius portrayed the desperate vices of the later Romans, until we wonder that the fire and brimstone

<sup>1</sup> Anacreon, 24. (Bergk.)

<sup>2</sup> Havet, i. 84.

rain of Sodom was not repeated. Swift and Sterne showed folly and crime so vividly that their readers desire to be sensible and virtuous, if only to escape the ridicule of their own consciences. But it has been reserved for the French to unite both species of satire, to show the ridiculous side, as well as the wicked, in the most relentless manner. Rabelais, with terrible earnestness, levelled his poisoned shafts at the abuses of the Romish church. It is marvellous to behold how he trusses up the monks (himself one), and bastes the writhing victim over the slow fire of his ridicule. But there is a far deeper satire than this in the dissection of the human heart. Few are capable of this, because most persons have neither patience nor candor sufficient to endure the pain of vivisection. Here is the special forte of French satire. This style is represented by three writers of the first eminence. Montaigne with a keen blade lays open the heart, exposing its vanities, its deceit, its littleness, with the naturalness and playfulness of a child. While we see ourselves in the great mirror of human nature, we know not whether to laugh with Democritus, or cry with Heraclitus. Still, we cannot but feel that the sport is too serious, because it is our character that is on exhibition. It is not our neighbor, but our own dear selves, that the unsparing dissector is laying open. It is not a matter of sham play or indifference; for we compose the *tableaux vivants*, and our destiny is jeopardied. Next comes Rousseau, whose motto is: "Intus, et in cute." Doubtless his picture of the heart is a true one; it is his own which he exposes. Pah! it is disgusting; and the nose of decency calls for the noisome carcass to be removed. We are ready to admit that he was the most thoroughly mean man of the ages. We are willing to believe him as abominable as he could desire us to,—possibly, more so. He was a great artist, and he had an incomparable subject.

While Pascal excelled both these, nay, all satirists who ever lived, yet he is possessed of what Chalmers so aptly calls "a blood-earnestness." He sees the unspeakable meanness and selfishness of our hearts. He understands, if ever

man did, that "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." But during the whole time of the vivisection he is the gentle, though firm-handed physician, who cuts because he wishes to cure. His look is full of tenderness, his tones soothing as the voice of the mother over her sick child. The wound is deep; but it must be probed. The ball has gone tearing its way through the divine form, but it must be extracted, else the injured one will die. Man is unwilling to think of his real condition, and seeks amusement.<sup>1</sup> He is in danger, but wishes to divert his mind from it. He is going to pitch headlong down a precipice, and would fain place a blind before the edge, that he may not see the gulf beneath, before he takes the fatal leap. If he would only allow himself to view the danger, if he would vigorously exclude every thought that interferes with shaping his destiny aright, then there would be hope. But, knowing that his case is hopeless unless he stop short and reverse his course, he seeks every trivial amusement that himself or friends can suggest to drown all thoughts of the future; as though this would prevent its approach, or prepare him for its issues. "The only thing that consoles us for our miseries is amusement, and, nevertheless, it is the greatest of our miseries. For it is this which principally keeps us from reflection, and leads us insensibly to perdition."<sup>2</sup> Nothing can be more certain than that this life, which is only intended as a preparation for another, will soon be ended; yet every effort is made to kill time, and so hasten the departure of that which, to a man of the world, bounds all his hopes. We are all under sentence of death, and some of us hurried away every hour; yet we look with as much indifference on the execution as though we had a reprieve for eternity.

One principal reason why Pascal is more just in his delineation of our littleness and vanity is that he was not affected unduly by particular traits of character. The grasp of his intellect enabled him to seize upon the salient

<sup>1</sup> *Havet*, i. 144.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, i. 54.

points of our nature as a whole, and not to view it confined to classes or particular periods of time. His study was man, the race, as portrayed in each individual with reference to himself and his relations to God. Seldom does he view human nature except under these aspects; but when he does, he occasionally makes egregious mistakes. For example, he says: "If each person knew what other people said about him, there would not be four friends in the world."<sup>1</sup> This is far too sweeping. We are deeply conscious, each for himself, that if the majority of our acquaintances knew all our words, nay, our most secret thoughts, about them, they would still be our friends, even more devoted than before such enlightening. Doubtless one of the great vices of society, in all ages, among all sorts of people, is a proneness to make slighting or caustic remarks about their neighbors. This is too often done through real malice; and the leaky vessel vibrating between neighbors, if it carry only what it receives, will part real friends. But the chief trouble is, "*Fama crescit eundo*"; and the expansive power of the utterance while in the custody of the circulating medium, is the chief cause of harm. Making due allowance for bad temper, selfishness, and the whole brood of unclean birds which roost in the heart, still, the greater part of conversation arises, as Bishop Butler says, in his sermon on the government of the tongue, "from a desire to talk"; not because there is anything to say, not because there is malice or knowledge of our neighbor's failings, but because the belly is filled with the east wind, and must have relief. This may be noticed when two or more gossips are prattling together. Each talks as for dear life, paying not the slightest heed to the other likewise engaged, and without any ill feeling that no attention is given or recollection is preserved. When the conference breaks up, the hum of voices is lulled, great relief is experienced, and each is just as wise as before. This, it is true, is a humiliating picture of our nature; but it should be regarded as affecting the individual, and not his

<sup>1</sup> *Fungère*, i. 210.

neighbor. In this light, it is not possible to paint the littleness of man in too strong colors. He stoops an infinite distance to fritter away the time given to prepare for eternity. He jeopardis his everlasting happiness by amusements which, if they were innocent, would be wholly beneath his dignity, but become intensely criminal, because they occupy time required for something else. Thought was given to be employed in some of the worthy matters which press upon our attention in countless numbers. Speech was bestowed that we might convey our thoughts to each other for mutual advantage. When these are abased until airy nothings supersede considerations of our supreme happiness or misery, and speech comes to mean nothing at all to speaker or hearer, it does not seem that our nature could descend lower in the scale of littleness. But let us remember that it was Pascal's purpose throughout, in showing how little man has made himself, to draw a picture of total depravity, that he might represent the actual condition of man when estranged from God. Though great beyond comparison with anything else in creation while he was innocent, being the fit companion of the highest intelligences before he sinned, he has now fallen to the lowest depths of degradation. There are evidences enough in the ruins to show what the temple was before its destruction. But now its scattered fragments, every one of which bears marks of a greater genius than Phidias or Angelo, — marbles, with their noble sculptures delineating the exploits of gods and heroes, have been removed to build the dirty hut of the prowling Arab or vagabond Greek bandit. Man when he came from the hand of God was pure, noble, exalted, beautiful in the symmetry of his character, little less than the angels in the powers of his intellect. Now he is a shapeless mass of corruption. He is helpless even to the extent of not knowing his own misery; he is miserable to the fearful degree of preferring to be deceived rather than know his condition, through which knowledge there would be hope of deliverance. From this view it followed, as a logical necessity, that Pascal had an intense conviction of

man's inability to save himself, and his need of regeneration through a Mediator. He was a Paulinian, Augustinian, or whatever men please to call a believer in total depravity and sovereign grace. Not even Calvin was more positive in this faith once delivered to the saints. This great fact in Pascal's religious life is too plain to be ignored; and hence we have abundant apologists for him among his editors or commentators. Condorcet and Havet express their profound sorrow that the great man was carried away by the gloomy doctrine which allied him with the dreadful Genevan Reformer. The sour trifler Dreydorf<sup>1</sup> apologizes for his scientific attainments, his deep spirituality, his devotion to religious convictions — nay, seems to ask pardon for Pascal's very existence. If there is anything which arouses our contempt and wrath, it is when a little soul, who is not capable of getting even a distant glimpse of that elevation in which some master spirit soared habitually, undertakes to apologize for his mistaken theories, to sorrow over the good he might have done had he not fallen into such unfortunate mistakes, and to express thankfulness that, despite his fatal blunders in gloomy religious dogmas, he still effected a considerable amount of good, etc. It is bad enough for the dead lion to be kicked by an ass under any circumstances; but when, added to this, the long-eared creature administers on his literary estate, and sounds his own notes through that terrible throat which once waked the forest, then, like the prophet in extremity, "we do well to be angry."

Whether Pascal is to be apologized for because of his belief is, however, another question. What we wish to discover is his true opinion on those subjects which chiefly engaged his attention. His view of the littleness and depravity of man in his estrangement from God could lead to no other result than the alternative presented in the despair of fatalism or the confidence of Christian faith. Any recuperative power in man, by which he can from within elevate

<sup>1</sup> Pascal's *Leben und Kämpfe*, *passim*. As an offset to this, vid. Neander, who in the *Leben Jesu*, Vorrede, p. xiii. calls him *Der grosse Pascal, der Weise für alle Jahrhunderte*.

himself to that condition whence he has fallen is utterly excluded. The virtue of the Humanitarian, or the partnership work of the Pelagian, has no place in his system. If man be elevated it must be through a power *ab extra*, coming from the source of all-sufficiency, and, like the wind, blowing where it listeth. Entire depravity can be subdued only by a new creation. There is nothing upon which to build a reformation; all must be made anew, and hence be the work of God quite as truly as the first creation of all things. Election, in the strictest sense of Augustine or Calvin, is the only doctrine which will satisfy Pascal, as it will the utterances of the New Testament touching man's ruin and recovery. And it is a noteworthy fact that he arrived at this conclusion from an independent source, that is, the constitution of man as it displays itself. He makes but few references to those places in the Bible where the doctrines of depravity and free grace are most emphatically taught, which shows that his view, while in harmony with revelation, did not on these points arise merely from the study of the written word. He rather takes the witness of man himself, expressed in the facts of his being, and from these deduces as a necessary consequence that which the sacred writers, speaking by the command of God, declare authoritatively.

But from Pascal's view of man's helpless condition all sorts of vagaries have been deduced by those who had not the moral greatness and reverential regard for the Bible necessary to enable them to comprehend his utterances. Without stopping to notice the small fry of Jesuits, with Father Hardouin at their head, who pronounced him an atheist, it is proper to meet the severe accusation of Cousin, who has done so much in procuring a correct edition of the *Pensées*. This noted philosopher, who shows such keen discrimination in the history of speculative thought, and deserves so well for his discoveries in psychology, so far misapprehends Pascal as to call him a "philosophical sceptic, a very leader of the Pyrrhonists."<sup>1</sup> This view, utterly baseless in fact,

<sup>1</sup> Cousin's *Blaise Pascal*, seconde Ed. avertissement et passim. See, also, Wight's excellent English edition of the "Thoughts."

so contrary to the whole tenor of Pascal's method, shows how prone great men are to fall into blunders when they have a theory to maintain. Cousin founds his theory of philosophy upon man's inherent capacities for knowing the truth, and elevating himself by virtue of the moral forces he still retains. The idea of a fall, such as the Scriptures teach, or of total depravity which can only be remedied by divine grace, has no place with him. All that he would leave for a Redeemer to do is by the force of example, or, at most, a co-operative aid—that sort of partnership work in which man does the chief part, and deserves all the glory. But here Cousin is somewhat inconsistent. A Redeemer is accepted theoretically, it is true; but there is no work left for him in his mediatorial character to do. The one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus, comes into the world, but his person not being representative, his death has no significance. Man is in precisely the same condition with or without Christ; being in any case capable of working out his own salvation, and in every case where successful doing this by his own powers. Cousin is not alone among the wise of this world. Such is the common doctrine of all who do not cordially accept the Bible teaching of sin and atonement. It is rejected as a cardinal truth, or, if admitted at all, the admission is partial and graded by the special leanings of the writer or exigencies of his position. But Pascal, like every truly great man, was consistent. He accepts the atonement, because it is an indispensable condition of true virtue, elevation of character, and reunion with God. His picture of human nature when destitute of aid from this source must therefore be one of utter helplessness. Man of himself cannot know the truth. He does not wish to know it. He cannot be pure and holy. His only inclination is toward vice and corruption. He voluntarily shuts his eyes against the light when it comes in his way, and sedulously avoids coming in contact with it. Such is man in fact, as shown clearly in experience, and by reference to history. The individual consciousness, or the sum total of human

actions, when viewed apart from divine interposition, alike testifies to this estrangement. Hence when Pascal adverts to the fact that all doctrines in metaphysics have been in controversy, and the most monstrous absurdities have been made the basis of philosophical systems; when he states that a few degrees of latitude or the boundary of a river reverses the simplest dictates of justice;<sup>1</sup> that a difference of nationality or the lapse of time changes the most solemn enactments of law; he states what all know to be true. From such statements Cousin concludes that he was a thorough sceptic in philosophy, believing all knowledge deceptive. And so it is, when bereft of faith, as the world's history proves. But we must remember that the mind of man is dual in its powers, and that one of these without the other can effect nothing. These co-ordinates are faith and intellect, and are both indispensable to the completion of any mental or moral process. As faith without works is dead in morals, so intellect without faith is fruitless in psychology. Pascal contemplates man, while in his estrangement, as utterly helpless and destitute of that knowledge of God which can be obtained in no other way than by faith. Viewed in this light, which represents man's true condition in a state of nature as opposed to grace, he is just as Pascal pictured him; and Cousin, with his keen discernment, could not have failed to see this, had he not been swayed by his theory of human ability for self-regeneration. It is nothing strange for Pascal to say, substantially, that knowledge is impossible. Had not Socrates and Plato admitted this as the basis of their system? In his Apology,<sup>2</sup> the greatest of all philosophers declared that the reason why Apollo had through the oracle at Delphi pronounced him the wisest of men was because he recognized his own ignorance. Other men thought themselves wise, and were not — a fact which he had discovered by trying them, each in his chosen pursuit. He, however, acknowledged that he knew nothing, and therefore was wiser because of not professing to know that of which he was

<sup>1</sup> Havet, i. 38.

<sup>2</sup> Apology, 21 D.

ignorant. It would be too long an episode to explain how this declaration is consistent with the system of Platonic philosophy. But it is pertinent to observe that neither Socrates nor Pascal believed that the world is entirely destitute of divine enlightenment. God has never left himself without a witness, nor failed to have a people in the world to serve him. And hence human nature, whenever it aims at truth, no matter among what people, does this by virtue of the light of revelation, direct or reflected, which is enjoyed. It is folly to hold that the original revelation made to our first parents, and in successive stages to the chosen people, was confined to them alone. The nature of light is to diffuse itself. It spreads with greater energy than any other agency. If we had no evidence in the heathen mythology, even in its most grotesque and revolting forms, to prove by their similarity that the doctrines prefigured were copied from sacred history, still the diffusive power of light and life in divine truth would justify us in holding that whatever is veracious in speculation or virtuous in action is derived from the same source. Though greatly caricatured by passing through the medium of human fancy, its origin can still be traced.

Now, the manner in which truth is mixed up with error, and the efforts which the corrupt nature makes to shut out the light which is struggling for admission, are a constant testimony to total depravity. If we wished additional proof of this fact, it would be forthcoming without limit in the persistent efforts of able men to rob Christianity of its honor in civilizing the world. Were this religion the most false and cruel, the most corrupt and demoniacal of all systems the world ever saw, it could not be hated with greater rancor, or opposed with fiercer vindictiveness than it is. Yet, like its Founder, who went about doing good, and only good, — his enemies themselves being witnesses, — who when he was reviled reviled not again, this beneficent agency moves on in its triumphal march through the earth, curing all woe, and wiping away all tears, just as far as men will allow it to advance. And not only do avowed enemies oppose and ridi-

cule, but professed friends grudgingly allow Jesus the honor of his constant miracle in the world's progress, since they claim the greater share for man's inherent power of self-regeneration.

It has been objected, both by Cousin and others, that Pascal in his reasoning with unbelievers, jeopardized the truth by subjecting it to a game of chance, even to the vulgar and ridiculous toss of a penny. It is true that he employs this argument: Assume that the existence of God and a future state cannot be proved by reasoning, and that the Scriptures are not to be accepted as a guide. Still, the alternative remains, either God is, and his revelation is true, or not. Try the issue by a cast: Heads I win; tails I lose. On the assumption of unbelief there is nothing to lose. Hence it makes no difference if the issue prove false. But on the side of belief there is everything to gain — happiness, God, eternal life. Hence the advantage is infinite on the side of faith. If this were Pascal's own chosen method of proof, we might well say it is degrading, and turn from it in disgust. But it is meeting the antagonist on his own ground, and showing him, even from his admission, that his course in rejecting the proofs of religion, without any evidence against them but negations which can prove nothing, is illogical, and inconsistent with his conduct in other things. Pascal's faith did not depend upon this pitch-penny test; but that of others appears to do so; and for their sake he argues on a level with their elevation of soul. Bishop Butler, in his *Analogy*, adopts the same method, by showing that, if there be any proof or probability, however small, on the side of religion, since there is everything to gain, and nothing possible to lose by believing it, it is therefore the part of wisdom to accept that which presents any ground of hope. If we can know nothing of a future life, if it be impossible that we should be informed, if the Scriptures are to be left wholly out of the question, yet if there be the least probability deduced from the course of nature that we shall live hereafter, if it be plain that, on the whole, it is well with the righteous and ill

with the wicked in this world, then infidels are inconsistent. For there is no conceivable justification for rejecting a system whose fruit is only good, and embracing one whose fruit is only evil. Shall we consider from this that Butler had no higher ground for his faith than this, or that he advocated no other with those who were open to the reception of reasonable evidence? The Westminster Reviewer<sup>1</sup> who undertakes to combat this method wholly misapprehends Butler's course of argument and the purpose he had in view. So Cousin does in the case of Pascal. And what is more singular is that he has a marked admiration for the *Pensées*, and does their author justice with a trenchant pen against many unjust criticisms.

It must be remembered that all sorts and grades of unbelief have to be met, and sometimes on their own ground, in order to answer the fool according to his folly. Each man in his own experience must combat every kind of doubt and suggestion of the devil. Sometimes, therefore, he examines from all sides the evidence on which he rests. He weighs the proofs by every scale, and endeavors to see what residuum of truth there still is left after eliminating all that doubt and destructive criticism can attack. Every prudent business man occasionally takes an inventory of all his resources, and in such scrutiny leaves none out of the audit. Because the banker has a million in government securities, he does not therefore neglect the smallest item which may be used in his balance-sheet, though the fractional part of the dollar would neither satisfy the clamorous creditors during a "run," nor meet his household expenses. So every general, in estimating his ability to carry on a campaign against his enemy, reviews all his available troops and resources. Thus each believer at some time scans all the forces which he can bring to bear against doubts in his own experience, or objections made by others. For it is the common fate of Christian life to be assaulted by doubts; and perhaps every believer, in times of sore temptation by the adversary, feels

<sup>1</sup> July 1874. Art. 1.

the ground shifting from under his feet. Satan sifts him like wheat, and he has need of prayer that his faith fail not. He may well fear lest, having preached the faith to others, "he himself become a castaway." Yet all this time his doubts are subjective, arising from states of mind which special temptations may occasion. The objective truth remains the same, not affected by our moods, or rendered less positive by our unbelief. Either personal temptations, to which Pascal was subjected even as others, or the assumption of the adversary's position for the sake of argument, justified him in resorting to every line of proof which might be serviceable for the end in view. That he was a believer of the most undoubting faith is both the general verdict of the world and the inevitable conclusion of every mind that is capable of sympathy with the grandeur of his character or the clearness of his intuitions. The charge that he was a Pyrrhonist in philosophy comes with an ill grace against one who from his childhood had a grasp of scientific truth, as it were by instinct, equal to that of any man who ever lived, and who continued at intervals until near his death to manifest the keenest interest in truth, no matter in what department of inquiry it might be represented. True, he believed that human nature, whether in things intellectual or moral, is helpless when left alone; that in our ruined estate the depravity extended to our whole body, soul, and reason. Thus only can we account for the enormous follies by which men rush wildly to their own destruction, and which have always prevailed except when assistance came from above. Hence Pascal looked to Christ as the only hope of the world, and fled to this Saviour, who said: "Without me ye can do nothing."

Originality in a pre-eminent degree is claimed for Pascal. Above almost every other thinker the world has produced, his thoughts are stamped with a vigor and impress peculiarly his own. It is proper, however, to define more exactly what is meant by originality. To say that the great problems which especially engaged his mind were original with him

would be absurd. On the contrary, they are the very ones which lie in the way of every cultured and reflecting mind. And hence Cousin<sup>1</sup> and Saint Beuve are wrong in attributing to Montaigne and Epictetus an undue influence on Pascal's mind. The fact that his predecessors had asked some of the questions common to humanity, and he alone could solve them satisfactorily, does not show a great amount of indebtedness. For his transcendent power consists in taking up those very ideas which under one form or another have become threadbare, presenting them in a new shape, clothed with a phraseology which excludes from consideration all but the essential elements, and making them living realities to our minds. All ideas which we grasp for the first time must be allied to others already known. For if they were entirely disconnected and alien to what was already in our minds, we could neither comprehend them, nor know where to place them for assimilation. Hence originality, pure and simple, is something which is now impossible. There are combinations which are original, and which may be patented by the inventor with the same justice that a machine, involving a new and useful principle, can be by the mechanic. But the artisan does not create his materials. The successful adaptation of principles, hitherto unappropriated, to make labor effective, is all that he can claim. So it is with the discovery of new thoughts. They are the application of elements already well known, so as to present truth under a new form. The ideas of speculative philosophy are all old, dating back prior to the origin of letters among the Greeks, Hindoos, or Egyptians. Even the theories which from time to time are heralded by a loud blare of trumpets as great discoveries are mummies, which have been shaken from the dust, dressed up in modern costume, and introduced as the children of Darwin, Schopenhauer, Hegel, Kant, and Spinoza. It is asserted, without fear of successful contradiction, that there is not a single theory in mental philosophy, among all those

<sup>1</sup> Cousin, in his zeal to convict Pascal of borrowing from Montaigne, attributes to the author of the "Essais" a text taken directly from 1 Cor. iii. 18. So much for Cousin's knowledge of the Bible.

with which Europe and America have been electrified during the last two centuries, but can be found in the Greek schools of speculation. It is known that the Romans borrowed all the metaphysics they had, all their science, even all their literature, from the same source. Between the Greek and Hindoo philosophers there is a striking resemblance, though not enough to prove that one borrowed from the other. We come finally to a period when there are no letters in use, and the thoughts of men to a great extent died with them. But there is no more reason to believe that the mind did not speculate during the period when the world was young than that children do not ask questions. Astronomy was studied before observatories were erected at Babylon or Delhi. The position of the constellations was understood before the zodiac of Denderah could be constructed. All the deep problems of human destiny were discussed by the "Idumean emirs" on the plains of Arabia before Israel went down into Egypt. In the infancy of the world, when men had nothing to read, and thus make their thoughts run in the grooves of others, they would be still more largely engaged with introspection, and the questionings quickened by external phenomena. They would naturally evolve, each from his own consciousness, those ideas which result from bringing physical nature before an inquiring mind, or from its reversion upon its own processes. Thus there would be deduced by each man for himself, by each community and race, a thesaurus of ideas, the common property of all, because they come like the manna, simultaneously, upon the face of the whole earth. Hence, just as before there were books there were complete languages, even so before there could be written systems of philosophy these were elaborated in the minds of early thinkers. Doubtless fewer modifications would be conspicuous in their theories; but the germs would all be there potentially, and subjects of earnest discussion, from the earliest ages. The characters of the alphabet are few, yet capable of endless combinations. So it is with the elements of thought; but they may by permutations be made to satisfy the capacities of an endless variety of minds.

We see this doctrine realized constantly among children. Such as are possessed of ordinary intelligence pass through the same stages, are busied with like playthings, ask similar questions, and are perplexed at an early age with those difficulties which remain unsolved through life. The boy constructs his wagon, or wearies himself with attempts at a rude mill. The girl dresses her doll, and goes through the mysteries of housekeeping. Occasionally a child will appear who is always in advance of his age, and therefore more alive to the problems of life. His originality is shown by asking questions which could not be suggested by his instruction. And when this spirit is conspicuous in an author he is called a genius, an original thinker. The justice of this award rests upon his more full comprehension of all the facts of human knowledge, and his deductions from them, than other men exhibit. Still, his materials already exist in the ideas possessed by his fellow-men, so that his work consists in a more clear conception and effective combination. It is true that in some cases this comprehension of facts appears to be by intuition. Bacon was not learned to the extent that Scaliger, Erasmus, or Sir Thomas More were, and still he is master of all the material facts of science and speculation up to his day. This was by his power of combination, so that the common materials of knowledge presented to his mind all the relations that they did to his predecessors, besides innumerable anticipations since realized by his successors. Thus he was original in presenting truths under fresh forms, and directing the minds of men into new channels. So Pascal, while still a child, elaborated the leading propositions of geometry before he had seen a treatise on the subject. For, through fear that this study would divert this gifted mind from other pursuits, the father had rigidly excluded Euclid; yet the bright boy, without assistance, created the science for himself. And when his precocious thirst for the mathematics conquered opposition, and the forbidden book was given him, it presented nothing new to his mind. So from the common materials of knowledge he constructed

the *Pensées*, which embody both in substance and form that which most interests all who think seriously on the great problems of our being. Such thoughts are both old and new, because they are immortal, and exhibit the highest species of originality that can exist. They are free from every taint of plagiarism, because the ideas are evolved by their author without any suggestion save that which is common to the race. The skill of the master is shown in shaping them into living realities, and constitutes him, as Neander so aptly says, "the seer for all the centuries."

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## ARTICLE V.

### DO THE SCRIPTURES PROHIBIT THE USE OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES?

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3. *Passages in which the reference is obviously to an intoxicating beverage.* Gen. ix. 20, 21, 24. "Noah planted a vineyard, and he drank of the *yayin*, and was drunken. And Noah awoke from his *yayin*," or dead drunkenness caused by his wine.

In this first instance of the use of wine on record, two characteristic facts are referred to,—Noah had degraded himself before his children, and fallen asleep *naked* in his tent. The *narcotic power* of fermented drinks is asserted: "Noah *awoke* from his wine." The same term is used in one of the Proverbs of Solomon. The drinker is represented as saying: "When shall I *awake*?" The reference in both is to the *coma*, or unnatural sleep produced by even a small quantity of alcohol, so strong is its affinity for the brain and nervous system.

In Gen. xix. 32–35 the daughters of Lot are represented as saying: "Come let us make our father drink *yayin*, and we will lie with him." The bare statement of these cases