

THE SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW.

VOL. XI.—No. IV.

JANUARY, MDCCCLIX.

ARTICLE I.

THE ASTRONOMICAL ARGUMENT AGAINST CHRISTIANITY.

The history of Christianity presents a scene of continual conflict. The ingenuity of man, and the malice of Satan, have been exhausted in assailing it by every form of opposition from without, by every mode of seduction from within. Its Divine Author predicted this when he said—"think not I am come to send peace on the earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword." The various modes of assault may be reduced to three classes—persecution, corruption, and the antagonism of science, falsely so called. Persecution, though reeking with the blood, and encompassed with the dead bodies of the saints, has ever proved to be the most harmless. Its attacks are open, and, therefore, may be more readily guarded against; its instrument is physical violence, and it is, therefore, unfitted to cope with moral courage and the spirit of devotion. Days of persecution have often been the most flourishing times in the Church. It was so during the ten devastations under the Roman Empire. It was so in the days of the Reformation. Corruption is the most dangerous form of attack, because it is the most insidious, and because it begins at once to prey on the

vitals. A debased Christianity, which holds truth enough to attract, but not enough to save, or whose truth is hidden under a mass of heresy and superstition, which possesses the form of godliness, while it denies the power thereof, presents the most hopeless spectacle among the religions of earth. It is well nigh as destructive as Atheism or Idolatry, far more capable of expansion and progress, and far more tenacious of life. Witness the spiritual dearth of the middle ages, the boundless sway of the Roman superstition, and the result of the contest between Protestantism and Papacy. After three hundred years of unceasing warfare, what has evangelical religion gained in Europe? Scotland, a part of England, a moiety of Ireland, and a few feeble and scattered churches in some half-dozen other countries, comprise all its possessions. Romanism, though beaten back for a while, has slowly regained nearly all that was wrenched from her in that great struggle.

The efforts of infidelity are directed either against the evidences, the facts, or the doctrines of the Gospel. The battle around the outworks of the evidences was long and arduous. It is now suspended, probably, until another cycle shall have buried in the minds of opposers the sense of their former defeat. The conflict, if not hotter now, is closer, being within the fortress. Every science is laid under contribution to gainsay the Gospel. Infidel philosophers deny the consistency of its statements with the dogmas of their science, and either convert man into a machine, or endow him with Omnipotence. Infidel moralists unsettle the ground of distinction between virtue and vice, and repudiate the doctrines of original sin and total depravity. Infidel logicians reject as fallacious and irreconcilable, its teachings concerning the origin of evil, and the goodness of God, concerning man's freedom and his inability. Infidel physiologists deny to man a spiritual existence, and attempt to account for the phenomena of mind by the organism of the brain and nerves. Infidel historians deny its facts, and pour contempt on its prophecies. Infidel geologists disembowel the earth, and find alleged contradictions to its supposed account of the age and formation of the globe. Infidel ethnologists will not admit the unity of the race; and in the

cranium, in the cuticle, and in the heel, discover evidence of a multiform origin, and can even point out the transitions by which a fish has been expanded to a man. Infidel astronomers measure and weigh and number the stars, and from the magnitude and splendor of the firmament infer the incredibility of the Gospel narrative. Each science is seized at its birth and declared to be a champion of scepticism; but as soon as it can speak, and while in the very gristle of childhood, it proclaims itself a true knight, and a defender of the faith.

It is to the Astronomical argument that we now invite the attention of our readers.* We shall attempt no description of the sidereal heavens. Suffice it to say, that this great globe is but an obscure member of our own system. Jupiter is fourteen hundred times, the sun is twelve thousand times, larger. The earth wheels along its orbit at the rate of sixty-eight thousand miles per hour, and describes annually a mighty circle, whose circumference is above five hundred millions of miles. The sun shoots his bright and burning rays athwart a vast and awful chasm, and beams upon us at the distance of near one hundred millions of miles; and struggles to illumine the most distant planet at the long interval of two thousand millions; and yet these inconceivable figures are but as the lisplings of infancy in the arithmetic of the heavens. Sirius pours forth a flood of splendor nearly equal to fourteen suns, and though the centre of a system twenty billions of miles from us, sheds on the earth a vivid light rivalling the lustre of Venus. A cannon ball, moving at the rate of five hundred miles an hour, would traverse this inconceivable space after a weary journey of four and a half millions of years! And the earth, if projected through this space from its orbit at its present terrific velocity, would accomplish its flight when five times older than it is now. The naked eye, on a cloudless night, beholds a thousand stars; the best instrument invented by man can take in eighty millions. The nebulæ are the luminous points in innumerable clusters of suns, of which our sun and all the thousand

* See, generally, Chalmers' *Astronomical Discourses*, and John Foster's *Review of them*.

fixed stars which appear in the firmament, together with, perhaps, untold multitudes lying beyond the reach of our vision, are but the components of a single member; the grand central orb, around which revolve these thousand suns with their ten thousand planets, with all their hundreds of thousands of attendant satellites, wheels its majestic evolutions around some more remote and more glorious centre, and lies beyond our perception in this distant, and it may be utmost, verge of the mighty circle, or else emits a hazy and undistinguished ray amongst incalculable millions of associated spheres of equal or superior splendor. There is reason to suppose that this is but the hem of Jehovah's garment. It is just as absurd to think that we have now reached the bounds of creation, as it was when men gazed upon the stars without a telescope, or looked through Gallileo's invention. Nothing can be more unphilosophical than the supposition, that the creative energy was exhausted at the precise point which the vision of man, at a particular stage in the perfection of optical instruments, is capable of reaching. We would not check the belief that this is a corner of the universe, and that all we have seen, and all we have imagined, are but the skirts and shreds of creation, while the vast whole stretches, in some sort, infinitely around us. And then to the question, whether all these worlds are inhabited, we are more inclined to return an assent than a denial. We cannot believe that these innumerable and stupendous masses of matter wheel along their endless courses amid the silence of death. We would crowd them with living, active, intelligent beings. In every star we behold a sun—and our imagination fills the boundless spaces between them with the habitations of God's worshippers.

This is a brief outline of the facts on which infidelity builds its reasoning. It alleges that the Christian religion can be rendered credible only by giving to earth the prominence among the works of creation assigned it in the days of ignorance; but that amid the discoveries of modern astronomy, and while surrounded by untold millions of blazing suns, this insignificant ball becomes utterly contemptible, and the story of its redemption by the incarnation and death of the Great

Creator is simply ridiculous. The argument is entirely presumptive; we shall have answered it when we afford a counter and more violent presumption. We accept the facts, but reject the reasoning. On the hypothesis that this globe is the only habitable portion of the universe, with the exception of a circumscribed place called heaven, and a narrow pit called hell; that the human race comprises the entire number of God's rational creatures, with the solitary exception of a limited number of spiritual existences,—these being the only conditions on which infidelity will accept the statements of revelation,—there is nothing marvellous in the scheme unfolded in the Gospel, but the Almighty is placed in a position which it is the depth of humility to assert He can never, never occupy. He is represented as being urged to the work of salvation by motives of which the Divine nature is wholly unsusceptible. A part, it may be a large part, of the angelic forms of intelligence, have openly and forever abandoned His service; and now this lower type of human existence has been seduced from its allegiance by the intervention of those malignant spirits, and all mankind are at enmity with His law and His nature. There is apparently imminent danger that all His creatures will desert him; that He will present the awful spectacle of a king without a kingdom, a sovereign without a subject, a God without a worshipper. Under these appalling circumstances, it is quite probable that He will exert himself to reclaim the rebels; it is not incredible even, that He should in these efforts go to the length depicted in the Gospel. The whole matter is reduced to a question of self-preservation, or rather to a question, which to every crowned head is infinitely more vital than that of personal safety—the honor of his throne, and the integrity of his empire. Everything bears the aspect of a desperate and doubtful conflict between the king of kings and his rebellious subjects. All such ideas as free grace, mercy, love, condescension, and an eternal purpose, comprehending all these transgressions and all these displays, are entirely impertinent; and the work of redemption, even to the last extremity of the sacrifice of His own Son, is forced upon the Supreme Being as a sheer and humiliating necessity. Nothing can be more blas-

phemous than all this; yet all this flows naturally from the requirements of infidelity. The necessities of the Christian argument demand no such contracted field; but find full scope only in the widest view of creation, and allow the presumption, that as this globe is but one among many globes, so the human race is but one among many races of intelligent creatures. And in order to aggravate the objection, and afford the carpings of scepticism full utterance, we admit the apparent probability that the human race is among the lowest in the scale of intelligent existence; we even assent to the certainty of this, because a being inferior in intellect to man could not be rational. He occupies a position at the very next remove from the brute, and it is impossible to conceive of an intermediate grade which shall be possessed of the essential attributes of reasonable existence.

However we may escape the supposed dilemma, we are very far from wishing to do so under any false colors. We accept with delight all the developments of astronomy, and revel in the view of unnumbered millions of radiant glories inscribed by the finger of Omnipotence throughout the boundless realms of space; we admit that this is but a speck in the midst of an almost limitless space—an atom amongst an apparent infinity of worlds. We urge that as immensity seems to be of the Creator's plan, that immensity must far transcend, not only what the eye of man hath seen, but also what his imagination can conceive, and must, to the apprehension of the most exalted finite intellect, be practically infinite; so that the loftiest of them all, and of most rapid wing, shall never, through the ceaseless ages of eternity, be able to survey all the scene, or to reach the spot where

“The terminating pillar raises high
Its extra-mundane head.”

We insist, also, on man's insignificance, and admit him to be a child of clay, brother to the beast, and a worm of the dust; that he is the connecting link between animal and spiritual existence, the very meanest creature capable of loving and adoring its Maker; the feeblest voice in the swelling anthem

of universal praise; that in his loftiest efforts to conceive the Deity, he may not be able sufficiently to stretch his imagination to take in the full proportions of those majestic, but created beings, who stand next the awful throne. We allow all this, and yet maintain that reason and science offer no valid objection to the truths of Christianity; and that for anything they may say, there may have been unfolded in such a world as this, and among such a race as this, the wonderful scheme of redemption revealed in the Gospel.

I. The infidel argument briefly stated is, that this world, and this race, are so insignificant amid the wide-spread glories of the universe, that God can never have concentrated on them the care depicted in Scripture.

1. The argument is fallacious on its face. From the multiplicity of God's works it infers partial attention to each one. It is guilty of the sophism of inferring littleness from greatness. The data are infinite, the conclusion is less than nothing. It proceeds upon an assumed deficiency in God's attributes, and it makes out this deficiency in one direction, from the fact of their infinity in another direction. Because God has exerted Himself infinitely in creation, He cannot exert Himself infinitely in providence. He has made a universe wider than He can compass; He has brought more beings into existence than He can properly attend to; His creatures must endure an eternal inanition, not because they have forfeited His favor, but because He is unable to bestow it. He is overwhelmed by the vastness, and confused by the complexity of His own works. Man needs salvation, but his Maker cannot grant it, for the same reason that the man who began to build without counting the cost, was unable to finish. The world is suffering under a deep and dreadful disorder, but God is so occupied with other things that He can never find time to visit this portion of His dominions.

This argument is analogous to that of John Adams' concerning original sin. God's providential care is either divisible or indivisible; if divisible, the share falling to each creature is so small that, like a remote decimal, it may be overlooked in our calculations; if indivisible, the chances are billions to one

that the fortunate recipient dwells somewhere in the milky way. God is able to do a little, in a general way, for His creatures; but we cannot expect a being, on whom devolves the charge of an entire universe, to be very special in His attention, or to do for each creature precisely that which he most needs, and that which he must obtain or else be forever miserable.

2. Further, these reasonings find their legitimate conclusion in epicureanism. If they prove anything, they exclude the Almighty from all intervention among the affairs of the world, and commit all things to the guidance of chance. For if God be incapable of directing the particulars, it is impossible that He can control the generals. If the minutest event may occur without His agency, there can be no general and efficient supervision, and the character of infallibility cannot be ascribed to His administration. Great affairs are so interwoven with small ones; broad issues, which affect whole nations, so often depend on trivial matters, that no plan can be pronounced perfect which does not embrace all these disturbing influences. Life is a tangled web, with many a knot, and many a twist, and only he who can follow the thread through all its devious courses, can reel it smoothly off. Each event stands related to a thousand others, each of these to a thousand more, and the circle widens geometrically, so that the final bearings of the most trivial act on the destiny of a nation, or the race, may be immeasurable; and no mind which fails to observe these incipient forces can secure the furtherance of its plans. God either comprises *every* thing in His purpose, or He has no purpose, and hence is not God; for a decree which does not fix the event is a solecism; and no event can be fixed unless there be a knowledge and arrangement of *all* the causes which combine in its production.

3. But again. It affords a more exalted conception of the Divine Being, and removes our ideas of Him further from those appropriated to human imperfection, to suppose that while occupied with the concerns of the vast whole, He is not at all over-burdened thereby, but is able to bestow an undiminished attention on the minutest portions of His works. This being the most glorious view of the Deity, must therefore be the

true one; for nothing can be more absurd and impious than to say, that we are able to form a higher conception of God than is really and actually true—thus making the powers of our finite and feeble minds not only to grasp, but to reach, beyond the true expression of the Divine glory.

4. *Facts* establish this minute attention. Each one of us, though but a unit among the thousand millions of earth's inhabitants, is watched over, provided for, and guarded, as though we were the only inhabitants of this planet;—as though, in our single self, we exhausted all the energies of the Godhead. We are assured of the minuteness of this watchful care in the statement, that the very hairs of our heads are all numbered. And looking far down below our position in the scale of being, we are told that the same observant eye notes all the winged warblers who disport themselves in the depths of the trackless forest, so that not a sparrow falleth to the ground without the notice of our Heavenly Father. And still again, beyond the reach of our intensest vision lie unnumbered races whose existence can be made known to us only by the powers of the microscope. Myriads of sentient beings occupy every particle; to them an atom is a world, a leaf is an universe. And could our senses be quickened as we stand in the solitude of some retired scene, instead of the desolation which saddens, and the silence which oppresses us, we would behold around us countless generations, all instinct with vitality, and vocal with praise. All these, even to those infinitesimal existences which no glass can take in, are the objects of Divine protection; for in Him they live, and move, and have their being. If God care for these creatures who tremble on the verge of nihility, how much more will He clothe us, the partakers of His image, and the lords of this lower creation.

5. The objection is, that such condescension is incredible; but condescension must stoop, and is striking in proportion to the distance which it descends. If this world stood pre-eminent among the stars of heaven; if, as was formerly supposed, this were the grand centre around which the firmament revolves; if the human race held the topmost round in the lofty scale of creation, the story of the mighty intervention in

their behalf might be more credible, but it could not then, as now, be asked with emphasis, "What is man that thou art mindful of him; or the son of man that thou visitest him?"—and no such humiliating comparison as the inspired Psalmist makes between the splendors of the skies and the insignificance of the earth would be appropriate.

Thus, our littleness offers no obstacle to belief, but simply enhances a quality pertinent to the subject, the quality of a marvellous loving-kindness. True, God is presented in a new and most wonderful relation to his creatures; but it is a relation which, while full of blessing to them, does Him no dishonor—but, on the contrary, displays Him in His most glorious aspect, and endows our conception of Him with a deeper and more tender reverence.

II. This entire reasoning proceeds on the supposition, that Christianity is circumscribed in its sphere, and affects only the destiny of the human race. But this is an infidel assumption; and although it has been attempted to compel Revelation to utter what was imagined to be the sentence of its own condemnation, it has remained proof against torturing expositions. No such doctrine can be found in its pages; all the light shed on the subject beams full on its antipode.

1. It is abundantly evident from the plainest declarations of Scripture, that the work of redemption affords matter of *study*, of *instruction*, of *delight*, to the angelic world. "Which things the angels desire to look into." "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known, by the Church, the manifold wisdom of God." "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

2. There are indications of a peculiar moral government co-extensive with, but distinct from, the essential dominion of the Godhead, growing out of the Mediatorial work brought to view in the Gospel, and devolved on Him who was specifically designated to be the Saviour of the world. In the epistle to the Ephesians it is said—"that in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in

him." Again—"when He raised him from the dead, and set him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power, and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fullness of Him who filleth all in all." In Hebrews it is said—"thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet; for in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him." Peter declares that "Jesus Christ is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him." In Philippians it is said, that "God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth." And in Colossians it is asserted, that "having made peace through the blood of his Cross, by him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven."

Two positions may be firmly based on these passages: 1st, That Christ rules and governs angels; and 2d, That this is not the original and essential dominion which he exercises in virtue of his diverse nature, but that delegated and Mediatorial kingdom for which he was fitted by the mysterious constitution of his complex person. This wonderful person, embracing the infinitely diverse natures of God and man, was certainly appointed with special reference to his offices among the children of men; but these passages show that Christ sustains a much wider, viz: an universal relation. Hence we infer, that Christ Jesus performed a work which affects all created beings; and as the work required by us was specifically different from that necessary to other orders, though generically the same, he took our nature, and accomplished it on the earth. Had our wants been identical with those of angels, for anything we can see, he might have assumed a spiritual and unfallen nature, and simply rendered a preceptive obedience to the law; but, as man was sinful, and condemned, his necessities demanded

that the Mediator should be made flesh, and should become obedient, even unto death. But the further comprehension of special and additional matter does not, in the least, detract from the character of universality properly belonging to this great scheme of mediation—and the Gospel, which principally reveals so much of this scheme as bears directly on our case, does not offer itself as an isolated and unaccountable fact, but as part, probably the most glorious part, of a wondrous plan, embracing all ages and all generations. The radical and distinctive principle of this new mode (if we may so express it) of the Divine Government, is *grace* in distinction from law. A legal relation with God appears to be not only ruinous to the sinner, but insecure to the holy. There would seem to be in the creature, as such, whether partly material, or entirely spiritual, an inherent tendency to depart from the injunctions, and to incur the penalty of law. They were unquestionably created with an ability to obey it perfectly, but the retention of that ability appears ever to have been a difficult and doubtful task. A lofty rectitude, and an immaculate holiness, are their birthright, but they are prone to seek out many inventions. Of the two orders concerning which we are informed, only a portion of one have maintained their integrity, and they have been kept in their first estate, we believe, by a radical change in their legal relations. Except by the supervention of some additional element in the Divine Government, there cannot be, so far as we can perceive, any absolute security against a deadly fall to the seraphim and cherubim, who, radiant with celestial glory, encircle the eternal throne. This new element is *grace*, which, in its genus, signifies favor shown beyond the requisitions of law, and in its specific varieties of favor, on the one hand, to the undeserving, and, on the other hand, to the ill-deserving, bestows confirmation on angels, and redemption on man.

Two objections are urged against this, not with the flippant impiety of scepticism, but with the gravity of an earnest search for truth.* 1. It is not clear that angels are the *indi-*

* See Foster's *Critical Essays*, Vol. 2., pp. 384–385. Bohn's Edition.

genae, the original inhabitants of the various worlds in space; but they are styled ministering spirits—classes of which may be appropriated to each globe; and the angels mentioned in Scripture may be merely that particular set of spiritual beings whose offices are confined to earth; hence, though all that has been said concerning the relation of angels to the work of Christ be true, we have arrived very little nearer universality in the scope of the Gospel, than if its designs terminated on the children of men. The foundation for this opinion is laid in those Scriptures which represent angels in a posture of attendance on earth, “Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister?” “He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways,” together with those frequent instances in the Old Testament in which angels appeared to the patriarchs. But consider (1) that these services are rendered by special commission from God, and are everywhere held out as the peculiar blessings and privileges of a certain specified relation to Jehovah. This attendance is not conferred on man as such; these offices are not discharged upon the whole human family; angels are not the ministering spirits of all the earth. They are attendants on the Most High; they wait around His throne; they do His bidding. They are enlisted in the progress of His most glorious manifestation, the work of redemption. Those who are included within its provisions receive their kind benefactions, and no others; “they are sent forth to minister for them who shall be the heirs of salvation.” It is by a gracious provision of God’s love that the redeemed are allowed the benefits of this spiritual service; it is altogether a covenant blessing. Mankind in general have no part nor lot in the matter. There is no reason, therefore, to be assigned from analogy (and the reasoning is entirely analogical) for the opinion that other worlds enjoy the ministry of angels. The doctrine of their earthly ministration is a component of the scheme of redemption, which embraces the infinite grace of God, the advent of the Son, and the mission of the Spirit; and as these constitute a system perfectly unique, and superior to the ordinary dealings of Providence, no argument drawn from analogy possesses any force.

Answer (2). Various names are employed in Scripture to designate the diversified ranks and orders of spiritual existence; they are called thrones, dominions, principalities and powers, cherubim, seraphim, angels, archangels, morning-stars, and the sons of God. How incongruous are these imposing titles if applied to a small detachment of an inferior race, who have no local habitation, though, indeed, a superfluity of names, and whose existence and happiness are exhausted in attendance on an insignificant child of earth. The Scriptures could not more clearly have indicated the universal application of this spiritual nomenclature, unless it had first given lessons in astronomy; such instruction it was not the province of Revelation to communicate. But, although the Bible does not instruct in the truths of science, it is often illustrated by their discovery; and we are able, standing as we do amid the developments of modern astronomy, to perceive a greater significance than those of old in these lofty appellations, as we see spread out before us the universal range of created intelligence, stretching from earth to the central orb, the most gorgeous palace of the Great King; and from man to the brightest intellect who, in the heaven of heavens, beholds his Maker's glory face to face.

Objection (2). There is another objection which affirms supernal beings to be fully occupied with the affairs of their several worlds, and the alleged diversion of their attention to these sublunary concerns to be inconsistent with the necessary limitation of their faculties, and to involve the idea of a knowledge too nearly approximating infinite. Now, it is evident, that however absorbed we may suppose the heavenly hosts to be with those parts of the Divine plans and processes which lie immediately around them, there might be some manifestation of His glory far transcending all ordinary exhibitions, and which would catch the attention, excite the inquiry, and call forth the praise of every creature. It is clear, also, that this pre-eminent work might be so conspicuously revealed as to afford them information, while, at the same time, they were left in some degree ignorant of what was contiguous to them, and of what intervened; even as the sun, though many millions of miles distant, is to us the most con-

spicuous of all objects, and while we know the earth but partially, and almost nothing of what lies between, we behold his splendor, we rejoice in his light, and are sustained by his genial warmth. This objection, therefore, is based on the hypothesis that each globe has been the object of some great moral demonstration, and that the work of man's redemption is but one among many similar displays of the Divine glory.

Now, while we would not circumscribe the loftiest conception of the power, wisdom and goodness of God, and freely admit that He manifests His glory in all places of His dominion, we cannot allow the thought that He has ever made any other such display as is brought to view in the Gospel.

And this for several reasons: (1). The principle of grace above referred to needs but once to be engrafted on the moral government of God; and as this principle has full scope in the Mediatorial work of Christ, even on the contracted field of human salvation, but more perfectly in the broader relations we have ascribed to it, there is no ground to suppose the devising of any other scheme for its introduction.

(2). And as the grace of God, exhibited in the face of Jesus Christ, involving the display of all His attributes, His wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth, lifts its infinite provisions far above the utmost reach of our imagination, we are convicted of unwarrantable speculation when we attempt to conceive of something higher than all this, and are guilty of a wicked audacity when we undertake to affirm that this glorious work is but one of God's ordinary operations, and that it possesses nothing intrinsically, and nothing in its relations to the universe, which serve to mark it as a singular and wonderful production of its Divine author. Scripture everywhere represents Christ's assumption of the Mediatorial offices as the highest expedient ever adopted, not only in the government of earth, but throughout the bounds of His universal empire; and demands for it, beside the feeble thanksgiving of man, songs of loudest praise from heaven's assembled choirs. "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of

thousands; saying, with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying: Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever."

(3). Consider again the arrogance of the opinion, that the condescension of God has ever stooped lower than it did in the assumption of our nature; that His justice has ever been more awfully displayed than in the sacrifice of His Son; that His truth has ever been more completely verified than in fulfilling the promises of the Gospel; that the treasures of His wisdom, and of His love, surpass those laid up in Christ; that the honor put upon any creatures transcends that of the heirs of God, and the joint heirs with Jesus Christ.

(4). But again we are taught, that all things are put in subjection to the Incarnate Redeemer. The adoration of all creatures must be rendered to the Divine nature in its mysterious conjunction with humanity; and heaven shall forever present the amazing spectacle of the "Word made flesh." Nothing less than the most daring impiety can surmise that such an event may pass unnoticed among the worshippers of God; or, that this unutterable transaction, which raises the lowest form of intelligence far above all principality and power to the occupancy of the eternal throne, and to personal subsistence with the Almighty, is an ordinary occurrence, overlooked amid greater splendors, beyond the small province where it took place, and the few families affected by its provisions. Have we reason to suppose that other natures have been assumed by the Godhead? "Christ took not on him the nature of angels, but took on him the seed of Abraham." Have, then, the Father and the Holy Ghost, each, selected some created type in which to veil their glories? If not, and nothing can exceed the presumption of the conjecture, the incarnation of the Son of God must ever remain the great event in universal history; the most glorious, and the most

blessed manifestation of the Deity; and Christ Jesus shall receive throughout eternity, by the acclamations of all worlds and all races, the sublime appellations ascribed to him on earth, and shall be to them, as he is to us, the wisdom of God, and the power of God, the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person.

III. We rest this discussion, finally, on the establishment of a truth, which far surpasses the low conceptions of infidelity; which rebukes its mean attempt to honor God, and which reveals His true dignity and excellence. The advocates of this vain philosophy cannot conceive that God has any end in view in creation and providence other than the welfare of His creatures; and they object to the Gospel, not because man is infinitely unworthy of God's notice, but because he is not so worthy as some other races in the universe. Had it been revealed to the greatest globe, and to the tallest race in the heavens, they would admit its credibility. But this position, arrived at by weighing worlds, and measuring angels, is unsound and absurd; for it must be supported by one of two suppositions; either that God makes His creatures His end, or that He makes Himself His end. If we say the creature is His end, we are guilty not only of a fallacy, but of impiety; not only of a lie, but of blasphemy. But even admit it, and the adverse inference drawn from man's littleness is illogical; because, however creatures may differ among themselves, the finiteness and meanness of their natures is such, in comparison with the Infinite Being, that the difference is not worth considering. We may, in time, compare a year and a century, but when considered with reference to eternity, there is no difference between them; in fact, neither has an appreciable value. If we say He makes Himself His end, then the accomplishment of His glory by feeble instrumentalities is in accordance with the analogy of nature, and is highly expressive of His wisdom and power. In the works of nature, God does not sound a trumpet before Him. When He illumined the darkness of chaos, He said, "let there be light, and there was light." When He educed the universe from nothingness, "He spake, and it was done, He commanded, and it stood fast." These

majestic spheres, revolving in their grand orbits with terrible velocity, address no music to the outward ear. All vegetation springs and buds, and blossoms and matures, by an imperceptible process. Man needs long preparation and abundant material, because his faculties are limited; but God's infinite perfections are illustrated in His making all things out of nothing. If, then, His own glory be God's end in all His works, the argument against Christianity, drawn from the smallness of its objects, falls to the ground.

That the ultimate reason of God's actions must reside within Himself, will appear from the following considerations:*

1. All the plans of Deity were formed in eternity. He dwelt absolutely alone, and hence all influences must have been drawn from Himself. He was not influenced by extraneous objects, for no extraneous objects existed. Nihilism can exert no influence; therefore, whatever reason there was for making and executing His designs, must have been drawn from Himself.

2. God is the most glorious of beings; hence His glory is most worthy of pursuit and regard. God is infinite in understanding; and hence most fully comprehends this great truth. He is holy and almighty; and hence will assuredly secure the most worthy and righteous ends; therefore He will pursue His own glory.

3. The same truth results necessarily from the relations of the Creator to the creature. It is absurd that God would create beings for the express purpose of becoming their servant. All creatures are required to love, honor and obey their Maker supremely. How is this command consistent with the supposition that these creatures are the objects of His supreme regard, for whose benefit all the infinite treasures of Divine wisdom, power and goodness, are exhausted? There must lie some reason further back which ultimately refers all things to God, not only as their cause, but also as their end.

4. On the hypothesis, that the happiness of the creature, in itself considered, is His one great end, the existence of moral

* See Edwards' Dissertation on the End for which God created the World.

evil in the government of God, inexplicable in any scheme, but preposterous in this, casts a dreadful imputation, either on His goodness or His power. If He inflicted misery on some for the sake of greater good to the rest, the benevolence is questionable; if He allowed it partially, that it might not be universal, His arm is shortened that He cannot save.

But the Scriptures are abundantly clear on this subject. "For by Him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by Him and for Him. Col. 1: 16. "For it became Him, by whom are all things, and for whom are all things." Heb. 2: 10. "The Lord made all things for Himself." Prov. 16: 4.

The glory of God is the end of all things, and the interests of the creature are entirely subsidiary. If this be a truth, it is a fundamental truth; and the sceptical argument, by leaving it out of account, renders itself hopelessly vicious.



ARTICLE II.

THE STATESMAN.

The Earl of Chatham being asked, on a certain occasion, where he learned politics, replied: "That he picked them up in the streets." Though uttered, perhaps, in a spirit of levity, this remark is not destitute of significance and wisdom. The development and happiness of the individual constitute the great ends of human government. Experience teaches that legislation should be limited to the actual wants and capabilities of a people with reference to their prospective development. Much, indeed, of the philosophy of political, as well as legal administration, is expressed in the maxim, *summ cuique tribuere*—so that the legislator or statesman could not, perhaps, better acquire practical wisdom to direct the legislative affairs of his country, than by mingling with his fellow-