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## ARTICLE I.

### RELATIONS OF SCIENCE TO THE BIBLE.

1. *Modern Scepticism: a Course of Lectures Delivered at the Request of the Christian Evidence Society. With an Explanatory Paper*, by the Right Rev. C. J. ELLICOTT, D. D., Lord Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol. 1 vol., pp. 526. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 27 Paternoster Row. 1872.
2. *Modern Materialism: Some of its Phases and Elements*. By GEORGE B. CHEEVER, D. D. Published in Nos. I. to XI., in the *New York Observer*, March, April, May, and June, 1873.

Our remarks in this article will be confined to the single question, What are the relations of modern physical science to the Bible—to the volume which claims to be a very gradual revelation of spiritual truth, by a personal God, for his own glory, in the redemption of fallen man, created in the image of his Creator? We intend to discuss neither the evolution hypothesis and other forms of modern scepticism, nor the influence of physical science on modern morality, civilisation, and Christianity, as affected by arts, manufactures, and commerce. Has any truth of science been shown to conflict with any plain declaration of revealed truth? Can science discredit revelation? Is true science responsible for the use of physical hypotheses by sceptical scientists? Can theologians who are ignorant of science, reply wisely to speculations that grow out of scientific discoveries? Does the Bible denounce physical science, as it does divination,

## ARTICLE IV.

## THE BENEDICTION NOT A MERE FORM.

Aaron and his sons were divinely required to pronounce, and Israel warranted to receive, "the blessing from the Lord." Among the Levitical injunctions, we read the following in Numbers vi. 22-27: "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The Lord bless thee and keep thee; the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them." Here the emphasis is noticeable: "On this wise ye shall bless; . . . and they shall put my name upon the children of Israel." And the concluding promise is, "And I will bless them."

That the benediction was assigned no essential place in the order of tabernacle services, further proves that it was not an unmeaning form, merely to conclude public worship. Yet propriety, and gratification from an interest ever deepening, frequently reserved it for the close and climax. Thus having been invested with his high priestly office, and the sacrifice having been offered, "Aaron lifted up his hand toward the people, and blessed them, and came down from" the altar. (Lev. ix. 22.) There we have the manner of pronouncing the blessing; and there in both manner and act, as Matthew Henry has suggested, Aaron was a type of Christ, who came into the world to bless us; and when he was parted from his disciples, at his ascension, lifted up his hands and blessed them, and in them his whole Church, of which they were the elders and representatives, as the great High Priest of our profession. Aaron's hand lifted up toward the people, doubtless signified the imparting the blessing. It was also evidently in acknowledgment of the source of these benefits, and as a voiceless invocation of the Almighty, first to bestow grace upon the priest, that with becoming solemnity and fervid desire, he may

pronounce blessed those whom the Lord Jehovah has truly blest.\* Hence the Hebrew doctors warn the people, "that they say not, What availeth the blessing of this poor simple priest? For the blessing depends not on the priest, but on the holy blessed God, from whose own lips these wondrous words first proceeded." Accordingly, it is with reverence and deep solemnity that the modern Jews, with bowed heads and silence unbroken for many moments succeeding, receive the benediction.

In this threefold benediction, there are three prominent suggestions:

I. The blessing is personal, being addressed to Israel as an individual: "The Lord bless *thee*, and keep *thee*."

It is evidently not without design that the singular number characterises many of the exceeding great and precious promises. The promises have been called the overflow of God's love. They suggest that the ever-blessed God is so eager to bless his people, that he cannot restrain the opening of the windows of heaven until their hearts' fallow-ground is broken up to receive the fructifying rain. He must signify beforehand his gracious design, that they may hasten the preparation, and not permit his pent up yearnings to do exceeding abundantly for them, too long to chafe and chide within his heart of infinite love. The promises are the result. But lest one true child, in conscious unworthiness, disclaim the blessing as too great, although his rightful inheritance as a son and heir, a pitying Father frequently addresses him alone: "Fear *thou* not, for I am with *thee*; be not dismayed, for I am *thy* God; I will strengthen *thee*; yea, I will help *thee*; yea, I will uphold *thee* with the right hand of my righteousness." What stricken heart, pouring forth its deep tide upon the grave containing all which constituted earth to her, has not praised the Inspirer of that personal consolation? "Thy

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\* Poole writes (*Synopsis Criticorum, ad loc.*,) that six things are required for this benediction: 1. That it be uttered with a holy tongue. 2. While standing. 3. With uplifted hands. 4. With elevated voice. 5. With countenance turned toward the people. 6. That it be done in the four-lettered Name. (*Nomine tetragrammato*).

Maker is thine husband ; the Lord of hosts is his name ; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel ; the God of the whole earth shall he be called." And she rejoices in the further assurance of *her* covenant-keeping God : "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed ; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee." Likewise, we are grateful for the personal character of many of the Psalms, permitting each communing heart to exult : "The Lord is my light and my salvation ; whom shall I fear ? The Lord is the strength of my life ; of whom shall I be afraid ?"

As in these promises in Isaiah, Jerusalem or Zion is addressed for an individual application, so in the Old Testament Benediction, all Israel are permitted to claim the blessings pronounced upon all collectively, as if one person. He who telleth the number of the stars, and calleth all by their names—Arcturus, Orion, and the Pleiades ; who orders the fall of the sparrow, and numbers the hairs of the head, will much more remember and bless each member of each of the families of Jacob. He knows each endeared name, with the wants and joys of each, and commands on every one who will receive it, the blessing of his Triune Name : The Lord bless *thee* and keep *thee*.

The patriarch-judge, Moses' assistant, perplexed in arbitration, jealous for the integrity of each decision, recognises in this full utterance, all requisite guidance for his just, impartial verdict, to the glory of Israel's God. There some anxious Hannah, clasping her little Samuel's hand, burdened with the responsibility of that immortal spirit, and trembling at her helplessness rightly to train up her consecrated child in the way he should go, takes courage from this personal address. He who has honored her with this charge, Abraham's God and hers, *will* make his face shine even on her, revealing every path of duty in which to lead her tender one, from which, when he is old, he will not depart. And Samuel also perceives in the blessing that even he shall be able to keep dread Sinai's command, "Honor thy father and thy mother ;" and hears a gracious invitation, "Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father, thou art the

guide of my youth?" Some Hagar returns with cheerful footstep to her menial tasks, to do with her might whatsoever her hand finds to do; and by faithful service in her humble sphere, to glorify the God who thus promises to bless and keep even her, and give her peace. And now the song of the shepherd is borne from the neighboring hillside where, rejoined to his browsing flock, he realises that whom the Lord hath blessed, he is blest indeed.

II. This frequent and almost unparalleled repetition of the incommunicable name, Jehovah, argues in each case a special meaning.

Instead of reading, "The Lord bless thee and keep thee; AND make his face shine; . . . AND lift up his countenance," as we should naturally expect, each of the three blessings is distinct, and introduced by the word Jehovah: "Jehovah bless thee; . . . Jehovah make his face shine; . . . Jehovah lift up his countenance."

This name, we are aware, the Jews regarded with such awe as never to write it in full. They called it "the four-lettered name," fearing to utter it. Accordingly, in connection with its four consonants, (the Hebrew language, as is well known, being originally written without vowels,) they pronounced the vowels of the less dreadful word, Adonai, or "Lord." When, in later years, they added the vowels, and marked with pause accents the divisions of clauses for reading or chanting, they expressed the mysterious awe with which this threefold, unexampled, and seemingly needless repetition was universally regarded, by affixing a different pause accent in each case, (Tiphcha, Darga, and Mahpakh,) although the word Jehovah, occupying the same relative position, the second word in all the verses, according to usage, should receive in each case the same diacritical points.

We who have the New Testament, in which, as Augustine says, "the Old Testament lies open," possess the explanation of this repetition. The Christian mind here adoringly recognises the doctrine of the Sacred Trinity. Can it be a coincidence alone that the Apostolic Benediction is likewise composed of three portions each, in different order indeed, exactly corresponding to those of the Levitical, yet amplified, inasmuch as the doctrine of

the Trinity, this great mystery of life and immortality, is in the gospel brought to light? "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all." We may therefore accept the Old Testament benediction as the Old Testament promise of blessing from the several persons of the Triune Jehovah: That God the Father will bless and keep; God the Son be gracious; and God the Holy Ghost will communicate peace to the Israelite indeed. This view is confirmed by the verse succeeding: "And they shall put MY NAME upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them."

III. The third suggestion is, that the peculiar blessing bestowed by the respective persons of the Trinity is described in the clause added to each invocation of Jehovah.

The words, "and keep thee," show how or in what manner Jehovah the Father will bless: The Lord bless thee *in* keeping thee.

The second invocation promises that Jehovah the Son will make his face shine upon thee *in* being gracious unto thee.

The third invocation declares that Jehovah the Spirit will lift up his countenance upon thee *in* giving thee peace.

In briefly examining these blessings, no one of which is complete apart from the rest, let us more closely observe their exact correspondence with the apostolic benediction.

1. The first blessing is comprehensively described as a keeping: "The Lord bless thee and keep thee." This is the Bible representation of the office-work of God the Father, with reference to his people. His keeping or providential care of them, is the theme of praise or prayer in both Testaments. The Psalmist declares that "He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep," and permits the believer to rejoice, assuring each, "Jehovah is thy keeper." The Son of God, in the sacerdotal prayer with which he concluded his active ministry, invokes the fulfilment of this office-work: "Holy Father, *keep* through thine own name, those whom thou hast given me." And Peter, introducing his First Epistle with the beatification, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," describes believers as those



“who are *kept* (garrisoned) by the power of God; through faith, unto salvation.”

Protection is therefore the divine work of our Father God. He blesses by protecting his people. What do we rather need, who have once become the children of his grace? Is it not this bestowment which, “through all the changing scenes of life,” evokes from their glad hearts that daily song, each day more precious?—

“The hosts of God encamp around  
The dwellings of the just;  
Protection he affords to all  
Who make his name their trust.”

Now, in the Apostolic Benediction, can the invocation of “the love of God” to his chosen people, be more adequately fulfilled than by the assurance, “Your wants shall be his care?”

2. We are pervaded with holy rapture in recognising in the second invocation, the promise of pardoned sin. This is the result of the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ: “The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee.”

Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. Grace! everything for nothing; God’s unmerited favor, by which alone man gains the keeping of the Father and the blessing of the Spirit. “We have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.” From his grace as the fountain, flows the stream of salvation. This was the motive-power as well as the sole explanation of his infinite condescension: “Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye, through his poverty, might be rich.” Accordingly, we are not surprised that in the New Testament benediction, that larger development of divine love, this portion of the threefold blessing precedes, in logical order—not, indeed, of origination in the Triune Mind, but as practically experienced in the heart of man. “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ” once received, guarantees and prepares us for the consequent “love of God,” and “the communion of the Holy Ghost.”\* This is the natural order in

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\* “The love which God the Father hath for any of us, is only in his Son, and for his sake, without whom we could expect nothing but wrath.

which God conveys the benefits of redemption to mankind. "Christ and his grace," says Luther, "must precede everything else, or our evil consciences will prevent us from trusting to the love of God. Both are united together in our hearts by the fellowship of the Holy Ghost. This threefold band encircles all who are willing to be the Lord's, and makes them children of the Father, members of the Son, and temples of the Holy Ghost."

With propriety, then, is the sun, with its vivifying, renewing, and all-sufficient radiance, nature's emblem of the love of God in Christ to lost men, chosen to enforce the power and glory of this second promise: "The Lord make his face *shine* upon thee, and be gracious unto thee."

Here is man's chief need. All his wants are concentrated *in the pardon of sin*. He is now reconciled to God; and if God be for him, who can be against him? Life presents no real sorrow; death hath lost its sting, and the grave its victory. If sin be pardoned, he is secure. Upon him the Lord hath commanded his blessing, even life forevermore. Here, then, is proclaimed God's boundless love:

"See where it SHINES in Jesus' face,  
The brightest image of his grace;  
God in the person of his Son,  
Has all his mightiest works outdone.

"GRACE! 'tis a sweet, a charming theme;  
My thoughts rejoice at Jesus' name;  
Ye angels, dwell upon the sound,  
Ye heavens, reflect it to the ground."

and vengeance from him; and by consequence the grace of Christ is most properly here placed before the love of God, seeing we cannot have this unless we have that first. The same may be said also of the communion of the Holy Ghost; for that likewise is "shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Titus iii. 5.) Wherefore, seeing that we can never have either the love of God the Father, or the communion of the Holy Ghost, but only by the grace of God the Son, there was all the reason in the world that the apostle should pray for this first, and say first, 'the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ;' then, 'the love of God;' and lastly, 'the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all.'"—Bishop BEVERIDGE: "*The Sacramental Benediction in the Name of the Trinity.*" Works, Vol. I., p. 100. London: 1720.

"*Nam per gratiam Christi venit ad Patris amorem.*"—BENGEL.



3. After pardon comes peace. Now, in the light of his countenance reconciled, with the lifting up of a benignant countenance, God's pardoned children are promised "the peace of God which passeth all understanding."

This is the office-work of the Holy Ghost, the ascension-gift of the Son, and whose essential work the apostle invokes: "And the very God of peace, sanctify you wholly."

"Peace" is the most comprehensive word in the Hebrew language to express all good which goes to make up a complete happiness. As in the most ancient times, so to-day in derived word (salaam) "*peace!*" is the common Eastern salutation in meeting and parting. When Jacob inquires regarding Laban, "Is he well?"—he asks, "Is he at peace?" David at Besor "saluted" the people; literally, he "inquired of their peace." The courier's report of Absalom's defeat, "All is well," in the original is, "All is at peace." Whereupon David inquires, "Is the young man Absalom *safe?*" which is "peace" in the Hebrew. Therefore, the omniscient, all-loving Jehovah, that he may omit nothing in earth or heaven which may minister to the happiness of each of his covenanted people, concludes the triune benediction, with the promise of all needful temporal, and all spiritual PROSPERITY. This is the communion of the Holy Ghost. From the communication of and participation in the Holy Ghost, is borne the fruit of the Spirit, which in the larger language of the New Testament is "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."

And, further, this peace is the result of the *active exercise* of divine love. It evidently indicates the Spirit's *application* to the believer of the blessings of redemption already purchased by the Son. The shining of the face, however cheering, does not necessarily imply a deliberate act of favor. Moses' countenance shone involuntarily, and inspired awe and dread. But in this third and perfecting blessing, there is promised *the lifting up* of Jehovah's countenance on the once guilty, wretched sinner, now the pardoned, redeemed son, an heir of God and joint heir with Jesus Christ, who becomes our peace through the inworking of the Holy Ghost.

And thus even in the Old Testament, God is love, through his priests commanding upon every true Israelite: Protection from the Father, pardon by the Son, and peace through the Holy Ghost.

From the above premises, the following are the natural conclusions:

1. That the customary "benediction" is by no means a mere form, or simply a convenient method of concluding church services.

It were presumption and blasphemy for mortal man pronouncing the name of the sacred Trinity, to invoke their respective blessing as a mere form of dismissal. The ordained minister of Christ, thus giving the unholy touch to the ark of God, might well apprehend Uzzah's immediate doom.

This position is also substantiated by the unanimous testimony of the Christian ages. Brief citations from representative writers may at this point be cited, in proof that the benediction has ever been regarded by the Church with peculiar reverence, and esteemed one of its most precious possessions.

Chrysostom (Hom., 2 Cor. i. 10, 11,) says:

"Then we bid them" (the congregation) "bow their heads; regarding it as a proof of their prayers being heard, that God blesseth them. For surely it is not a man that blesseth, but by means of his hand and his tongue, we bring unto the King himself, the heads of those that are present. And all together shout, AMEN."

Bishop Beveridge thus closes his sermon on "The Sacerdotal Benediction:"

"We may learn wherefore our Church concludes her daily prayers as the apostle doth this Epistle with the words of my text, (2 Cor. xiii. 14,) even *because they contain in short all that we can pray for,\** and are in effect the same in form which God himself prescribed wherewith the priest should bless the people. (Num. vi. 24-26.) And when the priest pronounced this blessing to the people, (as we still do in the visitation of the sick,) God promised that he himself would accordingly bless them. And if you faithfully and devoutly receive it as ye ought, I do not question he will do so now upon my pronouncing in this name the same blessing, according to this apostolic form in my text: 'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,' etc.

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\*Italics ours.

Bishop Patrick in annotating upon the words, "And I will bless them," (Num. vi. 27,) remarks :

"The Jews from hence observe that God's blessing in some sort depends upon the blessing of the priest; which they thought so necessary that such priests 'as were admitted to no other service' might perform this; for fear the people should at any time want it."

Dr. Thomas Scott impressively comments upon both the Old and the New Testament formulas :

"As the ministers of the Lord, the priests very solemnly prayed for the people, and pronounced a blessing upon them: the apostolical Epistles are most of them begun or closed with a similar benediction; and it has been a common and very proper custom, for the minister, in Christian assemblies, to dismiss the congregation in the same manner; both as expressing his affectionate good-will to them, and his fervent prayers for them; and as assuring them in the name of God, that a blessing will attend on those who are indeed the Lord's believing people; for hypocrites can have no share in these special benefits.

"This most comprehensive benediction" (the apostolic) "has generally been adopted in the worship of Christians when about to separate; but, alas, it is too evident, that most in our congregations, not to say of the officiating ministers, regard it as a mere form. . . . What more can we desire for ourselves, or our brethren, than this frequently repeated apostolical benediction implies? May we then at all times, when these words are on our lips, or spoken in our hearing, so enter into the meaning of them with fervent affections and enlarged desires and expectations, that the blessings prayed for by them may be upon us and all our fellow-worshippers, now and forevermore! AMEN."

Charles Simeon (Skeleton, 491,) excellently suggests that—

"It was repeatedly declared to be the office of the priests to bless the people in God's name, (Deut. xxi. 5,) and the constant practice of the apostles shows that it was to be continued under the Christian dispensation. In conformity to their example, the Christian Church has universally retained the custom of closing the service with a pastoral benediction. We are not, indeed, to suppose that ministers can, by any power or authority of their own, convey a blessing; they can neither select the persons who shall be blessed, nor fix the time, the manner, or the degree in which any shall receive a blessing; but as stewards of the mysteries of God, they dispense the bread of life, assuredly expecting that their divine Master will give a salutary effect to the ordinances of his own appointment. The direction of the text was confirmed with an express promise, that what they spake on earth should be ratified in heaven; and every

faithful minister may take encouragement from it in the discharge of his own duty, and may consider God as saying to him: 'Bless *thou* the congregation, *and I will* bless them.' To this effect, see Luke x. 5, 6; and John xx. 23.

"Let not then the benediction be so slighted, as though it were only a signal to depart; but while it is delivered with solemnity in the name of God, let every heart be expanded to receive the benefit. Let every one consider *himself in particular* as the person addressed, and may the experience of all attest at this time that God is ready to 'grant us above all that we ask or think.'"

That opinions on this important theme be not here unduly multiplied, let us sum up all in that last issued from the press. "The Speaker's Commentary" thus treats of "the Priestly Blessing:"

"(Cf. Eccles., xxxvi. 17: 'O Lord, hear the prayer of thy servants, according to the blessing of Aaron over thy people, that all they which dwell upon the earth, may know that thou art the Lord, the eternal God.')

The blessing gives, as it were, the crown and seal to the whole sacred order, by which Israel was now fully organised as the people of God, for the march to the Holy Land. It is appointed as a solemn form to be used by the priests exclusively, and in this function their office, as it were, culminates. (Lev. ix. 22.) The duties thus far assigned to them and their assistants have had reference to the purity, order, and sanctity of the nation. This whole set of regulations is most suitably and emphatically closed by the solemn words of benediction in which God vouchsafes to survey as it were (Gen. i. 31) the whole theocratic system created by himself for man's benefit, and pronounces it very good. Accordingly a formula is provided by God himself, through which from time to time his people, by obedience, place themselves in true and right relationship to him; the authorised mediators may pronounce and communicate his special blessing to them. The Jewish tradition, that this blessing was given at the close of the daily sacrifice, is at least in accordance with its character and tenor. It will be observed that the text does not appoint the occasion on which it is to be used.

"The structure of the blessing is remarkable. It is rhythmical, consists of three distinct parts, in each of which the Most Holy Name stands as nominative; it contains altogether twelve words, excluding the Sacred Name itself, and mounts by gradual stages to that peace which forms the last and most consummate gift which God can give his people.

"From a Christian point of view, and comparing the counterpart benediction, 2 Cor. xiii. 14, (cf. Isa. vi. 3; Matt. xxviii. 19), it is impossible not to see shadowed forth the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. And the three several sets of terms correspond fittingly to the office of the Persons in their gracious work in the redemption of mankind.

“Maimonides states that the Sacred Name has never been used even in the solemn benediction of the sanctuary since the death of Simon the Just. (Eeclus., Ch. 50.)”

Notwithstanding this wide recognition of its extraordinary character and privileges, how many in Christian congregations in act disdain this marvellous condescension of Almighty God in eternal blessings! Instead of the seemly decorum of the bowed head, the solemn, prolonged silence, the reverential awe—that eloquent interval of succeeding quiet before the noiseless passage of the congregation from the courts of the living God—there is frequently during the offering of the benediction, the reaching forth for needed articles of dress, a restless impatience to leave the pew, a bustling, whispering departure down the aisle, as if from the hall of ordinary secular amusement; as though no words of boundless import, and of favors unnumbered had been offered unto each!\* And thus do they—how unwittingly—spurn God’s richest gifts tendered even to the unthankful and the evil. Thus might the ingrate husbandman, in contempt of Providence screening a cultured spot from the essential sunbeams and the fructifying rain, yet expect an abundant harvest. Even thus, careless professed worshippers in act despise the freely proffered benediction; while the reverent ear and glowing heart of the humble Christian, receive with gladness from authoritative lips, the assurances of grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Then after an interval of silence, as if applying to his soul these gracious words; repeating in his heart-depths a fervent “AMEN,” he passes from the sanctuary,

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\*“It is with great reason that this comprehensive and instructive benediction is pronounced just before our assemblies for public worship are dismissed, and it is a very *indecent* thing to see so many quitting them, or getting into postures of remove before this short sentence can be ended.”

“How often hath this comprehensive benediction been pronounced! Let us study it more and more, that we may value it proportionably; that we set ourselves to deliver or receive it with a becoming solemnity with our eyes and our hearts lifted up to God, when out of Zion he commandeth the blessing, he bestows in it ‘life for evermore.’ AMEN.”

Doddridge’s Family Expositor, 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

privately to commune with this newly-confirmed God of his salvation.

2. Nor is it merely a prayer. Else were the New Testament more circumscribed than the Old, which commands the blessing, (see also Ps. cxxxiii. 3,) and as a part of worship, independent of the sacrificial and typical ordinances to be abrogated by the Antitype. The Saviour implies that the salutation given by the twelve to the houses entered during their mission, was not a wish, or even a prayer; but an influence for good authoritatively proceeding from them vouchsafed from himself, and to return to them should the recipient prove unworthy. Were it to possess no other power, great though it be, than as a fervent petition for the welfare of the congregation, why is the ordained ministry jealous of the prerogative of pronouncing the benediction, denying it even to the candidate for sacred orders—although well qualified for public prayer, and more tenacious alone of the right to administer the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper? Good George Herbert evidently thus held, for he quaintly seeks to condone clerical dulness thus:

“The worst speak something good: if all want sense,  
God takes a text, and preaches patience.  
He that gets patience and the blessing which  
Preachers conclude with hath not lost his pains.”

The view of Bishop Beveridge above is profoundly impressive. The Benediction is not so much *our* prayer as it is the Lord's “Amen” to his people's prayers and praises. Into it he collects all the desires and vows and holy meditations of the service now being terminated, and in this single sentence assures every true worshipper that every thing conformable with his will shall be accomplished; yea, that he will do exceeding abundantly, filling them with “all the fulness of God.”

3. The divine injunction regarding the very words of the blessing, suggests the inquiry, whether gospel ministers are not restricted to Bible language, and that a Bible invocation of the Trinity in offering the Benediction. Twice it is the divine admonition: “*On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them,*” etc. Aaron and his sons may not court a



seeming propriety in concluding even a peace-offering by the invocation alone: "The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace." Even then they must pronounce also the conjoined blessings of the Father and the Son.

Ministers often deprive congregations of their complete and rightful benediction by employing their own unauthorised language, or by the partial although scriptural blessing: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all." We are always safe in offering the Levitical or the Apostolic Benediction. The Triune Name is also implied in the inspired form appropriate for funeral services, and beginning—"Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect," etc. Our standards\* also recommend this form for the Lord's Supper.

With propriety the minister may employ at the close of a consolatory discourse, the words: "The God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. AMEN." And can we, it might almost be said, dare we, at the sacramental table, or in dissolving ecclesiastical courts, bless the assembly in our own unauthorised language, while there exists the thrilling formulary of the beloved disciple?—"Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father: to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. AMEN."

Again. Consider the joy of the minister of Christ, thus, not permitted only, but commanded to bless his endeared people.

During the week past, he has perhaps stood at the dying-bed of a mother in Israel. He has seen her trembling, triumphing

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\*Directory for Worship, Ch. VIII.

hand laid upon the head of her son entering upon the life-work for which in his infancy he was by her devoted to the God of the covenant. Her fast glazing eyes filled with a radiance not of earth, rest upon a daughter long active in the service of her own and her mother's God. Now the last parting smile beams upon the companion of her life-long walk with God, and the freed spirit beholds the face of her Redeemer. Clad in habiliments of sorrow, the bereaved are now gathered in the sanctuary, worshipping him whose very name is "the Comforter." Upon them rests the eye of the minister as he rises to bless his people. With deep emotion he bestows with the promise of the Triune God, "beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."

In another seat is a young disciple, who but few days since found peace in believing while kneeling with him who now blesses with a meaning never before perceived.

Now he is able abundantly to requite the delicate attention of a family who, for Christ's sake, have recently anticipated his servant's needs. And now he rewards that word of cheer from one prayerfully appreciating the burden of souls devolving upon his pastor—a word which, all the past week, whether presenting his people at the throne of grace, or laboring from house to house, or preparing his Sabbath services, has caused his soul to make him like the chariots Ammi-nadib. Now also he is permitted, nay, divinely required, to bestow a blessing for those private injuries and half-insinuations of some, professing godliness and committed to their pastor's cordial support, whose private life is yet a record of open maledictions, or furtive mournful protestations, which more than any cause soever injure that pastor's influence and deplete the Church.

Thus, while compelled as a faithful ambassador of Christ, from Mount Ebal, to denounce against the ungodly the direful curse, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die," the radiant herald from Mount Gerizim, he may also offer them, together with the people of God, the triune benediction.

In conclusion. What must be the agony of lost members of Christian congregations, forever reminded that the promised bless-

ings of eternal protection, pardon, and peace, depended alone upon their acceptance?

Is God's Spirit now striving with any unconverted readers, convincing of sin, its inevitable doom, pointing to a Saviour, their only Saviour, dying for them? Do they need the assurance of his willingness to receive them? They had it in all the fulness of divine love, in last Sabbath's benedictions. They will have it next Sabbath: "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee; The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace." Also whensoever and wheresoever a burdened soul hears the benediction—"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all," let him remember that thus to him "the Spirit and the Bride say, Come."

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#### ARTICLE V.

#### CAUSE—FIRST AND FINAL.

*Christianity and Positivism: A Series of Lectures to the Times, on Natural Theology and Apologetics.* Delivered in New York, January 16 to March 20, 1871, on the "Ely Foundation" of the Union (N. Y.) Theological Seminary. By JAMES MCCOSH, D.D., LL.D., President of the College of New Jersey, Princeton. New York: Robert Carter and Brothers, 530 Broadway. 1871.

The Theistic controversy is an ancient one. The historical age of philosophy may be said to have begun with Plato. He informs us that, prior to Democritus, in the Ionic School, there were those who denied an extra-mundane, spiritual Creator. On the other hand, there were deep thinkers, such as Socrates and his illustrious pupil, who were not satisfied with material causes, with ascribing all things to chance, to nature, and to art.

Prof. Tayler Lewis, in a recent article in the *Princeton Review*, and, perhaps still more fully, in his scholarly and enchanting notes on *Plato against the Atheists*, has certainly shown it to