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REASON AND THE BIBLE

REASON AND THE BIBLE;

OR,

THE TRUTH OF RELIGION.

BY

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PROF. OF INTELLECTUAL AND MORAL PHILOSOPHY, BELOIT COLLEGE.

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P R E F A C E .

A DISTINGUISHED author* of our own times has said, "Reason leads to faith." The present volume has its elements in that thought. Its origin is in the conviction that something beyond what is already extant, is needed by the reading public, and especially by the young, the reflective and aspiring minds of the age, in evidence of the Oneness of Truth—the harmonies of Nature and Revelation, and in presentation of the common basis, and reference of their teachings in the elements of Reason and the necessary convictions of the mind. The course pursued does not lose sight of this, and is thus natural and obvious.

Some of the chapters may demand a more engrossed attention, and a higher analysis of thought than others; but they will be seen to be integral to the main design of the work, and to lie in the principles of the method prosecuted. These will then ask appropriate regard as the appreciation of them is germane to the general and glad result to which we come.

If faith is conjunct with reason and a dictate of it, and if all Divine communications to us are in accordance with the spiritual being given us, then is religion inherently legitimate and obligatory, and

* Cousin.

should not be deemed foreign in its elements and arbitrarily imposed.

This is a point worth gaining in the Christian literature and reading of the age; and to familiarize the mind with this, and to bring the statements of all religion to the principles of all conceded and necessary truth, is my leading object in the volume here presented.

As such, and as a book of elements in behalf of Religion, both Natural and Revealed, it will, I trust, be adapted to the class-room in our higher institutions of learning, for either sex, as well as to the general reader.

The chapter on the "*The Philosophic Method in Truth*," is especially commended to a rigorous analysis, as containing the principles out of which our whole subject arises, and in the light of which it is most appropriately and comprehensively viewed.

A supplementary chapter is added on the "*Relations of Moral Evil*," as auxiliary to the object of the book, as called for by the spirit of inquiry now abroad on that subject, and as obviating the objections of many even candid minds, against the claims of Religion.

Should our work help to recall the reflecting, the aspiring, and the tempted of this adventurous and somewhat superficial age, to the primary laws of belief in the human soul, and to the necessary obligations of truth, it will not fail of the mission on which it is sent.

M. P. SQUIER.

BELOIT COLLEGE, July 11, 1860.

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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

THE NATURE AND VALUE OF THE SUBJECT, AND THE SOURCES OF LIGHT UPON IT.

ALL history is a progress. Every age has its distinctive type. Society, in breaking loose from the stereotyped, and immobile East, has been wrought into new forms, and taken on new and variant phases of relationship and manifestation. Mind has transcended its old enclosures, and passed on to other and higher ideas, and more intimate alliances with nature and truth. Progress has been accelerated by the accumulations of thought which have been urged on its track, and, in this movement, new temptations have arisen, and new dangers been encountered. Alterative agencies have been ever at work, for evil as well as good. A real dualism may be observed all the way.

Under moral government this could *but* be an inherent liability, and where God is, and creatures in His image, there must be moral government, and what might be, has been, and we are within the sphere of temptation and sin and wrong.

In the onward current of events prevailingly buoyant and hopeful, there are yet eddies and counter-currents; voyagers on the stream may fall into them. And this drift in the ideas and habits of men, marking the periods of their development respectively, is suggestive of the counsels which are appropriate, and of the antidotes to be supplied.

Our own age has thus its distinctive idiosyncrasies—its subtle temptations—its especial liabilities and dangers.

In passing out from the moorings of authority, we may strand on the shoals of scepticism and irreligion. Independence of mind is not without its perils—liberty may become licentiousness. Our very freedom may lose for us the true balance of the forces by which we should be held, and we may fly off on the tangent of some rampant radicalism. In the sea of false opinions whose variant and obtrusive flags are hoisted to the breeze, or

whose broken fragments float by us, below the breakers on which they were dashed; we may get distrustful of *first principles*—may turn recreant to the grand elements of all truth and obligation—may hush the convictions of our own responsible nature, and, like the fool in the Gospel, “fear not God, neither regard man.”

This is especially to be marked among the oscillations and aberrations of young minds—of those not disciplined by experience, or fully furnished from the armory of truth—and most of all, perhaps of the ardent and aspiring youth of our schools and colleges, and of the privileged sons of the university and professional course in some departments of inquiry and research. They are intelligent—self-reliant it may be, if not self-opinionated. They are awake to the impulses of the age, and enlist in the vanguard of its forces. They yield easily to first impressions, and may be held in the power of defective and slender premises. We wish them to think for themselves—to develop mind and thought on their own account, and on their own responsibility. Still they may not be expected to have the wisdom and forecast of

riper years. They have but *begun* to look on the verities of things. First appearances may decoy and deceive them. They may jump at conclusions too soon, or be in haste for the message ere it is ready or they have strength to bear it. But we would not have their safety periled in this day of steam-power and galvanic-batteries, or their heads get dizzy, or their nerves unstrung, or their vision confounded, or their balance lost, in the rapidity or fitfulness of the headway they make. There are *first truths* enduring as eternity. There are elementary principles of morals, and religion, unyielding and relentless as the granite bed of the mountains. There are fundamental convictions, inherent in the being of the soul itself, which we may not ignore or resist. "If the foundations give way, what can the righteous do?" What then, can any of us do? We should be out at sea without helm or compass—without sun or port, or direction or object. But truth stands on a basis which is independent and immutable. Its laws, and relations, and bearings, are on us, with or without our consent. They cannot change at our bidding, or be spirited away at our pleasure. And we need often to recur to

first principles in our being and relations, and in the universe around us. The age—the currents of public thought—society at large—the more intelligent in it—the young, who are to be the future of it, demand this and make appropriate the subject of the present work, which is indicated under the heading of “REASON AND THE BIBLE; OR, THE TRUTH OF RELIGION.” I use the major term here in its largest sense, and would treat it so throughout the volume. The word religion gets its primary sense from its Latin origin (*ligo, religo*, “to bind,” “to bind anew;” “to make fast”) and thus is appropriate to our object. It embraces the sphere of our obligations and responsibilities, both to God and to each other. It includes both tables of the law, and thus is comprehensive of duty, and my aim is to present its truth,—its authentic validity, as a thing to be accredited, and a matter to be placed beyond doubt or equivocation, in our theoretic beliefs, and in our practical convictions. I would look back with my readers on some of the infallible first truths of the intelligence, in which the doctrine of responsibility is based, and see that we are conclusively held by the common consent of all truth, to

the claims which religion imposes—that the *subjective* and the *objective* agree in this; that reason and revelation coalesce in their instructions concerning it, and unite their testimony in the more express declarations and appeal of the Gospel. The subject will demand a somewhat scientific treatment and illustration, and yet we will not overlook the fact that science, and especially in the field now before us, has its practical aspects and bearings; that moral truth is the authorized exponent of duty, and finds its meet response in the rectification of the heart, and the rightness of the life and conduct.

My reference in this chapter, is to the *nature and value of our subject*, and the *sources of light upon it*.

Man is a compound being. The earthly and the spiritual combine in him. But religion has respect primarily, to our spiritual being. It vests in the supernatural chiefly. To *its* culture she devotes herself mainly. Its welfare she cares for; its immortality and glory are the consummation of her watchful and benignant ministry. She uses nature for the sake of that which is above nature. The intelligent and spiritual, are that for which

we are, and in which we live and are. This is the jewel that the casket contains. This "*the me*" embodied or disembodied, launched out into a ceaseless duration, with the prerogatives and behests of our own conscious being.

We do not undervalue the earthly. We love to trace on it the handy work of God, in the developments of nature and providence. The existence and mechanism of the physical universe; its laws; its working and results; are a study that may well fill the soul with wonder and praise. It challenges our admiration and gratitude the more, the more we investigate it. There is everywhere method, science, and benignant design. The geologist finds them in the drift, and rocks of the valley, and the mountain; the student of botany in every projecting stem, and rootlet, and leaf, and flower. The astronomer reads them in the heavens—the chemist in the affinities of animate and inanimate nature. Every study has its *ethical* relations. All created things spring from the bosom of God, and unite in revealing Him. And it is under this view of the sciences, that their true import is learned, and that interest is concentrated so mightily

on them. Material nature is the work of God. He is in nature, in providence, in history. Every science presents Him. Nothing can be comprehended without reference to Him. His being lies at the root of every thought. The finite implies Him, and is because He is. And thus brought to light in every principle and manifestation of physical existence—written on every leaf in the forest, and every star in the sky; He is thence the object of “the soul’s adoration.” To Him, Reason defers; of Him, Revelation treats. Our subject then is cognate to all science and truth. The physical and the ethical are in intimate relationship. Man is placed here in communion with both. The earthly and the spiritual belong to him. It is his province to rise from the one into the other, and let them as kindred sciences develop and illustrate each other.

From this stand-point it is the business of religion to comprehend our ethical relations—those of God to us, and ours to Him. It takes cognizance of the reasonable, the responsible, the accountable, the immortal—our history as related to law and right—to character, and conduct, and destiny; and as it brings out

the positions of that redemptive economy presented in the Gospel, imperfectly, yet truly, now, and progressively, forever.

This, then, being the province of our subject, its value can scarcely be overstated. It takes in the sphere of "*the me*" in all its relations. The past, the present, and the future, cluster in it. It comprehends probation and its results, and takes up, in its discussion, the doctrine of 'the life that now is, and of that which is to come.'—And the sources of light upon it are indicated in suggestions already made. These are three in number—the subjective in us, the objective of being and things lying out of us, and the Divine Revelation given to us.

1. *Our own conscious being, or ourselves.*

"*Cogito, ergo sum,*" is the old adage. "I think, therefore I am." Here is logically the starting-point of knowledge. Attributes imply a subject, to which they belong, and in which they reside. Acts must have an actor—conscious states, and affections, and processes, a mind, or being, whose affections they are. I think, I feel, I see, or hear, or taste, or smell; therefore I am. I could not have these affections if I did not exist. Being is

the logical antecedent to action; intelligence in being, to the exercise of that intelligence. And here is the logical beginning of knowledge, and we verify it at this point. This is not the chronological commencement of knowledge, it may be. The infant may have much commerce with external nature,—have matured into childhood or even manhood, before it consciously embraces the terms of this proposition, and draws for itself the formal corollary, that, inasmuch as it thinks, it *is*; inasmuch as it acts, it exists. But at this point, and within the terms of this category, is the element and offshoot of all knowledge and of all method in accounting for it. Here we get the science of ontology, as it is technically called. We apprehend the subject in its attributes,—we mentally cognize the me in its conscious phenomena. We know ourselves, and apprehend our ontological being and subjectivity, from the phenomenal states and acts, of which we are conscious. Thus, too, by the senses we perceive the outward, and meet the law by which all objective realities are cognized, and become matters of knowledge to the sense and understanding. Thus we come at the knowledge of all truth, and to its philosophical development in the mind, and

have it, as the more modern writers would say, "connected in the understanding, and comprehended in the reason."

Thus, also, we arrive at the knowledge of God. His being is the logical condition of our own. It is thus the insight of reason, and is apprehended in the intelligence, as that is apprehended in its acts, as there will be further occasion to observe, in the progress of our work.

Thus the religious idea takes rise in our own subjective being, and not in the fact of it only, but in its characteristics also—in the reason, the conscience, and the will,—in the affections and sentiments of the soul,—in all its susceptibilities for the relations and behests of a spiritual sphere of existence. The doctrine of the personality suggests it, and this conscious amenability to law and right. These are the responses within us, to the truth and validity of the religious idea, from without. We are ourselves a suggestive source of evidence, in respect to all that religion teaches or demands.

2d. The *visible universe* is also a *valid* and an *authoritative instructor* on this subject. The fact of it, and the nature of it, are full of meaning here, as well as its relations to us. It is a dependent economy, and must have had

an author, and must ever have an upholder and preserver. It is a *unity*, and teaches the *one* God. It is vast, and shows His greatness. It is complex, and exhibits His wisdom. It is intelligent in its aim and tendency, benevolent, disciplinary, and retributive, and evinces the moral attributes of Jehovah. We appeal to nature and providence with utmost legitimacy and confidence. *There*, we find the befitting counterpart of lessons otherwise derived. It is like socket to socket, and bone to bone. Every science, every study, every art, is tributary to the *religious sentiment*, and throws converging light upon it. All is, on the mighty scale of universal being, what *comparative anatomy* is in investigating the fossil remains of bygone organisms, as a single science.

3d. God has given us *an express Revelation*. In the statements of an overt and positive manifestation of His will, do we arrive at a source of new and defined information, confirming the testimony of reason and nature, and developing more fully and explicitly the doctrines of religion—the further will of God, and the ultimate destiny of man. Such a method of intelligence is not strange and foreign to the ideas of the reason, but, duly at-

tested, is consonant therewith. It has many analogies in the ordinary methods of instruction within nature, and why not be accredited when it transcends nature? 'He that formed the eye, shall he not see?' He that gave the mind, can he not communicate with it *directly*, as well as indirectly? If God see reason for it, *may not* 'holy men of God speak as they are moved by the Holy Ghost, and the Scriptures be given by inspiration of God, and be profitable, for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works?' Reason leads to faith. A Revelation is the highest form of reason. Its analogies are out everywhere; its argument is in the necessities of our being, and its "rationale" in all the works and ways of God. 'Its line has gone out through all the earth, and its words to the ends of the world.'

Such, then, being the nature and value of our subject, and the sources of light upon it, may I bespeak for it a candid and patient spirit of investigation? My method may not always be transparent at first view, or my specific conclusions, at once, in all respects, obvious; but both, I trust, will, in the sequel,

be vindicated, and the tendency and value of the whole, manifest and unquestioned. My method may seem, at times, a little novel and adventurous; I shall reach after the analogies of truth, and shall aim at concentration and unity.

Dissatisfied with the methods in which, for the most part, the evidences of revealed religion have generally been presented, and at the needless divorce which has been proclaimed between the teachings of nature and the Bible, I shall refer you to them in their coalescence and concurrent testimony. They are not antagonistic in their instructions, but cognate and corroborative of each other. The one Jehovah is author of both, and has impressed on each the same great lineaments of truth. They are but steps in the progress of divine manifestation, and are equally within the sphere of the one vast economy of Him 'who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.' A man, from love of nature, need not undervalue the Bible. Revealed religion stands on the same scientific basis with that derived from the other works of God, and is embodied in the same categories of thought. It is interpenetrated with the same

elements of eternal truth, emanating from the throne of the Infinite, as comprehended in the ideas of the reason. Both sources of light are valid, and should be viewed in their immediate connections and reciprocities. They have much in common, and while revelation is a later and richer manifestation of the will of God, and in the definite forms of oral and written instruction, it stands on the pedestal of those eternal truths which are cognized by the human mind, and which we cannot repudiate.

There is analogy in truth,—there is oneness and mutual “consilience” and illustration, in the manifestations of God. Let us follow a little in its lead, and try its faithful promptings, in encountering that labyrinth of incoherent elements, which the dissociated methods of investigation have cast on our way;—and may the Spirit of Him ‘who is light, and in whom is no darkness at all,’ guide in all our inquiries, and bring us to those legitimate and safe results which shall bear benignly on both intellect and character, and on that glorious future destiny and inheritance in which the perfection of our being is attained.

CHAPTER II.

THE HARMONY OF TRUTH.

OUR theme is, Reason and the Bible, or *the truth of religion*. The opening chapter presented the nature and value of the subject, and the sources of light concerning it. It falls into the precincts of moral philosophy, and takes up our relations to God and duty. It comprehends the spiritual of our being, and shows its value in the soul's likeness to God, and its destiny in both the present and the future. The sources of light to which we legitimately refer, in the treatment of our subject, are, the *reason* and *constituent being* in us, the *universe* around us, and the *Revelation* given us. I devote the present chapter to a consideration of the *substantive harmony* of all knowledge and truth.

Every subject of discussion or thought has its preliminary themes, which lead the way to it, and in the converging light of which, it is seen to advantage. These are as the foregrounds and vestibule of the temple, and the lights and shadows thrown upon it. Much is lost, often, by failing of the natural method in the illustration of truth. It is of use to know where to begin—to lay foundations with care,—to suggest to the reader the elements in which a proposed subject of discussion lies imbedded,—to throw off irrelevant matter, and concentrate thought upon the exact features of the case in hand. It is well, if we can, to “mete and bound” the truth,—to show where it *must* be, as well as where it *is*, and to trace the lines by which, from the necessities of the case, it is circumscribed.

It is with this intent that I refer to the topic announced for this chapter. The consideration of this will be found to be germane to our whole design, and to lead, by an abridged and comprehensive method, to the grand features of the course of instruction on which we are now entering. This is, *the integral oneness and harmony of all truth*; its *homogeneity and relationship*; its mutual coal-

escence and self-approval, and reciprocal illustration, as foreshadowed in its *subjective idea*, and seen in its *objective law*.

1st. *Let us dwell a little on the subjective idea, and the thoughts which cluster in what is termed the à priori method.* If the universe is one, and is created, prosecuted, sustained by one independent and perfect being, there *must* be in it this oneness and harmony. Its facts will agree. There will be concentric adaptation in it. It will be *one* mighty framework. It will have consistency. Its laws, its principles, its design, its working, and its issues, will show the mind of Him who formed it. There may be a various shading of the picture;—different groups may cluster on its front, and in the background. But it shall be *one* picture, homologous in its leading parts, in its grand idea, one, and characteristic in its features. Up to certain approximations, we can forecast what shall be in it, and what will be excluded from it. Its *physical* laws will be in harmony, and exhibit the features of mutual consent and accommodation. The earth and the air will be adapted to the beings which depend upon them; centripetal and centrifugal forces will balance, and all the minor compen-

sations in the planetary, and solar, and stellar movements, will be adjusted to each other. There will be dependence and combination. There will be the integer, in its parts. There will be, in a variety ever so complex,—in a vastness ever so amazing, a homogeneity that characterizes the whole, as the product of one creating and sustaining Deity. Especially shall this be characteristic of the *ethical* relations of the universe. They will reflect God. They will be like Him, and worthy of Him. If sin be found there, it will be the work of subordinate agents. God will have no hand in it, and be only the antagonist of it, and in Divine sufficiency, will overrule it for good. Virtue will be triumphant, right sustained, and wrong punished, and put to unmitigated shame and reproach; and thus the final issue will be glorious. Nothing shall *successfully* resist the will of God, and circumvent His great end in all things. What power shall do it? What wisdom or craft triumph in unequal conflict with the Supreme? He must eventually gain the victory over sin,—weed it out of His kingdom, and confine its adherents to their own place. Resistless as infinity, He must move on to a consummation of the uni-

verse, that is worthy of himself, and such as perfect righteousness requires.

These and the like, are the foreshowings of reason, in respect to what must be, in the universe, and under the administration of the one infinite and perfect Jehovah. It is the universe, in its subjective idea. It is the *à priori* and necessary conclusions of the reason, as to what can *but* be in the working out of the problems of creation and providence in an actually existing state and process of events:—the necessary conditions of actual being, and of an economy of things, whensoever and wheresoever it shall exist, under the Infinite, and as subjectively apprehended and infallibly foreshown in the ideas of the reason.

These, then, being the *à priori* considerations belonging to our subject, we turn

2d. *To the objective law of the universe, as an actually existent economy of being.* What are, in fact, the marks of unity and harmony presented? Do we find our subjective forecast in the objective law of the actually existing universe? Here it is but fair to prefix the suggestion, that it is illogical to seek for more causes for an effect, than that effect needs. If there be in the one God an

all-sufficient cause, reason asks not another. It would be obviously gratuitous and vain to be multiplying divinities, when in the one absolute Jehovah is found the adequate and sufficient cause of all created existence. But the universe gives us both the negative and the positive argument and illustration on this subject. A unity is affirmed,—a multifarious origin denied. We may refer to the illustrations of this truth, as written on the face of nature, and through the works of God.

Shall we draw them from the science of *astronomy*? Myriads of worlds are thrown into the immensity of space,—suns, centres, systems, planets, and satellites, and comets,—primaries, secondaries, and tertiaries; and yet one law obtains in all. The doctrine of the falling apple comprehends that of the universe in motion, obedient to the will of God. Creation falls into one law, and points us to the guidance of that one unseen hand. Science has discovered it, and by the *à priori* method. A fact suggests the principle. It is hypothetically applied, and it meets the full range of facts in the case. It meets them universally, as far as the researches of man have carried it, and forms, in the matter of “the Heav-

en-born science," as it is called, a beautiful and graphic illustration of the coalescence of the subjective ideas of the reason, and the actually objective law, as found in existing things. As reason foreshows that there *can* be but one supreme and infinite Jehovah, and one economy and administration of created dependent things; so nature declares there *is* but one.

See a happy instance of this combined issue in the investigations of the French mathematician and astronomer, Le Verrier. In his retired study, and with no instrument pointing to the heavens, he ascertains, from tables of calculations before him, which trace the movements of the planetary system, that there is some deviation *there*, from the requirements of the law of mutual attraction and forces, as applied to planets *already* discovered. There is a discrepancy between the *required* and the *actual* movement. The law is inadequate, with the material given. It does not fully account for the *nutations* of the spheres, and will not fully anticipate their actual pathway. There must be a further influence somewhere in the heavens. There was an unknown, disturbing cause. There must be some undiscovered

planet, which, by its size and location, shall account for the aberrations of its sister orbs. He applies the known laws of the heavenly bodies, and calculates where and what it is,—measures it, and defines its motions, and requests his friend at Berlin to look it up for him. That friend points his glass to the specified quarter, and easily detects the stranger, and gives it a name and a place in the recorded heavens of our constellation. The *à priori* method had found it—had ascertained that it must be—had “determined the bounds of its habitation,” and weighed its influence. It was left for the telescope to respond to the calculation, and *verify* the deductions of science. The subjective and the objective agree; the coalescence of philosophy and fact is realized, and the homogeneity of truth convincingly seen.

From the heavens shall we remove our stand-point to the earth? Why this universal adaptation of mutually compensating elements and principles,—their organic laws,—this specific and unyielding application of them? Why this sympathy of the earth and the atmosphere, for the sustentation of vegetable and animal life? Why is the air adapted to

the lungs, and the lungs to the air? Why is the leaf in oneness with the rootlet, and the rootlet with the leaf? Why will not nature go beyond hybrids? Why this universal organism conspiring in its provisions, to secure defined and unique results? You see it in the wings of the bird, in the fin of the fish, in the structure of the mole that digs in the earth, and of man himself who walks erect upon it. It presents itself in the reciprocities of the animal and vegetable kingdom; in the sciences of geology and chemistry, of anatomy, and physiology, and therapeutics; in that of diseases and their remedy; of production and consumption; of life and death. The generic elements of nature contain it, and work out their results, through an economy of inter-communication and mutual relationship. It is everywhere, in earth, and air, and sky, exhibiting the sympathy of affiliated and dependent truth. If philosophy teaches that *thus* it must be; facts teach that *thus* it is.

There is this harmony, also, in the *ethical* relations of our being. The laws of our *physical* existence are subserved by the requirements of morality and duty. To love God supremely, and our neighbor as ourselves,

which is the sum of the claims of religion, conforms to and promotes the highest development of our individual and social being. The intelligence given us, asks this; mind and conscience will be satisfied with nothing short of this. No man is reconciled to himself, till he is reconciled to God. There can be no intelligent reconciliation of our subjective being, until we come into that rectitude of our objective relations to God and duty, which religion supposes and demands. There is no conscientious and satisfactory quiescence of our spiritual nature before. There, and there only, is repose, and progress, and perfection. Hence, all nations, wittingly or unwittingly, have built their civil codes on this principle, or with greater or less recognition of it, as they had light. Divine law is the basis of human law. International and municipal law rests equally on that basis. Indeed, what element of law is there in the universe, if God is not, and if to love Him with all the heart, and our neighbor as ourselves, be not our duty? All morality sinks into mere questions of prudence,—all reciprocities among men, into merely conventional arrangements, and in them even contain no binding force and ob-

ligation. On the same basis rest the varied courtesies and charities of life. The highest element of religion lies imbedded in the principle of every sentiment of *good-will* among men,—of every kind look and word that we give. Such is the homogeneity of truth,—such the oneness of our moral ties,—such that single cord which binds to God, and to the universe of intelligent beings, each one of the grand fraternity composing it. It is a chord, too, which vibrates in our subjective being, and which thus proclaims the alliance of conscience and reason, with all that Revelation teaches, or religion requires.

Let us analyze this a little. You ask the health of your neighbor; you loan him your umbrella in a rainy day; you invite him to the hospitalities of your fireside and your table. Do you not express a regard for his welfare? Do you not seek his good? Would you not have him think so? Would you not feel scandalized, should he refer your kindness to selfish and sinister designs? Would you not leave the impression with him, that you were disinterestedly doing him a favor? Would not the whole transaction lose its vitality without this element? and would you

not account yourself an arrant hypocrite if you felt no such sentiment, and had no such intention? And what is this but *disinterested benevolence*? what but the *essence* of true virtue, as applied to social life, and the command, 'thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself;' what but a meeting of the second table of the law? Thus it is that we professedly act on the sublimest principles of religion, every hour of the day, in all the intercourse of life, and that we *must* so act, with how much imperfection and hypocrisy I will not say. But you cannot intelligently meet the humblest duty of relative life, without stumbling on the principle of the highest analysis of truth—the highest element of religion. Society cannot exist without that principle, a single moment. We must have it, or ape it, as the common change which passes from hand to hand in all that is man-like, or pleasing, or respectable, or to be endured in the intercourse of life. All that is above meanness, falls into the category of the sublimest principles of religion, and thus verifies the apostolic suggestion, 'whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.' The disinterested benevolence asserted by Hopkins, and the 2d

Edwards, is deferred to, and unwittingly professed, by every polite infidel who walks the streets of Paris, and doffs his cap in the salutations of her Boulevards or market-places. So generic is truth,—so homogeneous. It reaches from God down to the humblest intelligence he has formed,—from the relations of heaven to those of earth,—from those of eternity to those of time. The principles of religion are inherently universal in their application. Man was made for them. His intelligent nature is wronged without their use. They are the necessity of his being. Society must be constructed on the basis of them, and obey their dictates, or, in its working, “grate harsh thunder.” The subjective, the objective,—the present and the eternal,—the phenomenal and the absolute, unite in the one and only foundation of morality which religion prescribes. It is a basis given in the nature of things, in the nature of man, and the necessities of his social being, equally as in the Bible; and this is a conclusion which bears variously and powerfully on the whole design of our proposed course of thought, as well as on the elucidation of the doctrine of the present chapter. It is enough that we now use it

for our present purpose, and see in what lines of light, and with what conclusiveness, it traces the coalescence and harmony of truth.

I take a doctrine of *Christian* ethics. The Gospel exhibits repentance as the prerequisite and indispensable condition of forgiveness. But is this an isolated requisition of merely *Christian* truth, which is found nowhere else? Is it one which has no archetypes in nature, and derives no illustration from the generic laws of society and the human mind? Does the parent forgive his offending child, and express his reconciliation to him, until that child is penitent, and confesses his wrong? Do you forgive your friend while he harbours his wrong against you? Yea, so deeply engraven in us is the conviction that penitence is indispensable to forgiveness, that the overlapping charity of the Gospel must bring a special message in mercy from the throne; 'Love your enemies,'—'Do good to them that despitefully use you and persecute you,' and must bring in a principle of compensation from another feature of truth; to reconcile us to the forgiveness of injuries in such a case,—must say, 'Vengeance is *mine*, I will repay, saith the Lord.' There is, indeed, deep philosophy in

this relation of penitence to the remission of sin. Two objections, at least, would lie against the dispensation of pardon to the impenitent;—it would *compromit authority*, and be dispensed where it would *not be appreciated*. It would take from the sanctions of law, and from the obligations of obedience. It would indeed annihilate the very terms and sanctions of law, and turn it into mere advice and counsel; and then by one further analysis, which the offender would not be slow to institute, would turn that counsel and advice into foolishness. If law and its appropriate penalties are not meet and proper, and to be maintained against those who persist in their wrong, then all advice and counsel in view of it, are equally out of place. Yield the *authority* in the case, and you equally yield all argument in coincidence with it. The one is inconsistent, except as based on the other. Every child in the family,—every youth in the school-room,—every citizen of the State, knows this, and will turn to ridicule all your pretences for authority, if transgression may and must be indiscriminately remitted.—And hence the *second* objection to pardon without penitence. Without penitence, the offender is in no condition

to *receive* forgiveness. He fellowships his wrong,—he maintains his attitude of resistance. He is not reconciled to authority and right, and to forgive him in that state, only endorses his iniquity, and countenances his transgression. It takes his part against law, and annihilates both the ground and the argument for his return in the spirit of obedience and love. Hence the Gospel requisition for penitence and its limitations of forgiveness, fall in with the *generic* laws of the human mind. They do but illustrate the coincidence between prescribed statutes, even the characteristic features of the Gospel, and our own subjective being, and the necessary demands of all truth and righteousness.

We may resort to the *positive* institutions of the Bible, in illustration of the subject before us. Take the law of the Sabbath; the command to rest one seventh portion of time, from the cares and labors of this life, and give ourselves up to the services of religion. All experience shows that this command chimes in with the constitution and nature of both man and beast. Our physical and mental being requires more than the allotted hours of diurnal rest. A whole day must be given

as often as the Sabbatism required in the Bible, in order to the full development and perfection of our earthly state. A thousand collated facts abundantly show that the constitution of man and of the animals that serve him, will break down prematurely, by continuous labor without a Sabbath. The horse, the ox, will do more work, and keep in better condition, on the regimen of six days' labor to the week, than that of seven. Lord Castle-reagh might not have died a maniac in middle life, but for the incessant toils and cares of office, continued without the rest of the Sabbath day. We all notice the freshness and vigor with which the tradesman, the mechanic, the agriculturist, and the day-laborer, lay out their work, and enter upon it, on Monday morning, when the recuperative economy of the Sabbath has refitted them anew for the secular duties of life.

But time would fail, to bring out all the analogies which bear on this subject. It is enough if I but strike some of the chords which vibrate through the domain of all being; if I but show how conversant we are with truths that seek their alliance in the high behests of religion. It is meet to observe this

coalescence of truth,—this oneness of the universe of God,—this harmony of the natural and the revealed in human knowledge. It leads unhesitatingly to the conclusion, that we are but *at home* in the matter of religion,—that the inward and the outward are related to each other in this thing, and that we cannot ignore the instructions communicated to us, without repudiating the moral nature given in us, and that both are obviously from a common source, and are made for each other. Religion, as an economy of thought, is innate with us, and cognate to us, and integrally allied to every branch of knowledge. She sits, of right, as queen in the sisterhood of the sciences, and claims her position and influence in the training of the human mind, and the elucidation of its principles.

The thought in this chapter is integral in the instructions before us. We shall often have occasion to refer to it, as we proceed. It is the base line we shall fall back upon in all our offsets and surveys in the domain of truth. It will ever show our course, and distance and verify the conclusions to which we come. It is the grand *preliminary idea*, in all our investigations. It will suggest every-

where the analogies of truth, and give the circumference of knowledge. By it we may learn generically what can, and what cannot be, and give validity to our inquiries in the right direction. Here we have both latitude and longitude, and the sphere, too, within which inquiry and investigation are legitimate. Our stand-point is in our own subjective being,—the laws of the reason, in harmony with objective truth. The claims of any proposed system would be weak without this: with it, those claims would be irrefragably strong. We cannot deny ourselves, or the constituent being which God has given us, as the finite transcript of His own. Reason has her necessary laws; we cannot ignore them. They are of God, and constitute His intellectual image in us. They are like the exact sciences, of which they are the parent. They contain the analogies of all truth. They are as the radii of the circle; they meet in the centre,—they fall equally into the circumference.

Let us, then, get the benefit of this homogeneity of truth,—this harmony of the elements of knowledge. Let us take it with us in all our inquiries. Let us use it as our gauge and measuring line, in all the heights we

would scale,—in all the depths we would fathom. Like the thread of the fabled Sibyl, it will lead us safe out of every labyrinth, and give us broad and stable footing in every humble attempt to gain the knowledge of God, and of His will concerning us.

CHAPTER III.

GOD IN REASON.

OUR first chapter presented the nature and value of the subject before us, and the sources of light concerning it. In the second was brought up that important preliminary view, which is found in the *generic harmony* of truth, as contained in the *one system* or economy of things, of the *one absolute Jehovah*, and the influence of this view, to correct and guide our inquiries and pursuit after all possible knowledge. Under the tutelage of this principle, I would now take the reader on, the first step of advancement, as found in the *inquiry* respecting the *existence* of God. Authority and obligation have their objective source in Him. The "*religo*" is there. It is in the absolute Jehovah, 'who was before all things, and by whom all things consist,'—the

eternal,—the infinite ‘I am,’—‘without beginning of days, or end of years,’ that we find the rightful emanation of law, and the objective ground of all that religion imposes. Let us, then, take firm footing here. If the principles may but be intelligently grasped, which I shall attempt to present and elucidate in this chapter, much will be gained for our whole course. It is no Corinthian ornament that we now attach. We plant the grand Doric column itself, that is to support the edifice. My readers must go with me here, or I shall fail of their convictions and consent all the way through. There is something of Algebra in every science. If you lose a first principle, you will never comprehend the results of the study, and a mist will settle down in your mind, over that whole department of knowledge. But come with me here to the first elements of knowledge, and help me to lay in its appropriate place this *foundation truth*, and you will find an easier access into all the affiliated and dependent truths which overlie it, and gain a happier insight into all those resultant matters which arrange themselves on the line of our investigations.

Our brief caption to the chapter is—*God in Reason.*

The starting-point of knowledge is in *consciousness*. We are conscious of perceiving objects by the senses,—of feeling emotions and affections within us,—of apprehending the relations of truth, and of reasoning and reflecting upon it. Of this we need no proof. It does not lie within the province of proof or demonstration, which is to bring within our intuition that truth, which in itself lies beyond. But *this is* within it already. It does not want proof, for it already *is experience*. It can be helped by no extrinsic process of reasoning, and no array of argumentative proofs; it is already *sight and feeling*. Its highest possible verification is *that consciousness itself*, which on every subject within its range, is the most legitimate and conclusive element and essence of knowledge.

But thought implies a thinker. If there is thinking done, there is one who does it. If there are emotions and affections, there is one whose properties they are. The attribute inheres in *some* one, of whom it *is* the attribute. Conscious perceiving, feeling, and acting, involves the idea of a substantive being,

who perceives, and feels, and acts, and of whom all the attributes of consciousness are predicable; and we go over infallibly from the facts of consciousness, to the *ontological idea* of our own *valid being*. Mind *is*, for it acts. The adage of the schoolmen we have again, "*Cogito, ergo sum*," "I think, therefore I am." Here, then, we arrive at a *first-truth*; consciousness gives our own valid being—*I am*—*we are*, as already stated. But there is something in that consciousness which not only guarantees the validity of the proposition that *I am*; it gives me the *living* and *felt apprehension* of it, though this is not so universally conceded. I am conscious of *being*, and of having the attributes and powers of a living, acting, and self-controlled agent. I comprehend myself as "*the me*," with its capacities and powers. I have a conscious sense of my own personal existence, capable of the acts ascribed to me, and of which I recognize myself as the author. Thus much is clear in the reason. Let *this*, then, be established in our convictions as an undoubted *first-truth*.

But again; if *I am*, *God is*. His being is the necessary antecedent of mine. How could I be, if He were not? How could any

of us be, but that He is? How could the finite be without the Infinite?—the dependent without the independent; the conditioned, without the unconditioned conditioner; the phenomenal and relative, without the absolute and eternal? As well might you have matter without space,—events without time,—or attributes without a subject,—or a river without banks,—or a valley without hills,—or thinking, without “the me” that thinks.

There is a *chronological order* of truth, and a *logical order*, as before stated. They are not the same. Thinking and acting give the necessary validity of being, and show un-deviatingly that it is. This is the chronological order. It runs from the attribute to the subject of it. But how could I think, if I *were* not? My substantive being is the *logical* antecedent to my thinking, as only he that *is* can *act*. Such is the connection between the finite and the infinite. The finite suggests the infinite, for how could the finite be, were it not for the infinite? Substance suggests the idea of space, for how could you have substance, but for space to put it in? Space, then, is the *logical* antecedent of substance, and is necessary in order to it, though we might have

no idea of space, but for the intervention of substance, to give that idea. Space is in its nature, infinite. Can you bound it? Can you tell where its centre is? Has it sides and angles? A given substance—be it an atom, or a world—marks a somewhere in it, with breadth and thickness, height and depth,—but as the attribute of the substance, not of the space it lies in. It is a finite, cut off, or marked out, in an infinite, and is suggestive of it;—a defined and conditioned somewhere, which could not be, but for the undefined and unconditioned everywhere, *in* which it is. It is the exception, and not the rule. It *is*, because it is put there,—a little matter, thrust out from infinity, with form and color,—a phenomenon,—an event, set out in infinite duration, and suggesting it;—a little universe of some billions of worlds, perhaps, hung out in space somewhere, and some when, in duration,—put there as a conditioned, dependent thing. But it is merely the created and finite of being. It is the exception. It is as nothing to the limitless, the uncreated, the absolute and eternal, which it suggests, and of which it is the offspring and counterpart. Thus the finite involves the infinite, and is but an exception to it.

Recur, for a moment, to the illustration in respect to time. How could you have an event without time in which it should occur? But time is boundless. Can it be measured, backward or forward, viewed as simple duration, and disconnected from events? Has it any middle? The period of an event is but the point of duration at which it occurs, and it suggests the boundless duration which precedes, and which follows it. But without events, there would be no periods. There would be no epochs, if there were nothing to mark them. So that the period is itself the child of the event it chronicles. And so the first event will be in the beginning, wherever on the line of absolute duration it occurs;—and the first verse in the Bible is as philosophical-ly true, as it is scripturally revealed. So dependent conditioned existence, in any form or way, or of any extent, suggests the idea of the independent and unconditioned, and is the *logical consequent* of it. These words,—the finite,—the dependent,—the created,—have no significance, and would be impossible, and the ideas they represent, but for their converse in the independent and unconditioned infinite. As well have thinking without a thinker, as

have created, dependent, relative existence, without the uncreated, the independent, the absolute. One atom of created, dependent matter or being, related to time and space, involves the idea of the existence of the uncreated, independent, absolute Jehovah, as perfectly as a world or a universe. You cannot have an atom, or an event, without the Infinite. The logical condition of it is in the formula, *that God is*. This, indeed, is the logical complement of every thought and idea, on any and every subject. Thus, then, the existence of God is an apprehension of the reason, direct and intuitive. The mind apprehends God, as the eye does colors, or the ear sounds, or the touch hardness, or the taste sweetness, or the smell fragrance. It comes like the conviction that the whole of a thing is greater than a part of it, and equal to the sum of its parts. The idea of God, in the reason, is not so much an *inference*, as an *apprehension*,—not so much a *deduction*, as a *cognition*. It comes up conjunctly with the idea of our own existence, when logically considered, and indissolubly, as the necessary condition of it.

But we are at an *integral* point, and must dwell a little here. It is not properly an in-

ference that substance lies in space. We *see* that it does, and that this can but be so, by a direct and intuitive apprehension. It is not an inference that the whole of a thing is greater than a part of it. We see that it must be so. We directly cognize this relation of a whole to a part, as intuitively necessary, and that it cannot be otherwise. So with all necessary truth. So with the being of God. It is a necessary cognition of the reason. Reason would not be reason, without giving forth this idea, and thus apprehending God. This is its inherent function, as much as it is that of the eye to see, or the ear to hear. Hence, it is strictly true, as Jesus declares, that we do *know* God,—that His existence is a necessary idea of the reason, which sees that it cannot but be that He is. Finite dependent existence being given, as it infallibly is in consciousness, the supposition of the non-being of God can be but an utter absurdity. We do not here adduce the doctrine of cause and effect, in the usual form, or the argument appropriately founded on it. That will come up in its place, as a corroborative element, and be another illustration of the homogeneity of truth. Our subject here is, *God in the Rea-*

son,—the absolute, the infinite, as cognized in the necessary laws of the intelligence in us. And I wish it not to be regarded in the light of an argument simply, or a proof of the existence of God; but more, *much* more, as the intuitive apprehension of it, as that which cannot but be, and that, to suppose the contrary, would be the veriest solecism. His being is attained by the *insight* of the intelligence which He has given us, as the offspring and likeness of His own, and the finite expression of it. Reason gets the idea of God, as sense does that of colors, and that each is what it is, and not the other. Any attempt at argument only weakens the position of reason on the subject. It is like attempting to prove that sugar is sweet, or acids sour, or the sun luminous, or harmony agreeable. How would you prove that sugar is sweet? How would you give just the impression of it which you have, to one who has never tasted it? You would be awkwardly set to work. You would fail of your object. It is not a matter of proof. It is not a conclusion arrived at by a process of proof. It is an apprehension,—an experience,—a vision,—a taste, and must be got at in that way, and in no other. And yet you

know that sugar is sweet; you have no doubt on that subject, and you have only to ask your friend to taste it, and he will find it so. Such is the characteristic of all first, all necessary truths. They are *seen*, not *proved*. They are *apprehended*, and not *inferred*. They stand before the intelligence in their own light. The knowledge here is more direct and immediate than by proof and demonstration. All the object of proof and demonstration is to bring truth into the category of intuitions in some form, so that the intelligence apprehends them to be as stated. And this is just the position of the idea of God, already before the reason. Given but "the me," and it comes of course as the logical antecedent of it, as a necessary first-truth, and in all the *perfectness* of such a truth. Hence, we affirm that the existence of God is *comprehended* in the reason. She may not *measure* the full content in the *perfection* of His being, but she *infallibly knows that He is*; so that what Jesus asserts as the revealed personification of God, is strictly true,—'Ye know Him, and have seen Him.' We may infallibly know that *that* is which we cannot comprehend.

Again. *Reason apprehends the spiritual*

personality of God. We may go from the finite to the Infinite, as well as come from the Infinite to the finite. Intelligence is intelligence in both. Reason is Reason in God, in angel, and in man, and alike in its attributes. It has mutual response and correspondence, and homogeneity everywhere, and is the ultimate appeal. When God speaks, He expects *us* to understand Him, but not the brutes or trees. He has made but one Bible,—has given but one conscience, and will hold to but one accountability. The true, and the right, and the good are so to Him, as they are to us. We hold fellowship, and enter into communion with Him as we do not with the brute, or inert matter. He is our Heavenly Father, and the sentiment of allegiance and obligation to Him is in our conscience and our souls. There is a correspondent identity and likeness of spiritual being here, that is not less a dictate of reason than it is a declaration of the Bible. It is taught in all the elements and relations of the finite reason. It is given in all its introspections within, and all its observations without. If spiritual personality be in us, and in finite being, much more in Him who made us and all things, and whose we are. Moreover, this

is inherent in the doctrine of cause, as given in the insight of reason.

Matter is merely dependent effect,—it *is*, and continues only as it is made to be “*ab extra*.” Will is the only cause. Mind contains the only element of power. Self-motion,—the going forth of a “*nisus*,” or effort from oneself, is an element of intelligence alone, and most of all in God. His goings forth are everywhere. The universe is instinct, with an intelligent causality, which must have its source in Him.

God is apprehended in the reason as above nature, and the author and disposer of it, acting from the behests of His own spiritual being in a true and intelligent personality, which, in the infinite, is the converse of our own, and of which our own is but the created and dependent offspring and outgrowth. Ours is intelligence in the finite, and a derivative of uncreated and infinite intelligence.

Again. *Reason asserts the UNITY of God.* All the demands of the subject,—all the reasons for the finite,—the created,—the dependent,—the phenomenal,—all the necessities of the case are met and exhausted, in the idea of *one* God; and it is a rule of logic not to

ask more reasons than the nature of the case demands. Besides, how could there be two infinite beings? How could the mind get the idea? . It is obviously impossible and absurd. They would run together and be one. Can you get the idea in respect to space and duration? The supposition is a solecism. The absolute, the unconditioned, the necessary, involve the idea of the limitless, the universal, the exclusive. Such a coincidence,—such a harmony and likeness, would be demanded in the case, as effectually to exclude *all duality*, and bring us back to the simple cognition of reason and dictate of Revelation, that ‘there is *one* God.’

Again. *Reason cognizes God, as a. PERFECT being.* She declares not only that He is,—has personality, and is *one*, but that He possesses *infinitely all intelligent and moral perfections.* Imperfection attaches to the limited and phenomenal, and is confined to them. In the created and dependent forms of existence alone, is it possible. Perfection is a characteristic of the necessary and the absolute. See this in the pure mathematics and in morals. Instruments may not construct a perfect triangle, but reason has the idea of one, and

that it contains just the degrees of the semi-circle,—that this is true of all triangles,—precisely so, and must be, universally, and forever; and on a few axiomatic elements, constructs that stupendous science which ranges through all height and distance, and gives all the measurements in space. Here lies the doctrine of numbers, and the reason why you march with perfect assurance through the most intricate combinations and processes of pure science, to an unalterable and undeviating result.

So in ethical truth, *right* is precisely what it is, neither more nor less. Any deviation from it is wrong; any variation of it destroys it. All necessary truth has this attribute, as cognized by the reason, whether in mathematics or morals, or substantive being. Thus it apprehends God and the infinity of His perfections, and that it cannot but be that He has all perfection in an infinite degree. One deviating axiom would bring to nought the whole economy of the abstract sciences, and reduce to chaos the domain of pure truth. But this the mind cannot conceive to be possible. We know it cannot be. So the infinite and absolute of being, must be right and good,

—perfectly good,—infinitely good,—must have all the perfections of power and wisdom and goodness that nature and the Bible illustrate in God.

But there is a further process of logic, which would verify, if need be, the conceptions of the pure reason on this subject. Wrong is the infraction of right,—‘Sin is the transgression of the law.’ It supposes law, then, and right, and truth, and duty, and obligation as already in being, when it occurs, and on its first occurrence. It involves the idea of a righteous Lawgiver as already existing, whose will it assails, and whose authority it violates. It *can* be, then, only where a moral system is *already* established,—where law and order and right are;—in a word, where *God* is already. You do not find the Deity within the possible limits of wrong. It must be in its order of place after and below Him. It is *logically* impossible, that God should not be a good being. Sin must be, as the Bible describes it to be, an outbreak of subordinate agents in the dominions of one infinitely perfect and good. God must be, and have a moral system, and there must be the relations established of Creator and created,—of authority

and duty ; before the existence of sin is logically possible. 'Where no law is, there is no transgression,' as an Apostle asserts. Transgression and wrong can be hypothecated only on these conditions ;—And this presents a beautiful illustration of the unity of truth,—its generic harmony, from whatever quarter approached and canvassed. Logic and reason here coalesce in the statements of the Bible. Independent witnesses as they are, they fall into the very categories of Revelation.

But there is more in this reference to the logic of the case than we have yet presented. It has bearings on questions in religion, in philosophy, and morals, quite beyond what we may now discuss. It places sin in the phenomenal and conditioned ;—it shows us that to suppose it to exist in the uncreated and absolute, is a solecism,—that it is not so much a principle as an act,—that it is not so properly a substratum, as a voluntary state and attitude of the will,—that it cannot be without those conditions, which are incident to an existence which is begun and finite, and of course that the idea of an original, independent, uncreated, *malevolent* being, is the veriest absurdity.

A further thought is in place, and which we

must not wholly overlook. It is one which grows out of the relation of cause and effect. The idea referred to is not so much that effects demand adequate causes ;—a subject which will come fairly up in illustration of the being and perfections of God, from the magnitude and diversity of His works ; but that *any effect*, proves a first cause, which of course, as being *first* is *without cause*. Exhaust the catalogue of effects, and of dependent causes in the universe, and you do not find the answer which any fact demands in respect to its cause and the reason of its being. Creation *is*, and reason describes it, as conditioned and dependent, and as being by reason of a cause beyond itself ;—in a word, describes it as a *creation* and demands a cause for it, which is in no sense an effect, and therefore a first cause, and hence itself uncaused and absolute, and without beginning in its being. But you find a difficulty in grasping the idea of uncaused existence. Suppose you do, you see it *must* be, notwithstanding this difficulty in your comprehending it. A first cause there must be, or there is no second. But a second there is, you have it in "*the me*"—you get it in self-consciousness. A second cause there is, and of course a first.

The dependent demonstrates the independent, —the created gives the uncreated. Besides, you find difficulty in grasping the idea of caused, dependent existence. Folios of learned controversy have been written on the question, whether matter is eternal or not in its elements, and much learned folly evinced in the premises.

Even Dr. Chalmers, in Scotland, and Dr. Hitchcock, of Amherst, in this country, evade an issue on the subject, and turn yieldingly to the marks of design in the present conformations of matter to descry the divine hand. But so far as the question about the eternity of matter has any significance at all, it would seem to be one of very easy solution. Let the question be resolved into that of the *dependent* existence of matter, and the answer is contained in about the terms that ask it.

Thus, whatever cast we take of the subject before us, reason asserts the Deity. It finds the independent, the uncreated, the unconditioned, the absolute, the infinite, ‘*I am,*’ anywhere, and everywhere. We cannot have one thought or emotion, without seeing in the logical connections of that thought or emotion, that God is, and is, ‘from everlasting

to everlasting, the same, yesterday, to-day, and forever.'

Nor let it be supposed that we give undue emphasis to the declarations of reason, in respect to the existence of God, and the truth of religion. It is God's offspring, and should recognize Him. It is 'in His image, and after His likeness,' and should hold this intimate correspondence and communion with Him. It is that, to which He makes known Himself, and should, and must be in immediate communication with Him. It is that, without which the being of God would have no significance to us, and we might herd 'with the beasts that perish.' If the being of God is not conveyed in the necessary ideas of the reason, then may it be adequately conveyed in no other way. In no other way do we reach the infinite, the uncaused, the eternal, '*I am.*' It must be a conception of reason however derived. All nations get their apprehension of a Supreme Being in this office-work of reason, whether by introspection they recognize the method of the idea and of its possession, or not. Man, as man has it, and he cannot quench it by all the depravities of his heart, or all the

vinces of society. It is in his conscious being. "The me" shows it. You cannot have "the me" without it. The whole system of ethical philosophy is based here, and radiates hence.

This office-work of reason is authenticated by the Bible. I make the reference now as before, without respect to the question of its being a Divine Revelation. My object will be answered without including that idea. The Bible opens with the declaration, 'In the beginning *God created* the heavens and the earth.' It assumes His being as already known to reason, and refers only to what He did. It institutes no formulas of proof respecting His being. It accepts the idea and knowledge of His existence as already in the reason, and only speaks of His purposes and promises, and works, and ways; thus manifesting His attributes and showing forth His glory. What more could it do? What more could a Revelation do for us, in respect to the being of God? If the idea of God is not correlative of finite being, and projected in the reason, can it be placed there by any objective methods of instruction? Can you give it to the brute? Why not? The brute has no

mental eye to see Him,—is without “discourse of reason” to apprehend and know Him.

Two somewhat practical reflections seem in place in the close of this chapter.

1st. The conviction, that the being of God is an apprehension of the reason, direct, intuitive, and necessary; gives *vitality* to that sense of His presence at all times which religion teaches. We run not after the idea through lengthened processes of argument, and find it suspended at the end of a complex demonstration, or as can be only approximated there; but like the prophet of Israel, we are enabled to say, ‘Now I behold thee, and mine eye seeth thee.’ The idea of God becomes not so much an inference as a vision of the intellect,—not so properly a deductive conclusion, as an ever-present knowledge. We see Him, and do know Him. Anywhere and everywhere, ‘the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly *seen*, being understood (apprehended) by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead.’ The ideas of the reason, then, not only comprehend the declarations of the Bible at this point, but coalesce with the songs of poetry, and find rocks, hills, and vales, vocal

with praise to Him, who is the Creator and Lord of all.

2d. *Its advantage in prayer.* There is an appositeness in addressing God, if He has thus put Himself in communication with us. If reason apprehends Him,—if our intelligence beholds Him,—if it comprehends His being, and sees intuitively and perfectly that it cannot but be that *He* is, and is the infinitely perfect, present Jehovah;—how correlative,—how connatural is prayer,—how lifelike our approaches unto God,—our adoration of Him,—our confession of sins in His ear,—our imploring of forgiveness,—our acknowledgment of His goodness, and the commitment of our interests and ourselves into His hands. There is a vitality and naturalness,—a nearness and communion in this, that is all its own. There is a vividness and reality concerning the being of God, found here, which is well worthy of the effort after those higher analyses of our spiritual being, which our subject imposes, and which will give it. May we, then, *covet* this conviction of God in the reason,—this vision and knowledge of Him, as there declared, and, like the solid granite of nature,

may it underlie all the processes and superpositions which we have yet to lay upon it.*

* The recent works of Sir William Hamilton, and of his disciple, Dr. Mansel, of Oxford, and the extended and searching reviews of them, by Professors Hickok and Smith, and others, in the "Quarterlies" of this country, give to the subject of this chapter special interest at the present time, and sustain the prominence that we yield to it in its place in this volume. See also the more general view given in the thirteenth chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

GOD IN HIS WORKS.

THE being of God is integral, in a moral system. It is fundamental in the question of religion. It is as the base to the superstructure,—as the granite foundations of the ‘everlasting mountains.’ You cannot get the idea of authority, without that of God, and by consequence, not the sentiment of religion as a completed idea; and the theme of our present work, without it, would be destitute of significance or object.

The mind, as constituted, must have the idea, but there would be no objective correlate to it, on which it could rest. Hence we begin, as the first step of our inquiry, with the consideration of the *divine* in being,—of the Jehovah himself. Our last chapter was en-

titled, "*God in Reason.*" This we shall denominate, "*God in His Works.*" Did we know nothing of God, but as illustrated in His works, doubt might well be silenced, and our souls invoked to gratitude and praise. The universe is the product of His wisdom, and power, and goodness; and the strain of the Psalmist is always in place, 'O Lord, how manifold are thy works, in wisdom hast thou made them all; the earth is full of thy riches.'

But, as stated in the last chapter, there is a deep background to the picture,—a befitting substratum for all the lines of beauty and sublimity depicted on it. In the first nestlings of "the me" within us,—in the first act or instance of self-consciousness, we get the validity of the Infinite,—the absolute,—the Eternal,—the Jehovah,—and comprehend the necessary being of God. We cannot move a step among His works, or look within, upon our own conscious being, without the ever-abiding implication that *He is*,—the ever-constant conviction of the existence and infinite perfections of the Deity. The argument for the being and perfections of God, from His works, in this chapter, becomes, then, but a detail of

proofs and illustrations, copious, rich, varied, and convincing, though they be, of that which is already developed and known, with the logical certainty of pure science, in the intuitions of the reason. This being our starting-point, then,—this our vantage-ground, with what ease, and freedom, and assurance, may we examine the “footprints of the Creator,” in the things which He has made,—with what luxury go forth to the vision of God, in the works of His hand.

The illustrations of our subject, from the source here indicated, bear equally on the question of the *existence*, the *unity*, and the *perfections* of God, and on all that religion demands concerning Him. But in a region so vast,—so varied,—so full of concentric thought,—in constellations of light so distinct, and outspread, and inviting;—in a mine of truth so deep, and every way exhaustless; what can be adequately accomplished in the compass of one short chapter, which is all that can now be yielded to it. I shall put over, to a subsequent place in the work, the more connected view of *natural religion*, as harmonizing with *revealed*, and combine as much as may be, the

testimony of our immediate subject, on the several points of the inquiry before us.

Turn, then, to those declarations of the being and perfections of God, and the doctrine of our accountability to Him, which visible nature and providence, and we ourselves, in our own subjective constitution, disclose. I shall select a few instances and verifications from these varied sources, and with all that brevity of induction and illustration which my purposed limits demand.

1st. *The BEING of God, as taught in His works.* But here remember, that a pebble proves it as fully as a world,—a mote in the sunbeam as perfectly as Jupiter with his satellites, or Saturn with his rings. The difference is, that while the first is equally legitimate and conclusive, the latter is more stupendous and imposing. If the grain of sand at your feet, in its dependence and humility, speaks with ultimate and perfect decision for the independent, all-creating, '*I am;*' the voice of assembled worlds is more commanding,—the origination of suns and systems,—of all that the night or the telescope,—all that astronomy reveals, is more absolutely overwhelming. How came it? Who put it in space, and

keeps it there? It *is*, and yet it did not originate itself. It could be but by creation, for it is dependent and phenomenal. It is conditioned. It is made. It is a thing. It was created, and put where it is, by a power beyond itself. It is here obviously by reason of one who is self-existent, un-derived, absolute. Effects demand adequate causes. Take in, then, the idea of the created universe,—its communicated laws and movements, and attributes and end, so far as known,—and what a being is God? ‘The thunder of His power who can understand?’ No expression more terse or pregnant with meaning, can be used here, or one more graphically true to nature and reason, than that with which the Bible opens: ‘In the beginning,’—(beginning, surely, for what could mark time before creation?)—‘In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.’

But that universe which gives the being of God, gives His *perfections* also. We have already alluded to the attribute of power as it stands, the symbol, and embodiment of all the natural perfections of the Deity. The revelations of astronomy are here also, it may be, the most overpowering. Of the might,

implied in that creating fiat, which spoke the universe into existence,—which holds it in space, and underlies its movements and functions, we may not adequately conceive. The words of Job are here most eloquent and appropriate: ‘Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is high as heaven, what canst thou know? deeper than hell, what canst thou do?’ Here is omnipotence in its might, and *omnipresence* too. The universe is dependent in its history, as well as its creation. ‘There is no power but of God.’ Even infinity could not create independent being. Reason cannot apprehend the idea. It is a solecism in logic and in terms. All things depend on God, constantly. He must be everywhere, always. The dependent universe demands the omnipresence and omniscience of God, in every condition and attribute of it. The ubiquity, and upholding hand of God is inscribed on all that lives, and moves, and is. Not a leaf trembles in the forest, or an atom crumbles from the mountain, but that He is. He acts from law, but law is nothing without Him. It has no inherent original vitality or power. It is but the term by which we express the uni-

formity of the divine operation. What would be the law of gravitation without the presence and power of Him who ordained it? So with all the laws of nature, in all their combinations and complexity, and to the full extent to which science reveals them. They describe but the omnipresence of the Deity, in the infinitude of His knowledge and power.

2d. Nature reveals the *moral attributes* of God. His works illustrate His wisdom, justice, goodness, and truth.

To this subject we may remember, that we come, bringing with us the recorded verdict of reason, in respect to God,—that it cannot be that He is perfectly holy, and just, and good,—and that there is a logical absurdity in the idea, that the absolute and uncreated—the infinite Jehovah,—is otherwise than infinitely perfect in being, attribute, and character;—that sin is in the phenomenal,—wrong is the resistance of right,—that the mind cannot conceive of it, but where the relations of authority and duty are established; and that reason infallibly comprehends the existence of those spiritual attributes in God, which it is our privilege and our pleasure

to see described everywhere on the face of His works.

The *wisdom* of God,—that connecting link between the physical and spiritual of all perfection, shines out from the bosom of all His works,—in the depth and richness of design,—in the consummate skill of contrivance and execution,—in the adaptation of parts to wholes,—in the wonderful mechanism and movements of the universe. The subject scarce needs a reference. It is brought out in all the teachings of the telescope on the one hand, and of the microscope on the other. It is taught in admiring perfection in the human eye itself,—so delicate,—so combined,—so accurately adjusted to all the laws of optics, and to the whole economy of vision. When this organ, though one of many of equal instruction in the human frame alone, is investigated by the instruments of science, and on the principles of science, how suggestive is it of the inspired interrogation: ‘He that formed the eye, shall He not see? and He that formed the ear, shall He not hear?’

In respect to the *moral attributes* of God, in their *appropriately ethical relations*, three preliminary suggestions are in place. The in-

structions of nature are not given in the form of *express propositions*,—we see not the *end* yet;—the present is a *probationary* economy. These positions scarcely need elucidation, and they combine to direct and modify our expectations of light on all moral questions, from the teachings of natural religion. Her lessons lie embedded in the works of God,—they are deduced from the operations of His hand. From their very nature, they are less determinate, and conclusive thereby. They are to be drawn from a system and movement of things not fully studied,—not fully understood by us. They are to be gathered from the current economy of His works, not yet completely and finally issued. We are yet not in the “beginning of the end.” The works of God we can look at but from one point of observation, and under but one law of manifestation on their part, and that, perhaps, but an incipient and preparatory one. There may be, and reason and revelation say there are, resultant and retributive dispensations not yet reached, which form part of the whole, and in the light of which, the works and character of God should be fully seen. The connected system should be viewed in its integrity, in

order to the fullest apprehension of the moral laws which govern it, and adequately to see God's great end in all things.

But do we not now trace the moral perfections of God in his works? In their construction, arrangement, and evident tendency, and obvious ongoing, do we not get unequivocal responses that He is holy and true, benevolent and good? Are they not outspoken everywhere, and more in number than we can record, and ready, on every hand, to verify the declarations of reason and the Bible?

1st. The fact of a *conscience* in man. I have not spoken distinctly of the human mind as the product of the divine, or of the testimony thence derived, for the creating energy and wisdom of God; but I now present its moral constitution, as evincing that of its Author. This is first adverted to, because its voice may of right be supposed to be the most decisive and ultimate,—because it is part of our own subjective being, which will henceforth last through all dispensations, and be adapted not only to probation, but its results, in that retributive state which it anticipates.

Conscience is the faculty of moral judg-

ment, and of the conviction of obligation and duty, in view of what is felt to be right. It is adjunct with reason as the discerner of right, and an element of it, perhaps, in respect to moral distinctions. It is a feature of our substantive being, created in us, acting in its own right, on laws inherent in us, and from which we cannot flee. It thus discriminates in respect to the right, and convicts us of obligation to do right. It convicts of wrong, and brings a sense of compunction into the soul when we do wrong. It acknowledges the force of authority in righteous law, and the obligation of obedience to it. The sense of praise, or blame-worthiness in view of conduct and character, vests in the conscience. It accuses of guilt for transgression and crime, lashes the soul with remorse and anguish for its misdeeds, and fills it with forebodings of deserved wrath. Thus Shakespeare, in Macbeth's cowering before his conscience, in respect to the concerted murder of Duncan, when a guest under his roof:

“ He's here in *double trust*.

First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,—
Strong both, against the deed ;—then, as his host,
Who should against his murderer shut the door ;

Not bear the knife myself. Besides, this Duncan
 Hath borne his faculties so meek,—hath been
 So clear in his great office, that his virtues
 Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued, against
 The deep damnation of his taking off.”

So, after the deed :

“How is it with me, when every noise appals me.
 Guiltiness will speak, though tongues were out of use.”

In Henry VI., also :

“Suspicion always haunts the guilty mind,—
 The thief doth esteem each bush an officer.”

How apposite, too, the words of Solomon :
 ‘The wicked flee when no man pursueth ; but
 the righteous are bold as a lion.’

The repose of the soul in the conscious
 rectitude of its state and conduct, is well ex-
 pressed in the lines that follow :

“ I feel within me
 A peace above all earthly dignities,
 A still and quiet conscience.”

Hence, too, there is in us, a foundation for
 gratitude,—for discerning right and wrong

in others, and following on them the righteous results of conduct and character. Law is con-natural to us, and penalty and retribution. We have thus in ourselves the microcosm of a moral system. Moral government, with all its distinctions, is that to which we are adapted in our whole spiritual being.

Whence, then, is all this, if it be not a transcript of the moral nature of God?—if it be not that ‘we are made in His likeness, and after His image?’ These spiritual elements, in their perfection in God himself, are *that*, in Him, which is adapted, and alone adapted, to the moral nature which He has given us.

If God is not holy, and just, and good,—if all spiritual perfections dwell not in Him,—if the archetypes of all these incipient qualities in us, be not in their Author,—if He who gave them to us, has them not in infinite perfection in Himself,—then, indeed, are they in their orphanage here, without a response or an object. But further, they could not be in us, without being in Him. Their rightful and binding presence *here*, involves the idea of their being *there*. But for their existence in God, they are out of place, and delusive in us. They can be, in us, but transcripts of the

same as infinite perfections in the Most High. What but righteousness and goodness in God can command my obedience and love. But I am made to obey righteous authority, and to love goodness and truth,—to tremble, in view of wrong doing, and to have my bosom swell with emotions of grateful praise to Him on high, who ‘doeth all things well.’ The moral perfection of God is that which alone gives validity to the conscience planted in our own bosoms. This oneness of the moral elements, in the Creator and the created of intelligence, is that, the denial of which strikes at the very vitality of a moral system, and leaves creation without an object or an end. As reason affirms the moral perfections of God to be a logical necessity, so does our own moral nature demand their infallible existence and coherence in Him.

I have dwelt somewhat on the voice of reason and conscience, in this inquiry into the moral attributes of the Jehovah, because, if that voice speaks clearly and authoritatively in the premises, as surely it does, we may well rest the question upon it, nor prolong our investigations with any doubting state of mind, wistfully, elsewhere. It is a question between

God and ourselves ; and if settled definitively in the substantive idea of God and ourselves, reason certainly is satisfied, and conscience, too, and an issue fairly and fully gained, and a valid verdict made up.

But we pass to a very brief reference elsewhere, that we may see the concentric lines of light on the subject.

The wisdom and goodness of God are impressed on the material universe, and on the features of its history and progress hitherto. The great, leading aspects and tendencies of His works are good. There is not only wise adaptation, but there are benevolent aims and results. The sun stands in the centre of the solar system, to balance, enlighten, and warm it. The earth revolves in its orbit, and on its axis, to give every change of season, and that of day and night, for activity and rest. The revelations of geology show that the earth has long been in processes of preparation for the habitation of man. Its rocks and metals have been fused, and thrown up within his reach. Its magazines of fuel were laid by for him in their quiet depositories ;—the solid crust of the earth, disintegrated by the action of air and water, and soils formed ; hills up-

lifted, and valleys scooped out, and the surface furrowed with rivers,—beautified and blessed with lakes and oceans, for his benefit.

There is progressive development, and that development is in the direction of larger moral results, and indicative of wise and benevolent design.

Unhappiness in responsible beings, is the consequence of sin in the system. Moral wrong precedes physical ills in it. Unmixed happiness, in this world of sinful intelligence, would be no proof of rectitude in God. There must be marks of His displeasure,—testimonies of His abhorrence of wrong, and of His disciplinary providence. But even thus conditioned, what a constant service of kindness and forbearance, and efforts of love abound! Misery is incidental to the system, and the consequence of ill-desert in us, and not its primordial lineaments and drift. Teeth are made to eat with, and not to ache. Food is not only needful for us, but pleasant to the taste. The landscape is clothed with beauty, and the air loaded with fragrance, and the evidences of kind, and good design, hung out everywhere on the face of the creation.

The objections to the benevolence of God,

from the manifestations of His works, are easily solved. Death is essential to life. Tornadoes and earthquakes have their beneficial tendencies and results. It is to be remembered, that God's economy here, is that of a righteous and good being, in a fallen, sinful world. It is an incipient, probationary season, looking on beyond itself to final results. Evidences of divine displeasure must be, so far as man is concerned, and to him the questions of morality are confined. The doctrine of desert and distributive punishment may not fully obtain here, but there must be infliction, suffering, and discipline. This feature of a moral administration must crop out even here. If God be good and righteous, there will be this incipient retribution in the present, and especially in the divine conduct toward states and nations, which, as such, have no after existence. The great features impressed on the present system, in this respect, cannot be mistaken; and if vice seems triumphant sometimes, and virtue unrewarded, it is no more than we might expect in the outset of a moral economy.

There are oscillations and compensations in the physical system of the universe, which

all, in the end, are accurately adjusted. In the vegetable kingdom, there is 'first the blade, then the ear, and after that the full corn in the ear.' The long-suffering of God toward man, is an evidence that He is good; and if this be a period of preparatory and probationary being, as all within and all around lead us to conclude, then the discipline and corrections,—the monitions and approximations to a perfect moral system observed here, are manifestly consonant with such a state of being, and with those perfections in God, which religion asserts.

We come, then, with freedom and assurance, to our conclusion in this chapter.

Reason declares there is the one only living and true God. In this His works unite. Conscience, as a sentiment of religion within us, demands the one supreme source of authority and law, and responds infallibly to the idea of the one God over all. All effects in nature can be accounted for on the ground of the one all-sufficient cause. The physical universe has one economy of principles and laws. It evidently sprang from one eternal mind, and is guided by one unerring hand. All seeming subordinate complexity, is within

the sphere of a mighty and august unity. Such is the lesson from nature and providence always. Geology may take us back myriads of ages, and even then, the same economy of the material universe existed,—the same physical and chemical agents were at work, as now,—the same marks of igneous and aqueous action,—the same gases, and the same laboratories in nature to secure results,—progressive, and yet homogeneous. The same checks and balances, and uniformity of laws, worked out results declaratory of the perfections of God, and of the great ends which religion supposes.

It is not claimed, here, that the instructions of natural religion are at all points obvious and conclusive, or that they are full, authoritative, and sufficient. The voice of reason and conscience, as an element of our own *subjective being*, is conclusive in respect to the existence, the unity and perfections of God, and in that voice the objective universe coincides.—The instructions of reason and conscience that universe illustrates. As a ministering handmaid, it conserves the cause of absolute truth. It exhibits unity of design,—harmony of operation,—benevolent tendencies, and righteous results. It acknowledges

that we are yet but in the opening scene of a moral administration, and points us on by all the laws of movement and progress, to a resultant future. It anticipates further light; and in the law of its own development, as well as from the necessities of the case, bespeaks for man a *Revelation* from God, and thus *foreshadows* the subject to which we shall be led in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V.

GOD IN REVELATION.

OUR course, thus far, has lain within the province of natural religion. We have listened to the voice of reason, and the works of God. The existence and perfections of God are first-truths of the intelligence, and are infallibly given there. It comprehends His existence as the necessary and logical antecedent of our own. Conscience, and our subjective being as a whole, proclaim it, while in the creation and history of the visible universe, God is clearly seen, and His infinite perfections illustrated.

We pass, then, to the next subject of inquiry, which is, *God in Revelation*.

Our first position here, is, that the idea of a Revelation from God is connatural to the human mind. Such a fact would be no way

anomalous or discordant with what is familiar to us from the dealings of God in creation and providence. It should not be regarded by us as a strange proceeding,—unique, peculiar, and not to be expected,—and one which bears no analogies to the other works of the Supreme Being.

The ideas of the reason, respecting God, are a *revelation* of Him to us, intuitive and direct; and it may not be thought unaccountable that He should hold direct correspondence in other ways with the intelligence which He has given us, if need be, and that for the benefit of the race, 'Holy men of God *should speak* as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.' There is no ascertained objection, difficulty, or presumption against it, when duly attested. We are capable of receiving influences from without, and liable to them. We act under those influences continually, from other and subordinate agents. It is a law of mind thus to act, and if so, why not act under *divine* influence? And if open to influences from God, on our minds, why not to *intelligence* direct from Him to us, if He choose, and choose through us to authenticate that intelligence to others.

Nature is a *revelation from God*. All His works reveal His being and attributes, and bring intelligence concerning Him. Everywhere, in earth, air, and sky, is He manifested. 'The invisible things concerning Him, from the foundation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead.'

Creation is *itself* a divine manifestation. The successive changes in the races of plants and animals, in the earth's history, are new and fresh manifestations of the existence of God. Geology brings up its lessons from the deep bowels of the early planet, and writes out for us the history of unmeasured ages past. The formation of man, and his mission here, are a new development of the divine hand, fraught with fresh instruction concerning the Deity. It was a novel step in the progress of divine manifestations. The earth had not seen such a thing. It introduced here a moral system, and all the ethical relations and responsibilities of created intelligence. We are every day learning new lessons from the varying hues and aspects of the things that are seen. It is divine manifestation. It is God in history and in providence.

Again. The *goodness* of God, in the earthly economy, foreshadows a revelation beyond it, if need be. Man is made of body and soul. He has a spiritual, as well as a physical existence. Shall God care only for the body? Shall all His goodness be exhausted, in a provision for merely temporal wants? Reason teaches that the body is for the sake of the soul,—that this ephemeral, earthly economy, can but be inceptive and preparatory to one more enduring,—more final,—more pregnant with results, growing out of relations and conditions instituted here.

Reason and conscience,—this transitory, evanescent scene of things for man,—this unfinished providence in respect to the individual life of man, or the life of the race,—all plead for,—all demand a future of our being, and more intelligence concerning it than is here seen in nature and providence. Our moral nature is outraged if this little life be the all of us. Reason sees not an *object* in what *is*, if there be not more to come. From the infinite depths of the past there arises a voice, proclaiming an immortal future, and imploring information concerning it.

But there is a further necessity for this,

springing from the *lapsed condition* of man. We need not a revelation to show that our race is now depraved, and sinful, and that this must have been by *apostasy* from God; but we *do* need one, to show what is His will, and what His arrangements concerning us now. Is He good, as nature indicates, and reason sees? Is He benevolent and gracious in His intentions toward man, apostate? and is there a way in which He *can* be just, and yet forgive and restore to favor him who has sinned? Has He an economy of mercy, honorable to law, and yet available for man? Is there redemption for us? Is this a probation, as it would otherwise seem to be that it is,—and are there ‘New heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness,’—and is that retribution, which conscience asserts, and providence here presages, a divine and overt reality to which we are destined? How needful to know it! How apposite an express revelation of it, distinct and authoritative, and duly authenticated? This would be just what was to be expected of God, in condescension to our wants, our darkness, and our woes. It is the boon that nature and reason would anticipate from Him. It is but doing for the

soul what, in this earthly economy, He does for the body. It is the forth-going in another direction, of what we see in the rain and sunshine,—in the seed-time and the harvest,—and in the constant working out of the great problems of this life, for the comfort of man, in the progressive manifestation of the perfections of God.

Such a revelation, we might expect, would be attended with appropriate *marks* of *authenticity*. God would set His seal upon it, and sufficiently attest to reason that it *is* from Him. It will not be anomalous, either. It will transcend our previous knowledge, in the information it gives, and bring out features of truth, before placed in comparative obscurity, but will not be absurd, or false to the laws of being and of belief, which God has given us. It will be a revelation *to* reason, and our spiritual being, of what we should not otherwise know. It will take its stand in the *elements* of knowledge with which we are already familiar, but then it will carry the mind on beyond them. It will be connatural, but then it will be supernatural also. It will rise up into informations which reason could not attain, but which, when given, reason will

appreciate, and conscience approve. It is,—it can be,—but a new manifestation of that *one* God, whom reason apprehends, and nature illustrates. There will be a harmony, then, in that Revelation, with the laws of our own intelligent existence, which will be acknowledged so far as the subject-matter of the Revelation is studied and understood. There is,—there can be but *one* God,—one in reason,—in nature and revelation,—and all science, natural and revealed, does, and must, illustrate *Him*. And hence, an authentic revelation should be welcomed by us. The idea of it is not exotic,—not foreign to the mind. A Revelation from God is matter of obvious inference, from reason and His works. It is a *desideratum*: our necessities implore it. We gain nothing by captious objections to it. We cannot get away from conscience. Reason holds us to the stern necessities of truth. A moral system is on us. It lies in the very terms of our being. The claims of natural religion are inwrought in the woof of our existence. A Revelation does but bring out sunlight upon those principles and relations which pervade our whole moral structure, and by its informations, give vitality and object

to all that is inherent and essential in the soul.

We can forecast, also, what shall be the appropriate credentials and authenticity which will attend on a revelation from God. It is part of a moral system. It comes in kind ministry to our *spiritual* wants. It will be commended to our *understandings* and *moral judgments*. It will be in communication with the laws of belief that are in us, and the conscientious convictions that are a part of us. These marks will be found in what it contains, and on those outward manifestations in its behalf, which God may see to be needful, and suited to this basis of conviction. These must transcend nature, and be in the way of special providence. They must show our Creator's hand in the *thing* commended to our confidence. Revelation is for us and to us, and is of God, and will be adapted to the principles of being given us. But then, as it is part of the moral system and for moral ends, it will make its appeal to our intelligent and responsible nature. Our reception of it will be a matter of conduct and character. It will not constrain acceptance, and make unbelief impossible. This, if it could be, would be out

of place. It would be no part of God's moral administration. It would, indeed, be inherently impossible. It would be constraint of will; and will is cause, and in its own essential nature and of its own right, free. Hence the proofs of a revelation will be to the intelligence—our examination—our rational conviction—our responsible issue under sufficient light. The case will go to the reason and the conscience, which a disobedient will may vault over and abuse, as is possible in all matters in reference to moral truth. The same verdict will hold in respect to our treatment of a revelation *as a whole*, as of any *one* item in it. Acceptance of it must be a virtue; rejection of it, a sin. The one accredits and honors God; the other wrongs him. The one is the part of a filial child, and is in the rectitude of our accountable being; the other grows out of a disobedient state of the will.

The progress of the thought here concerning a revelation, as connected with the *Bible*, I shall not hasten to a conclusion. I shall be quite content to have it rest on the mind as a *cumulative* idea—to grow up intelligently there, on the principles of science, and of all truth in the progress of our work—to evince

itself by all the laws of conviction implanted in us, as I proceed to the instructions of that Book—to its harmony with our necessary ideas otherwise derived, and with all essential truth, as known in our intelligence, and developed in the works of God.

The Bible *is* extant. It is in the world, as truly as we ourselves, or anything else. It is in our hands, and must be regarded as a *fixed fact*, which no man may spirit away; and I much mistake, if reason does not recognize the Deity in it, as directly as in “the *me*,” which He has placed here, and of the existence of which, we have conscious and perfect knowledge.

The Bible claims to be a Revelation from God. Its language is: ‘Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.’ ‘All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.’ We may set down to its claims, as to those of any other book, to be what it purports to be. Reason is here installed in its office-work of forming a conclusion on just and

legitimate grounds. Take it, as a problem in the mathematics, as here considered. Let the process and the conviction, if need be, be deliberate and cumulative, I repeat, and the issue at length gained. This must come of a view of its contents,—its consonance with natural religion, so far as that goes,—with the conscience that is in us, and the principles of that reason which God has given us, and which he cannot belie, and all these elements of truth competently attested by the interposition and seal of God. Revelations, it may make, and will, and must, but they will have alliance and harmony with all truth. The Bible may contain mysteries,—things too deep,—too high,—for our perfect comprehension, as what else does not? It may reveal *parts*, only, of the ways of Jehovah,—such bearings and relations of them as we now need to know, while, in their completeness, they rise to heights that we cannot scale, and sink to depths that we cannot fathom. It may require the studies of eternity to investigate all the relations of truth there presented. All may never be comprehended by finite minds. We are but in the inception of our existence. Revelation will come down to us, and accom-

moderate itself to our little range of vision ; but we must expect that it will go beyond our present line of things,—that it will pass on into the measureless future, and up into the Infinite.

And here, with the view of an appropriate application to the Bible, it may be restated, that reason does not ask so much new *principles* of truth in a Revelation, as the *facts* and the *future* of that moral government under which God has placed us, and which conscience asserts. It is information beyond what nature gives, and an express embodiment and an authoritative statement of that which she *does* give. It is a manifestation to our intelligence, of the will of God,—His purposes,—His requirements,—His economy of mercy to the fallen, and the way of salvation from sin. It is, to bring God nigh as our Heavenly Father, in the methods of His love, and the behests of the future.

Hence, the Bible goes into no *formal* proof of the existence of God, or of His attributes. It assumes them as already known to reason, and recognized in His works. They are referred to in the *concrete*, as illustrated in all that He has done ;—they are embodied in

the prayers offered to Him,—in the worship and duty of right belonging to Him,—in the specific instructions and commands He gives us.

In treating, then, of *God in Revelation*, I refer you to a brief selection from those exhibitions of His being and perfections, which the Bible gives. Its opening statement is a very comprehensive one. 'In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.' If He creates, then He *is*,—and if creator, then not created, but eternal,—absolute,—the infinitely perfect,—the Jehovah. But the Bible does not stop to trace out this formula. It leaves all this as obvious to reason, and passes to the record of His works. The New Testament contains the formal statement, there is 'one God;' but it is to ignore the idea of the multiplicity of the divinities of a depraved heathen world, and to carry out the parallelism, 'and one mediator between God and man.' In these and similar relations, the *existence* and *unity* of God are presented throughout the Bible.

The same is true in reference to His *attributes*. 'The *eternal* God is thy refuge,' said Moses to the children of Israel, 'and under-

neath are the everlasting arms.' 'Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God,' is the solemn adoration of the Psalmist. 'Thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.'—'The high and lofty one, that *inhabiteth eternity*.' So, in ascriptions of praise in the New Testament. 'Unto the king, eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever.'

Supreme *majesty* and *power* are thus ascribed to God. 'Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is thine. Thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all.' 'Thou, even thou, art *Lord* alone.' 'Thou hast made the heavens, the heaven of heavens with all their host, and the earth, and all things that are therein, and thou preservest them, and the host of heaven worshippeth thee.' 'I am the Almighty God. The Lord God *omnipotent* reigneth.'

So the *omniscience* and *omnipresence* of God. 'Great is our Lord, and of great power: His *understanding* is infinite.' Recur to that

searching view of the all-seeing presence of God, in the 139th Psalm, commencing with the words, 'Thou compassest my path, and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways,' &c.

The *self-existence*,—the *spirituality*, and *immutability* of God, are matters of distinct record in the Bible. God is there styled the '*I am*,'—a phrase, the graphic meaning of which, no other can equal, to express the idea of the underived eternity of His being. 'God is a Spirit.' 'As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son,' says Christ, 'to have life in himself.' In the vision of ancient seers, we have the ascription: 'Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment, and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed, but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.'

Such, too, is the Biblical expression of the *wisdom*, and *holiness*, and *benevolence* of God, and, in fine, of all His perfections, both natural and moral. The Bible everywhere brings them out in bold relief in its didactic teach-

ings of Him, and in its accents of prayer and praise. So we might recite from the recorded and appropriate themes of the Gospel, that grace of God,

“Where justice and compassion join,
In their divinest forms;”

to see how love pervades that sacred volume,—how the perfections of God, and the great features of a moral system, are impressed upon it, from beginning to end. I might spend more than the time allotted to this entire course of instruction, in presenting those views of God, and of His perfections, which are contained in the Bible. It is, indeed, full of Him,—of His manifestations to us, and the relations of authority and love, in which He stands toward intelligent creatures.

The doctrines of the Gospel, and the more especial disclosures of the New Testament economy, sustain the view, elsewhere given. They carry up the analysis of morals to a higher point, and a more accurate discrimination, while they expand our knowledge of the goodness and grace of God out into all the themes of redemption. They bring life and immortality to light; exhibit a method of

mercy consistent with the claims of moral government, and show how that mercy is consistent, and God glorious, in the dispensation of grace.

The Bible presents, in living attitudes and relations, the *personality* of God. There we behold Him, in the concrete,—everywhere energizing, upholding, and governing. He is extant in His universe, with living intelligence and heart. *There* is the historic development and manifestation of His works. They are interpreted by an open and determinate voice. Man is addressed in the language of men. Character and object are given to this moving panorama before us. A morality invests the works and ways of God, as recorded there. Character is depicted on every page. The origin and destiny of man are unfolded,—his intelligent being responded to, and his position given in the works of God. The existence of sin is accounted for,—the history of man given,—God's moral government over him maintained; and the great subject of conduct and destiny,—of good and ill desert,—of rewards and retribution,—brought into full light, and the wants of our moral being comprehended.

In the Bible, God is brought *nigh* to us, in all the relations of the Divine to the human, as foreshown in the reason ;—our Creator,—our providential benefactor,—our intelligent and rightful governor,—our Heavenly Father,—our covenant God and Redeemer. ‘The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart, even the word of faith which we preach.’ ‘Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.’ The Bible institutes communion and fellowship between us and God. Its atmosphere is that of condescension and grace, and the sympathies of a Father’s love, and of filial aspirations of prayer, gratitude, and praise to Him. It is the commerce of the Infinite with the finite,—of heart to heart, and love for love. The concentrated essence and exponent of its principles and requisitions, are in the command, ‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and soul, and mind, and strength, and thy neighbor as thyself;’—a formula which gives the summary basis and comprehension of all law, both human and divine ;—a basis, without which, all human legislation is a farce, and man without a warrant for those ponderous masses of international

and municipal jurisprudence, which the history of the race has accumulated.

The Bible gives an *authoritative* form and *attitude* to truth, and to our ethical relations. It gathers up the lessons of the universe, and of our own subjective being, in this respect. It presents, in a definite and tangible form, the authority of the Creator,—His right to possess,—to command,—to govern and dispose of,—and the duty of submission, obedience, and love. It exhibits the guarantees of a moral system, and its obligations. It utters the sanctions of law, and the rewards of virtue. As there described, the intercourse of God with man is clothed with all the prerogatives of the Godhead. Its doctrines,—its requisitions,—its manifestations of the present and of the future, are of this cast. It is God speaking to us from His throne of righteousness, goodness, and mercy,—announcing His will,—prescribing our duty, and revealing the grand issue and end in His moral government. Law, —grace,—redemption,—retribution,—salvation,—the life—the death of the soul, are there. *There* is a divine manifestation, in the person of Jesus, and the sacrifice of atonement through His blood, revealing to us the way of

life eternal thereby. The reference is direct, —the intercourse is immediate. It is God speaking to us by Moses, and the prophets,—by Christ and the apostles,—showing us the things pertaining to the kingdom of God,—the issues of grace, and probation, in the interminable future of our being.

These are among the chief announcements of the Bible, and they prepare the way for our next chapter, in which I shall trace their correspondence with the principles of all truth, as elsewhere discovered, and with the necessary laws of the human mind.

CHAPTER VI.

THE BIBLE COINCIDENT WITH REASON.

THERE are three ways of divine manifestation to intelligent creatures: that in the Reason,—that in Nature,—and that in the terms of an express Revelation. The first two are unquestionable, and to the last, when duly authenticated, there is no valid objection. It is connatural to us. It is inferential of the perfections of God,—of our necessities, and of divine adaptation and benignity, elsewhere seen.

An express Revelation is especially a want of our *moral* nature. Conscience asks light, and premonishes a future in our being. The things seen, are, to reason, but part of a whole, —but a link in a series. Much that *is*, is without an object, if there be nothing further. Providence, here, is unfinished,—a moral

system incomplete, and the perfections of God not fully vindicated. Seed time indicates a harvest,—probation points on to retribution,—the inceptive and progressive of being, to that which is resultant and final. If God be good, as reason and nature declare, there must be much for man to know, that reason and nature unassisted cannot teach. An express revelation is inherently needful to fill up the mighty chasm in our knowledge, in respect to our moral destiny. We want some more sure word of prophecy divinely given,—divinely attested, ‘whereunto we do well to give heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in our hearts.’ The demand is for some authoritative announcement of the will of God, concerning us as accountable creatures—an assured method of His love, that shall comprehend the present and the future of our existence—that shall reveal His grace to the fallen, and yet sustain moral government and law.

This *prerogative* the Bible claims, and it was the business of our last chapter to indicate the line of its instructions—to present some samples of its teachings on the great

subject of religion—to gather up some of its more generic forms of thought, and of its exhibitions of doctrine and duty, as the *basis* of its claim.

It may be well at this stage of our inquiry to refer to the *coincidence* of the Bible in its doctrines and testimony, with the *principles* of *all truth*, as *elsewhere* derived, and *otherwise* known—to present the homogeneity of truth in these three forms of manifestation, by reason, by nature, and by revelation.

We have before seen that there will be this agreement, so far as each testifies, if the Bible be from God, and this consent of principles in the characteristic manifestation of each. There may be incompleteness and deficiency, as one is seen in the light of the other, but there will be no contradiction. The first two may indicate the need of the third; but they will not be contravened or scandalized by its testimony. Revelation will rise above and beyond nature's light, but will not gainsay it. There will be coalescence. They will merge into each other. They will rise out of principles common to all. There will be symmetry in their manifestations of God, and in their elucidation of truth. Each

will work in its own province, but will work out problems recognized as the common inheritance and want of our moral being. Each is in the domain of God. Each is the administration of the one Jehovah, who cannot deny himself.

Has then the Bible this *test* to sustain its claim?

I would now refer to some of the respects in which it has.

1st. *The existence of God.* This is a truth known in the reason, and read in all His works. It is at the basis of every syllogism which substantiates "the *me*," and affirms the reality of an objective universe. All assert that *He is*, and that He is an intelligence with all the attributes of personality and power.

But the Bible is equally explicit in its references and instructions. It is full of God from beginning to end, in every line and feature. This is its cardinal doctrine—the basis of its economy of truth. I speak not here of the formal proof of the doctrine of the being of God. That is not the office-work of a revelation appropriately, but the constant implication of it, and reference to it is, and it is in the Bible. The most undoubted theism

characterizes its pages, in respect to all the attributes of a personal Deity. Creation is ascribed to God, providence referred to Him, spirituality affirmed of Him, authority and rule committed to Him—ownership, jurisdiction and judgment, and all the high behests of moral government. The emanation of law, as there given, is from Him. His ‘is the kingdom and the dominion, under the whole heaven.’ All the elements of belief which reason and nature give at this point, are brought out into authoritative and bold relief in the Bible.

So in respect to the *unity* of God. Reason asserts that there is *but one God*—that the supposition of more is a logical absurdity, and involves an inherent impossibility. All nature points to the one Jehovah. It is one universe, under one economy of laws, with reciprocal adaptations and adjustments, and is most manifestly in its creation and history, the product of the One Supreme.

Has the Bible a corresponding testimony? or does it run off with the fictitious systems of human device and passion, into the fabrication of ‘Lords many and Gods many?’ It holds steadily, and with unqualified emphasis,

to the teaching, that there 'is one God,' in contradistinction to all the lying vanities of heathen mythology. Dating farther back than any other book, giving a history of the world and of nations in it for thousands of years, coming in contact with all surrounding and invading superstitions, and penned by a long succession of men called from every pursuit and condition in life, from Moses to the Apocalypse; how comes it that this doctrine remains intact and antagonistical to all the prevalent corruptions and depraved cosmogonies of the nations, and that a divine *unity* shines out untarnished and pellucid through every page of the Bible? How came the patriarchs, and Moses, and the Jews, to be so much wiser on this subject than any other people? The Jewish nation were not so in other matters than those of religion. They had sinful hearts, and corrupt and idolatrous tendencies, and their history shows it. There was a *special providence* in all this. There was a divinity over that people which chastened and instructed, and preserved them. God was their king. There was a theocracy, mightier than their degenerate tendencies, which presided over them—which by the rod,

as well as by the voice of direct instruction, schooled them into the truth, and preserved among them the knowledge of the one living and true God, while heathenism sank like night upon the nations. There was a continued revelation extant in Jewish history, until *He* came, who, as the Messiah of God, 'brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel.' If the Bible be not authentic in its claims as an inspired book, Jewish history is an enigma. I defy the ingenuity of the world to account for the rise and continuance of that people—the preservation of religious doctrine among them, and the sources of all spiritual truth as found and perpetuated there; except on the principle that God had them in special charge, as the germ of still richer developments of divine truth to the world, when the fulness of the time should come, and that the seers and prophets of Israel were seers and prophets of God.

Such also is the New Testament idea. The doctrine of the *Trinity* does not mar it. It is the one God thus subsisting. We know nothing of an *absolute* unity. It is the idea of *uniqueness* that the mind seizes on in this direction. It is God, subsisting in the pecu-

liarity and oneness of His being, as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. It is the one God, of reason, nature, and revelation, thus subsisting, and reason sees no objection to it. She cannot penetrate enough into the essence of being, created or divine, to ascertain what complexity there may be in the uniqueness, or oneness that is in it. There may be no existing substance, or being absolutely and every way simple; and if a complexity or trinity in the divine is guaranteed by its appropriate evidence, reason is not embarrassed by it, any more than the New Testament is, in revealing the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, as the mode of the Divine existence, and as comprehended in the true idea of the *one God*. This last only reveals more in the one God than reason distinctly recognized—gives new and richer manifestations of Him, and of the relations, of absorbing interest, in which He stands toward us and our destinies.

Again: Does reason assert the *infinite perfections of God*, and do His works illustrate His wisdom, power, and goodness? With what emphasis may we announce these as the *doctrines of the Bible*? They are impressed on every page; they glow in every line; they

form the woof of the whole texture—the life of the whole economy of its teachings.

The same coincidence is verified in the doctrine of providence. If God created, He upholds and governs. If reason asserts the laws of nature to be but the mode of divine operation, and proclaims the power of God in the working of this dependent universe, and alike in the minutest as in the most stupendous movement and organism; the Bible, in its coincidence, comforts us with the assurance that ‘not a sparrow falleth to the ground without our Heavenly Father,’ and that ‘even the hairs of our heads are numbered before Him.’ Turn to a sublime passage in the book of Job: ‘Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Canst thou bring forth Mazzeroth in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons? Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven—canst thou set the dominion thereof? Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds, that abundance of waters may cover thee? Canst thou send lightnings that they may go, and say here are we? Who provideth for the raven his food?’

Job elsewhere says of God: ‘He stretcheth out the North over the empty place, and

hangeth the earth upon nothing. He has compassed the waters with bounds, until the day and the night come to an end. The pillars of heaven tremble and are astonished at His reproof. He divideth the sea with His power. By His spirit He hath garnished the heavens. Lo! these are parts of His ways, but how small a part is known of Him,—the thunder of His power who can understand?’

I pass to other features of generic truth exhibited in the Bible. All experience and history evince, that sin is in the world, and that the race of man is fallen and degenerate from God. Reason dictates that mankind are not now, as they must have been made at first by a perfect and good Being. There must have been some intervening element—some catastrophe—some disturbance wrought, in the original economy concerning man. He is not now a pattern from the divine hand. Reason cannot account for this prevalent ignorance of God and repugnance toward Him, and these features of sin which are stamped on the conduct and history and troubles of the race, and the clouds and darkness which lower in this mingled providence toward it, except that man is not as he was made, but has revolted

from God. 'An enemy hath done this.' It is not the type of an original constitution of things from the Infinite. The race must have swayed away from God, and be under His displeasure now.

The Bible reaffirms these ideas of the reason, and brings in assurance over this whole subject. It gives the concrete history of the case. It informs us how sin entered the world, and death as a consequence, and all our woes;—how God regards it—what He will do concerning it, and the methods of rescue which, in mercy, He has provided against its penal consequences. It verifies the whole subject, and brings out, in full proportions, that divine morality over it, which reason and conscience demand.

But we may not leave this feature of our subject quite yet. Reason affirms that sin must be a disturbance *within* a moral system, and the work of *subordinate* agency—that it implies the previous existence of authority, and law and government,—that the supposition of sin and wrong in the Infinite,—the *I am*, is a solecism, and logically impossible. The Bible informs us that sin *is* the result of subordinate agency,—that it *was* an outbreak

from under law previously established, and on the part of those under the obligations of duty and obedience to God. It falls into the categories of generic truth in this respect, and comes fully to their aid. It reveals the concrete actuality of what reason declares must have been the relations of the subject, and coincides with the monitions of conscience in relation to it. It thus *verifies* the ideas of reason, and is exegetical of a philosophy as legitimate and enduring as the essential being of man.

The same coincidence of testimony obtains in respect to *all* the attributes of moral government. The Bible here has its archetypes in every principle of our moral being. Conscience responds to the revelations made to it in the Bible, in both the first and second tables of the law, through the full range of its precepts and penalties, and in its prescription of supreme love to God, and of equal regard and justice to our fellow-men. It chimes in with our moral sense over this whole domain of truth.

Again. Reason declares that *probation* is part of a moral economy,—that there must be tests and a trial of character, and especially where recovery from sin is the design and law

of the economy. There must be time given for instruction, and experience, and the formation of the character required. Probation is of necessity the incipient and preparatory part of such a system, to be followed by a resultant retribution. The Bible *authenticates* this dictate of reason and conscience. Its whole framework of doctrine and exhortation, of provision, and providence, and promise, is on this principle—its command to duty and its reference to the eternal judgment.

Again. The Bible, in its requisitions, coincides with the laws of *physical health* and subserves them. Compliance with its principles and spirit is our surest guarantee for the most symmetrical development and perpetuation of our physical life. Christ is the Saviour of the body. The requisitions of the Bible concerning temperance, chastity, and all the institutes of morality, are proof of this. And they are there every way full, unembarrassed, and authoritative. The ten commandments from Sinai are a significant illustration of this. All law and all morality are there compressed into a few terse sentences, and yet are adapted to the wants of the race, and comprehensive of them, for all time. They have adjustment to

the physical, social, and spiritual condition and nature of man, like the bone to its socket, exact and enduring, never out of proportion and never outlawed. They are such as you look for in vain elsewhere, and such as have made that code the emanation and touchstone of all legislation since, and such as you can account for only on the principle given by the Bible itself, in respect to those commands, that they were written by the finger of God.

The *Sabbath* also was made for man. It is a *positive* institute of the Bible, and might be supposed to have no relation to us, but as a teacher of religion and a help to piety. But all history shows that it *does* have an inherent connection with our physical health and comfort—that man, in his constitutional being, needs a sabbatical rest; and not man alone, but all the brute creation which serve him, and that the law of the sabbath is the law of *animal life*, so far as is known to us.

Again. The *institution of marriage*, as a condition of social life, and thus the basis of the *family constitution*, has its only authoritative announcement and sanction in the Bible. I need not say how much this constitution lies at the foundation of all domestic virtue and

social order,—of all civil government and all individual and concurrent progress in society and in the history of mankind. But for it the world might now have been in the lowest phases of the savage state,—science and the arts have been yet unknown, and the human mind in no condition for the development of the ideas of the religious life. Hence, also, the principles of *national thrift* and *prosperity* are in the Bible. It has rules for the governor and the governed, for all in authority and all under it, adapted to all times and circumstances. It commends ‘the righteousness which exalteth a nation,’ and rebukes ‘sin as a reproach to any people.’ The elements of jurisprudence and international law are there, not in the form of detailed statute, but in those principles of generic truth, adapted to man in all his relations, in which a revelation is necessarily based.

Again. The Bible *contravenes* no law of nature and no *discovery in science*. It was not given as a text-book in the sciences or for the discovery of the physical organisms of the universe, and yet at this point lies one of the *most beautiful* and *convincing* illustrations of its divine origin. Human systems of re-

ligion are always at fault here. The Hindu cosmogonies and mythologies are inconsistent with the known laws of nature and the known facts in the astronomic heavens. Discoveries in science are fatal often to the assumptions of pagan worship and belief. Religious systems of merely human construction and device, go not beyond the knowledge that originated them. In the onward progress of the human mind and of discovery in the sciences and arts, they are left in the background. They are stereotyped in the wisdom of the times that formed them, and will, as knowledge and science advance, be found inadequate and absurd. They will impinge on the facts of astronomy on the one hand or of geology on the other. The conclusions of science are defined and uncompromising, and cannot yield their claims to conviction, or be adjusted to any economies of religious belief that may obtain. Fears have been entertained in the same direction respecting the Bible, but further study has shown how groundless they were. Galileo was imprisoned for endorsing the Copernican theory of astronomy, as being adverse to the instructions of the Bible; but an enlarged canvass of the correlated subjects

has shown how unfounded were the apprehensions of the Romish doctors. The modern science of geology was for a time supposed to conflict with the Mosaic account of the creation; but more mature investigations have wholly dissipated all apprehensions from it, while the disclosures of that science in the hands of such men as Miller, and Hitchcock, and the Chevalier Giot and others, are seen to be among the richest sources of evidence of the Divine authenticity of the Scriptures;—and the *rationale* of the whole matter is just this,—a little learning may be dangerous and find difficulties, but mature study harmonizes truth, and approximates the necessary result that all truth is harmonious. The Bible has the same author that nature has; and while it does not perform the same office that nature does, and speaks of God and man, and history, and all things in the language and to the apprehension of men, it derives its inspiration from infallible sources. God is in the Word, and the record it gives—the revelations it makes, *because true*, are harmonious with all truth, and wherever they may chance to border on the principles and results of human science, are *parallel* with them and *correlative* to them.

The harmony is not artificial and forced, but *innate, philosophical, and necessary*. It is because of the *essential unity* of truth and the leaping in of all truth into a universal homogeneity and oneness. This is not wonderful; it must be so. There is one God and one universe of being and relations; and because this *is* so, the lines of truth are parallel and illustrative of each other, and the progress of all discovery hitherto has left us but the confirmed assurance of the necessary harmony of the revelations of science and the Bible.

I make at this time but *one* reference more. The essence of law and duty, as propounded in the Bible, is in the *comprehensive summary* given by the Saviour: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength, and thy neighbor as thyself.' This is there stated as 'all the law and the prophets.' This is still further condensed elsewhere in the New Testament. 'The end of the commandment is love.' 'Love is the fulfilling of the law.' 'Love is of God; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, for God is love.' And is not this law and this principle, broad enough for man in all his re-

lations? Does it not comprehend them? and will it not forever? Is it not of necessity the adjusting element among intelligent beings, of all conceivable orders and relations? Has it not the attribute of *universality* and *speciality* too? What beyond can be added to it?—what taken away? Is it not inherently the law of the *ethical system* of the universe immutably? Let this law universally obtain, and wrong would cease on earth, penal statutes be needless, and man be brought into the rectitude of his social and immortal life. ‘The confused noise of the warrior would be no more heard, or garments seen rolled in blood.’ The world would become a paradise, and rejoice in more than the blessedness of its anticipated millennial state.

This law of love is everywhere the published requisition of the Bible. It is found there, and only there, as a formal and authoritative enactment. It is heaven-wide of all the teachings of all other systems known among men. It permeates the Bible economy of instruction, all parts of which are adjusted to this, and framed into it. All this is integral and independent, and on a basis all its own in the Bible. Its coincidence with natural and

generic law and truth is *undesigned* and *incidental*, and from the very necessities of the case. It comes of the necessary harmony of all truth, and it is in this coincidence and harmony of the Bible in the teachings of universal and necessary truth, that it finds legitimately a passport to our convictions, as 'given by inspiration of God,' and authoritatively commissioned to reveal what "He would have us believe concerning Him, and what duties He requires of us."

CHAPTER VII.

THE ANALOGY OF ALL RELIGION.

BISHOP BUTLER was one of the most distinguished prelates of the English Church, and one of the ripest scholars of his age. He was born in 1692, and lived at a period of great dissoluteness of manners and philosophical belief in his own country and throughout Europe. The restoration of the monarchy under the second Charles, whose queen was a princess of France, introduced the dissipation and extravagance, and voluptuousness of the Court of St. Cloud, even from the times of Louis XIV. A sort of carnival of royalty succeeded this triumph over '*the Commonwealth*' and the '*Roundheads*,' as the adherents of Cromwell and the Presbyterians were familiarly called. Great laxity of moral sentiment ensued,—un-

wanted freedom from the restraints of religion and a prevalent scepticism in respect to the subject of Revelation. It was in this condition of England, and of religious opinions in Europe, that Butler penned his great work on "*The Analogy of Religion, natural and revealed, to the constitution and course of Nature.*" The work was published in 1736, and had a decided and commanding influence in calling back the more reflecting classes of society to the first principles of belief as related to *revealed* truth, and in checking the degeneracy of the age. It is a succinct, terse, and closely logical argument in proof of Revelation, drawn from the experience and observation and undoubted truths of our present state of existence. The author lays the *future* by the side of the *present*, and traces the analogies between them, and solves any supposed objections to the truths of Revelation in a reference to the actualities of the present, which resemble and foreshadow them. The archetypes and symbols of all that the Bible communicates in the train of its doctrines, and the main scope of its revelations, he finds, in the actually existing economy of things of which none can

doubt, and on the truth of which all can but act definitively and constantly.

This is legitimate ground. It is taking the instructions of the present into the future. It is bringing our own experience into the service of religion, and tracing the connection between what we have *seen* and *do know*, and the teachings of Revelation. There is force in this as well as meetness and logical acumen. It carries the war into the enemy's camp. It breaks down his intrenchments and silences his batteries. It deprives scepticism of all plausibility, and though it may not *complete* the proofs of a Divine Revelation, it shows how connatural it is, and analogous to that economy of nature and providence under which we live, and to the facts which we cannot gain-say or resist.

We will avail ourselves, in this chapter, of the labors of the good prelate. I shall not promise to follow him implicitly, but would acknowledge myself largely indebted to him, in the form and the facts of the argument I use.

The Bible, as a Revelation from God, has an economy of doctrine and instructions, revealing light and imposing duty, both in

respect to the present, and the great future of our being. I shall select some of its leading doctrines, interwoven and blended with the entire system of its teachings, and see what analogies bear on and indicate them, in the facts of our present state.

1st. The Bible, as a Revelation from God, teaches a *Divine moral government*;—that God has placed us under law to right action, and holds us responsible to Him for our moral conduct. Are there any objections to this, from the constitution and course of nature? Are there any analogies in its favor? Look first to that intelligence within, which discerns law,—which apprehends right, and appreciates justice, goodness, and truth;—at that subjective being in us, which is indignant at wrong, and which imputes praise and blame, and awards retribution according to character and conduct. The *doctrine* of moral government is in us. It is in the woof and texture of the intelligence, as the offspring of God, and cannot be denied. Look to the conscience, which brings home this matter to the arbitrament of our own bosoms,—which convicts of good and ill desert, according to our conduct, and holds us responsible to the principles of

rectitude and truth. I speak of intelligence and conscience as elements of our mental constitution,—of the innate capacity and adaptation *there* to apprehend right and wrong, and to feel the obligations of duty, and the actual exercise and conceded authority of it,—extant and undoubted, everywhere; and I see in it the respondent of revealed truth, at this point,—the distinct and striking counterpart and preparation for that all-pervading doctrine of the Bible, ‘So, then, every one of us shall give account of himself to God.’

But further. The conclusions of reason and conscience, as elements of our moral being, are *necessitated*, and thus confirm the doctrine of a *standard* of right and wrong, as propounded in the Bible. You can no more alter them, than you can the principles of the mathematics. As well may you say that two and two make five, as deny that goodness is worthy of love, or gratitude due for favors received; or that honesty is a virtue, or theft a crime; or that right is just what it is, neither more nor less, and that any deviation from it is wrong.

On the principle of moral distinctions, all the intercourse of society is based,—all civil

government,—all judicial process,—all charge of the infraction of law,—all penal inflictions. Parental authority falls back on this element of our being;—and all the discipline of childhood,—all sense of injury, in view of wrong treatment from our fellow-men,—all the compunction and remorse which we feel, from our own misdeeds. The rights of property are on this basis, and all the courtesies, and charities, and amenities of life.

The doctrine of moral government is in our *physical* constitution even, and is daily illustrated there, as wrought out in the showings of an intelligent providence. Let a child be nursed to pride and self-indulgence, and grow up in luxury, and dissipation, and vice, and how soon blotches will appear in his skin,—the hectic be on his cheek, and the fever in his brain? If society lets him live, how long before feebleness and decrepitude will seize on his limbs,—rags and wretchedness clothe his body, and the gutter take him to its desolate companionship? Ordinarily, he does 'not live out half his days,'—while the converse of all this is true of the child of integrity and virtue;—beautifully illustrating the argument and the exhortation of the Bible: 'Honor

thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.'

But we may not linger on a point so obvious.

2d. The Bible contains the doctrine of a *future state* of existence. Life and immortality are brought to light by the Gospel. That we do not cease to exist at the death of the body,—that our being spans the grave,—that there is a future life, in which we shall exist in conscious identity with our present selves; is, with its correlated revelations, a cardinal feature of Bible instruction. This is peculiarly and appropriately, within the sphere of its revealed economy of truth. And has it no analogies in the present life? An instructive analogy is found in the very *fact*, that we *do* now exist. The difficulty, if one there be, lies farther back than the inquiry after a future life, and resolves itself into that of existence at all. The great miracle lies in the past. The mighty wonder is there. It terminates in the matter of our *possible* existence at all. But that is already overcome. It is solved, in the fact, that we *do* exist. The question of difficulty and wonder is disposed of, and be-

comes irrelevant in the indisputable truth that *we are*; and inasmuch as it *is* a fact that we are, we only need reasonable assurances that we shall continue to be. Indeed, the burden of proof is fairly on the other side; and we, of right, demand the evidence that we shall *cease* to be. Since it is a fact that we are, why should we not continue to be, if no good reason can be given to the contrary? Existence being begun, continuance is the law in respect to us, under some form. This is the law of *material* existence, so far as we know. We have no evidence that an atom of matter has been destroyed since the creation, or ever will be. Evidence and prevalent theories are adverse to such a conclusion. Matter in its relations may change,—may be resolved into its original elements, and be combined anew; but we are without evidence that any of it ever goes out into non-existence. For aught that is known, continuance is the law of the created, as it is of the necessary and the divine. The form of our being may change, and does continually. Identity consists not in continuing to possess the same particles of matter in our bodies. This is ever fluctuating and variant. We may lose any part or all of this

bodily organism, and yet remain ourselves for aught we know. A man is none the less himself for the loss of a finger. The matter composing our bodies does often change during this life, as do the clothes that cover them. The material body must be distinct from the integral essence of the soul. It is not "*the me*," but only a form of its *manifestation* and a mode of its being. That form and mode may change without changing the identity of "*the me*" or jeopardizing its existence. It is a spirit, and can *be*, embodied or disembodied; can live in the body or out; can exist as God does, without a material organism or with one. Indeed it is obvious, that an unembodied state is its *normal* mode of existence, and that the body is but an appendage to it, and, for aught we know, for only certain specific and temporary purposes. The soul is in its creation distinct from the body, and may survive it. We now see it only in its bodily manifestations, because our organs of vision are bodily. With other means of knowledge we might descry the existence and manifestations of the soul as distinctly at, and after the death of the body as we now do before.

Objections, then, to a future life are out of

place, and all those moral considerations which foreshow the continuance of our being are in full force. This, so far as we know, is the law of existence, while it is called for by all the dictates of reason and conscience, and by all that moral of our being to which frequent reference has been made in the progress of our work hitherto.

3d. Another cardinal doctrine of the Bible is, that the future state of man is one of *rewards* and *punishments*,—that the doctrine of a moral system,—of desert for conduct and character, is carried over into the future, and that it stands related to this life as a retributive response to what is here wrought out. Hence its revelations of the general judgment,—of the blessedness of the righteous as a gracious award,—of the miseries of the wicked as a punishment for sin, and the result described as the salvation or loss of the soul. Have we any analogies bearing on this subject in the constitution and course of nature? We find them *in* ourselves, in the primary elements and sentiments of our being,—in that self-approval which attends a good action,—in that self-condemnation, pain, and remorse of conscience, which are consequent on wrong-doing,—in the

judgment we pass on other men for their good or bad conduct,—in the difference which we make between *designed* harm and accidental injury, and in our apportionment of ill-desert, according to the comparative innocence or enormity of moral conduct. All respect or disrespect in the economy of social life, bases itself in the principle before us. It is an award for good or bad behavior. All the discipline beneath the parental roof assumes this doctrine, and is built upon it—all pains and penalties in society and in civil government.

Analogies here crowd upon us, from every quarter, and the only point at which the mind labors at all is at the revealed doctrine of *final* punishment; and the *final* state of loss and ruin to the soul, which is consequent on character, and as the effect of ill-desert. But what is the doctrine of *capital punishments*, or of imprisonment *for life*, on this point? Is not the culprit in these cases given up to *final* punishment, so far as *this life* is concerned, and so far as the purview of civil government extends? Is not the prosecution of his good *abandoned*, and is not he yielded a victim to the just penalties of law for the good of others, and the behests of moral government?

Punishment, as such, is correlated only with the question of desert. It does not respect the good of him who is the subject of it. There may be dispensations of a *disciplinary* and *instructive* nature to him to whom they are administered; but they are inflictions of a mixed character, and not pure punishments. And they are confined to a probationary economy where men are on trial and results not yet reached; and not to a *retributive* one, where we only reap the fruit of that we have sown. *Then* the subject of punishment is, from the nature of the case, a victim to it, for the sake of interests lying beyond himself.

But shall I point to the domestic fireside for the analogies of the doctrine of *final* punishment, taught in the Bible? A child in the family becomes irrecoverably vicious and abandoned in character and influence. Parental counsel, discipline, and faithfulness, are unavailing. Patience and long-suffering are abused and perverted, and become the occasion of a more dissolute and corrupting wickedness. Law, and authority, and government, in the household, are outraged, and trampled underfoot. Confusion, mischief, and wild misrule, are concocted, and rampant. Every evil

festers there, every good is overbornè, and lies bleeding in the dust.—And what shall be done? What must be done? As the last resort, that *child* is *outlawed*,—disinherited, and banished from the family. Parental *goodness* gives him up, and casts him out, a *victim* to his crimes.

There are also analogies to this doctrine in the *physical* nature of man. One may pursue a course of dissipation and vice, until his body becomes *irrecoverably* diseased,—till a fatal paralysis seizes him,—till incurable ulcers break out upon him,—the very springs and elements of all vitality yield, and the recuperative energies of his nature are gone, and he *must* die. He has become a wreck, and nothing will save him. Reform, recovery, health, are impossible, for the gangrene has ensued, and it is too late,—too late for any thing else, but to become a victim to himself, and a beacon light to others of the fatal effects of indulged sin.

Or, once more. You may so steep yourself in vice and crime, as to lose all *self-respect*,—as to feel that you have concentrated on you the unmingled disgust and reprobation of others, and thus get past all the *moral* ele-

ments of recovery, and abandon yourself to sin and shame, saying, 'I have loved strangers, and after them I will go.'

How graphic here is the pen of Solomon. 'Who hath wounds without cause? Who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine.' 'They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick? they have beaten me, and I felt it not? When shall I awake, *I will seek it yet again.*'

Other analogies present themselves under this head, but we need not wait to gather them up; and I turn to a further doctrine, in close proximity with that above elucidated.

4th. The Bible presents the life of man here as a *probation*, with a view to that condition of being which is in the future. His future welfare hangs on his present conduct. God 'has appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness,' and apportion the allotments of men, according to the issues which probation has ascertained. Do nature and providence furnish analogies to this economy of doctrine and truth? These are impressed everywhere on the living features of this passing scene of things, and I can do

no more than to indicate a few of them. I turn from those more obvious, as found in our *forms of civil process*,—in our penal codes, and judiciary systems,—in the doctrine of courts,—of witnesses,—the jury box,—the acquittal,—the conviction,—the sentence,—the penitentiary,—the award;—those patterns in things earthly, so constantly passing before the eye, in the necessary condition of society here, and which are so much the counterparts and types of things hereafter, as religion teaches. Overlooking all these, we dwell a little on some of those resemblances of the Christian doctrine of probation, which are more occult and suggestive. I recur to some, found in the economy of nature. What are spring and summer, but a probation for the rich fruits of autumn, and the sturdy retributions of winter? What is the whole doctrine of the seasons, but one of preparation and results,—seed-time and harvest,—the blade,—the ear,—the full corn in the ear. The process of tilling, and pruning, and watching over, and waiting for a coming harvest, is emblematic of the whole subject under review. We may go back even to the formation of the earth, and down thence through its geologic

periods,—its condensation and its cooling,—its vegetable and animal vivification,—its coal-beds; and alluvium,—and its distant, and steady, and onward preparation for the habitation of man, and the birth of a moral system. The gases,—the solid crust of the earth, and its whole history, are but an elucidation of the law of elements,—of development, and of results consequent thereon. It is the doctrine of progress, as seen through the universe. Results in the future, as the fruits of the past, are the economy under which we live, and under which the created universe has always been. You see it in nature, in providence, and in the history of man. In this idea lies much of the philosophy of history,—of the rise and fate of empires, and of the problems contained in those governments on earth, which have already floated by on the currents of time.

Shall we turn aside to our more domestic experience, and individual consciousness? Is not childhood a probation for after life? In the familiar adage we use, is not the child “father of the man?” Why the training, discipline, and education of the young? Why is youth a pupilage, devoted, with assiduity,

expense and care, to the business of preparation, with every help to the eye, and the ear, and the intellect and the heart? What are institutions of learning, but a probation for scholarship, and fitness for the stations of after life?

But probation anticipates retribution. It has no significance without that. Its necessary counterpart is there. It is so in this life. It must be so everywhere, and you have in the moving panorama of the present, the significant and instructive analogies of the revealed truth under consideration.

5th. The Bible contains the doctrine of the *sinfulness* of man by *apostasy* from God. Need I trace analogies here, or present the experience of earth under this head? Sin and death *are* in the world, and in the relation of antecedent and consequent, so far as we can see, while reason undeniably avers that sin can be here but by apostasy, and on the part of the subjects of moral government, and within its sphere.

6th. The Christian doctrine of *atonement* and *redemption*,—the substitution of the sufferings of a Mediator, for the direct inflictions of law upon the guilty. But is this wholly a

unique idea, and aside from all the notions we get from things seen here? Is not the doctrine of equivalents the fundamental law of commerce?—of all trade, indeed, and of every contract between man and man in all the relations of life? Substitution and compensation are familiar ideas, and so are those of suretyship,—the bond of a second and a third, to indemnify against possible loss by the first. The whole subject of insurance against loss by fire,—“marine,” “inland,” and “life insurance,” is very much on this principle. There is often the transference of obligation,—the doctrine of the security of one for the debts of another, with which we are familiar, and in civil society, the guarantee of the whole community against violence from any part of it, and for the keeping of the peace by all. We profess not to find here the “*fac-simile*” of the Christian doctrine of atonement, but enough to show it to be far otherwise than strange and unaccountable,—sufficient to show it to be quite consonant with our ideas otherwise derived, and, indeed, that it has its foundation in a principle of law, and of the human mind, of which we cannot

divest ourselves, and of which more must be said in a subsequent chapter.

7th. The Bible announces the doctrine of the *resurrection* of the dead,—the reviviscence of the body,—the reunion of body and soul, and the re-establishment, in a future life, of the personal identity known here. This is a modification of the revealed idea of a future state of existence. It adds that of the resurrection of the body.

The subject of the resurrection has been embarrassed by vexed theories about it, in the wisdom of men, since the days of the Apostles, some of which are not yet wholly exploded. These may all be thrown out of the question. No inquiry after particles of dust, or of the identical ones, that formed the earthly body at any part of its sojourn here, or at its close, is germane to the issue. To establish the identity of the future with the present, this is not needful. Personal identity is not perpetuated in this way in the present life, and we may not expect that 'flesh and blood shall inherit the kingdom of God.' The 'body which shall be,' will have adaptation to our future state of existence, and be so constituted as, in connection with the

soul, to declare a continued personal identity. —And though the resurrection is eminently a doctrine of the Christian Revelation, the inquiry is legitimate into any analogies which the constitution and course of nature may suggest.

Of the power of God 'to raise the dead,' none can doubt. We are surrounded with too many magnificent displays of His omnipotent energy and wisdom, in the actual economy of the universe, to question that any new modification of it, to meet the exigencies of the future, is equally within His pleasure and convenience.

Does, then, the present disclose any analogies of the future on this subject?

I discern something like it in the annual death and reviviscence of nature around us, in most of the latitudes of the earth. The leaves of autumn fall thick on every hand. The denuded forest looks drear and lifeless, except that here and there an evergreen bespeaks an immortality. The currents of vegetable life are stopped,—the earth is locked up in frost,—the pall of death is thrown over it, and stern winter reigns in recklessness and desolation.

But on this scene, how joyously looks out the young and buoyant spring! All nature revives again. Forest and field are clothed with verdure and freshness,—‘The flowers appear on the earth. The time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in the land.’ ‘Man goeth to his labor till the evening,’ and another cycle of activity and production revisits the earth.

There is in the planting of seed in the ground, and its reviving again,—an analogy so striking, and so illustrative of the Christian doctrine of the resurrection, that it secured the regard of the Apostle, in the annunciation of that doctrine.—‘That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die;’ ‘thou sowest not the body which shall be.’ The husbandman throws broadcast into his prepared field, the naked seed,—brings the earth over it, and buries it from his sight. The rains of heaven fall upon it, and after a time, a tender green spire shoots up through the overlying mould. You search for its source, and the kernel of wheat is not there. But a new life was in it, when planted in the ground. That life has been developed, and the stem and roots have shot forth. There is a reviviscence from the grave

of the parent seed, which grows up into a reconstructed identity with the past, and waves at length, in all the luxuriance of harvest.

Animal life has like analogies. The silkworm lives its day here, and does up its work,—weaves its own winding-sheet,—digs its grave, and dies in it. But look there some ten days after, and you notice that a variegated, beautiful, winged insect has eaten its way out of that sepulchre, with new capacities of motion, and new instincts and habits of life altogether.

Transfer, now, your gaze, to that joyous butterfly, yonder, buoyant in mid-air, over flood, and field, and flower, sporting in the sunbeam, and reflecting its hues and brightness. It is but the reviviscence of some worm at your feet, which had crept away in obscurity to die, and from whose unconscious *chrysalis* state it is thus metamorphosed, and reproduced, that emblem of ecstasy and delight you now behold it.

How different the new laid egg, from the perfected and sprightly form which, through a process of incubation, at length bursts its shell, and leaps forth into life and activity from its dark enclosure! The embryo state

of all animals, whether oviparous or viviparous, is as different from that which after is, as are our present body and state, and habits of existence here, 'from *the body that shall be.*' So that, in respect to the resurrection of the body, as connected with the future life, we have many obvious and instructive analogies in the life that now is.

Finally. The Bible predicts 'the new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.' But the fact, and the process of the formation of worlds and systems, and their progressive adaptation to the ulterior purpose of the Divine Mind, are matters with which science is daily becoming more and more familiar. She has theories of the earth's formation and geologic history, and of its methods of eventual suitedness to be the dwelling-place of man in this stage of his being, quite analogous to every demand of religion in respect to the exigencies of the future. She sees in the astronomic heavens, worlds in every stage of condensation and maturity, from the gaseous comet, to the solid sun itself. She has learned, too, how slight would be the change of primordial elements, that would renew the whole face of the earth,

—that would make of it a molten, liquid mass of fire, or pass it wholly away in vapor again; and she is not struck with wonder at the revealed idea of a new heavens and a new earth, as assuredly *reason* and *faith* are not; that in those abodes, and in that eventual,—that higher and final state of the perfected spirit, *truth* shall be triumphant over error,—virtue, over sin.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BIBLE NECESSARILY TRUE.

I PRESENT now, the *essential truthfulness* and credibility of the Bible, and of the economy of doctrine it teaches. And yet this phraseology does but partially convey my meaning, and give my subject. The inquiry, here, is not after the spirit of sincerity and veraciousness, everywhere impressed on the pages of the Bible, and which, in its place, does bespeak our confidence in its communications. My reference, at this stage of our course, is, to the fact that its doctrines are *essentially* and *inherently* true, and can but be seen to be, by the human mind. The Bible lies in a mine of *conceded* truth. It is at one with the elements of truth, as otherwise cognized and apprehended. Its cardinal doctrines, and great economy of statement and annuncia-

tion, must of necessity be true, even *irrespective* of the question of their being revealed. They are, at any rate, true, and must be held as such, if we would not be recreant to the ideas of the reason, and the principles of truth, which lie in our own being, and in the nature of things. The Scriptures give information above and beyond what reason and nature can, and bring a flood of needed light on the moral and future of our existence, which, without them, we should not have, and bring it in the way of authoritative Revelation from God. But all is based in principles of truth, and laws of belief, elsewhere seen and apprehended by us, and from the validity and jurisdiction of which we cannot escape. In a word, it is a revelation to us, and to the intelligence which God has given us. All this, I know, is only affirming what must be so, if there be the one God,—One in Revelation, in Reason, in Nature. There can be but this consent,—this harmony,—this leaping together of the principles of truth from all parts of the domain of God, and from all the methods of the working of His will and power. There is,—there must be oneness and consistency in truth. To this element in it we have already referred,

and need not take up, at this time, its generic discussion. We now pass on, rather, to an inference growing out of it, and to its use in our argument, in verifying the great cardinal doctrines of the Bible, and seeing how they arrange themselves on the line of necessary truth, and cannot but be held as true by the legitimate working of the intelligence within us. This being done, something is gained,—yea, much,—very much is gained for the object before us. If the positions,—the recognitions,—the statements, and forms of doctrine and duty presented in the Bible, lie on the parallel of all truth,—if they are inherent and intrinsic verities; they are to be believed as such, and by us put into the *category* of all necessary and conceded truth.—And having thus attained their *essential* truth in the Bible, the question of their *authoritative* announcement there is the only one that can remain. You can only inquire after their involution, and incorporation with a body of further light and information there furnished. It is but a question of the further disclosure of the will and purpose of God concerning us, and the future of our being, on a basis which our own intelligence, and the fitness of things, supply.

If the Bible is a book of essential truths, on principles known to us,—if it lies in the elements, and floats in the atmosphere of all truth, as of necessity seen, by the intelligence within us, as false religions do not, then do we in this, make progress in the question of its authenticity as a Divine Revelation. Its basis is right. Absurdity cannot come of that which is thus conditioned. It is the legitimate and only basis of communications from God, in the way of revelation, and must be. The record is true in its elements, at any rate, and can but be received as such, and a concrete and authoritative system of doctrine and belief, ever based on these principles, and culminating from them, bespeaks our favor. It has, of right, “the prestige” in our beliefs. It has the elements of credibility, for the authoritative statements which it makes, and the claim it prefers, to be a Revelation from God. It further needs but the “*imprimatur*” of heaven. The case calls for, and admits of only the endorsement of those *attendant manifestations* and *interpositions*, in its behalf, which shall designate it as actually from God, and which *authenticate* it to us as His word, and will.

Shall we, then, apply this subject to the Bible, and see the basis of its doctrines and precepts, in the elements of essential and necessary truth. Our road will lie along the line of previous discussions, but will present the subject-matter of them in a new attitude, and for an additional purpose, and is needful to an adequate summary of the proofs of Divine Revelation.

1st. The Bible recognizes the *being* and *perfections* of the *one living and true God*.

This primary and fundamental truth of reason and nature, is primary and fundamental in the economy of instruction and belief in the Bible. It stands as a first-truth there, and interwoven with, and pervading all, it would have us know and believe. But the positions of the Bible, at this point, are too obvious to need repetition, and in respect to *the being, unity, and perfections* of God, we at once acknowledge that it teaches essential truth; and conceding this, we concede much for the claims of the Bible. This is the substratum of its communications; this underlies the whole framework of its revelations. The doctrine of the one God,—his personality, and infinite perfections,—his independence, and

sovereign authority, and inherent right, in and over creation and destiny, is the integral element of Bible truth ; its base line from which every offset, and distance, are calculated : and this, we know, to be essential, necessary truth. It is true whether in the Bible or not, and cannot be otherwise than true ; and being in the Bible, and there as the *basis* of the system of instructions given in it, of *itself* does much to sustain and legitimize the superstructure of manifestations resting upon it.

2d. The doctrine of an *intelligent providence*.

This is a truth of reason, and is illustrated in the whole economy of this dependent universe. But it is in the Bible too, general, superintending, minute, particular ; and the movements and destinies of all the created and dependent are put consistently and always under the guidance, wisdom, and goodness of God. Here, we again assert, is essential, necessary truth ; and it is no less true because it is in the Bible, and because its reality and relations to earth, and to man, and the problems of human destiny, are quickened into vitality there ;—because the being and perfections, and providence, and care and

strength of Jehovah are there appealed to, and confided in;—because prayer and praise, and worship are tendered him, and the practical duties of religion are described there. No; the legitimate basis of a revelation is in the recognition of these *first truths* of reason and nature.

3d. The *harmony* of the Bible with the *facts and laws of the universe*.

It was not given to teach the sciences. It has another, and a higher sphere. The argument at this point is of the nature of an undesigned coincidence; and it sets in bold relief the claims of the Bible as a revelation from God, and as founded in essential truth. It is simply this; that all truth is harmonious,—that one truth cannot conflict with another,—that each truth, standing on its own basis, and encompassed with its own relations, will be found on extended analysis, and wherever that analysis is carried, to be coincident and parallel with all other truth. This is precisely where all false religions fail, and where the Bible is triumphantly vindicated. Being true, and comprehensive of truth, it will not conflict with the facts and principles of the universe, whenever science shall discover them.

It may depend on its own resources,—make its own revelations,—pursue its own object and purpose, and fulfil its office, irrespective of modern discoveries in the astronomic heavens, or the geologic earth. It shall seem, indeed, to be regardless of them, and not to anticipate them. But when these discoveries *are* made, and the time of trial comes, it shall be found equal to the test. Yea, indeed, it will rise higher, and sink deeper than our knowledge of facts; and be framed on a scale of proportions, and have an amplitude of vision, embracing all necessary, all possible truth. And the reason is, it is true itself, and is given by inspiration of God, who knows all things. It is of course consistent with all truth, and cognizant of it; and when the optics of men become enlightened by the methods of science, they see this harmony, and that all previously alleged discrepancy is from defective vision, and want of legitimate, or competent interpretation.

4th. *The coincidence of the Bible with conscience.* We proceed now to the more ethical relations of the subject. I have before stated, that conscience is a necessitated faculty. Its intimations and conclusions are independent of the will. You cannot help feeling that

right is *obligatory*, and wrong *sinful*. No man would suffer the anguish of remorse, if he could throw it off at pleasure. Conscience demands supreme affection for God, and impartial regard for our fellow-men. It recognizes the question of duty, and the binding obligations of virtue. It is a function of our being which is inherent in our moral nature, and is the integral element of it, and of the intelligence that God has given us. But it is in the Bible also,—deferred to, expanded and perfected in its intimations and office-work, and rendered authoritative there.

The Bible enthrones it as "*de jure*," the reigning principle in us, and makes all its communications in accordance with this idea, and to the intent that conscience should reign "*de facto*." This it does from the top of Sinai, in the full proportions, and definitive statements of the moral law, and through the length and breadth of its teachings, in every injunction and precept. All its communications are in adjustment with this element of our being, and the sense of essential rightness in the soul, and its peace with God, and with all *within* us and all without.

This coalescence of the Bible with con-

science, in the elements of all morality, shows indubitably its foothold in essential truth, and the *inherent validity* of its claims to our regard and confiding trust. It cannot be otherwise than true in its elements, for they are the inheritance of our being as we came from the hand of God. They are impressed on the soul itself, and on all the relations of truth with which it is conversant.

But we must descend more into specific illustration of the generic position here taken, —and remark,

5th. The Bible teaches *submission* to the *will* of God,—submission as a duty inherently, obligatory, and necessitated. Its doctrine is not an advisory subjection to fate, as in false religions, and because resistance is unavailing. It asserts the morality of our relations to God, and completes the demands of conscience. It comprehends the ideas of the reason, which assert that submission, cordial and implicit, is due to the absolute and perfect One,—the Jehovah of hosts. The Bible doctrine here is founded in elementary truth. It rises out of natural religion as well as revealed. It is inherently true, and right, and obligatory, and cannot be otherwise; and when authoritatively

incorporated in the informations of a revealed economy of doctrine, it cannot but be true and right, and obligatory *there*. It is a principle of necessary truth, and being impressed on the whole face of the Bible, endorses its claim as a book of truth,—the book of God.

6th. The harmony of the Bible with the *principles of all righteousness*. This might be inferred from what has been said; but a further view is important, to the full expression of this conformity.

Right is precisely what it is. It has no degrees of comparison. Any deviation from it is wrong. It is so in mathematics,—it is so in morals, and in our relations to God and to one another. The sense of right is deeper in the soul than the love of happiness. The “ought,” even in childhood, is the deepest and most ultimate conviction and appeal in the being of the soul. Its claims can be adjusted on no merely *utilitarian* scale. Right is not expediency simply. It is not a mere calculation of benefits. It is not right, because it is good, but good, because it is right. It is the primary element, and not an attribute of the relation suggested. It lies in the necessary relations of the infinite to us. It is the

will of Jehovah, according to the eternal relations and fitness of things. And this is the law of God, and reason sees it to be right, and that any deviation from it is wrong, and *remediless*. I repeat it: our intelligent nature apprehends the *irremediable* effects of transgression, and that there is no redemption from the consequences of sin, in a purely legal economy,—that a *single* sin is eternal wrong, and must remain so, and can never be adjusted or compensated for, on the simple elements of a moral system;—that aberration is utter, irretrievable loss, without the possibility or hope of recovery. If undeviating righteousness is my duty, and I fall from it, how can I recover myself, and stand before God acquitted, on grounds of law? Neither law nor conscience will submit to it. No. I am a fallen being, and I never can henceforth be right, in my moral relations, on a simply legal economy of things. Reason avers this; conscience endorses it. Punishment does not blot out sin,—penalty does not. You can never get to the end of its desert in the direction of penalty. One falsehood will press you down forever. Conscience will never say it is enough, and that the claims of law are satis-

fied, and all is right again. She knows no end to suffering, in the direction of penalty, for one wrong. By the principles of eternal righteousness, that wrong holds me, without strength in myself,—powerless, and forever under the grasp and condemnation of the violated law. It cannot be otherwise. If one sin does not forfeit the favor of God, and the terms of life on grounds of law, ten thousand cannot. The first sin has the element of all; and of course reason sees it, and conscience feels it to be *remediless*, and the transgressor without hope from law.

But here the Bible meets you, in direct statement, and in the full concurrence of its doctrines and economy of truth. ‘He that offendeth in one point, is guilty of all.’ ‘Cursed is he that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.’

Thus, too, Paradise was lost on the ground of the *first* transgression, and no hope extended to man, henceforth, on terms of law, and the principle of personal desert. The covenant of works, as it is sometimes called, was broken up and surrendered.

All that has since been done for man, concedes the remediless and hopeless loss and

ruin which came upon him by the one transgression. Its consequence was death and only death, and the displeasure of God; and there the economy left, and must leave, the transgressor.

Turn to the Sermon on the Mount, so full of the first principles of ethical philosophy. No one has ever uttered so many first-truths of reason, as Jesus himself, who came from the bosom of the *Infinite Reason*. Observe Him in this wonderful epitome of generic truth: every thought settles back into the fundamental idea above suggested, and culminates from the basis of the unalterable claims of law. Specifications are made continually there, which go to sharpen the points of the morality of law, and give a higher analysis to its scope and sanctions. 'Think not that I am come to destroy the law,'—'till heaven and earth pass, one jot or tittle shall in *nowise* pass from the law.' On the ruling of instructions there given, intent to kill is murder,—a wanton look is adultery,—the love of enemies a duty, and the precept unhesitatingly given, 'Be ye therefore *perfect*, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.' And here is essential truth, found alike

in the ideas of the reason,—in the conscience, and in the Bible,—the disturbance of which would break up the fundamental elements of a moral system, and reduce the intelligent universe to chaos. It is truth which we must believe, and from which we cannot escape. For surely, is right any thing less than right? and may we be less than perfect, and be as we should be?

But here, then, is the coincidence and necessary truth of the Bible. Its principles hinge here. This is the pervading element of its instructions, in respect to the nature and action of law, and personal righteousness,—and on this basis, and in submission to it, is built the entire superstructure of grace.—As appears,

7th. In the Bible doctrine of *mediation*.

Our minds can see no help for man in sin, on principles of law, but by substitution and equivalents. There must be a days-man,—a Mediator, whose sacrifice shall honor the law, if its penalties be remitted,—and this is the revealed economy of the Gospel. It is Christ crucified; and through a voluntary atonement of the Son of God, opening the way of mercy. Reason may never have devised this way.

She surely could never have authenticated it as an actuality from heaven in our behalf. But when revealed thence, and in heaven's own light, on our pathway to destruction, she *can* see its relevancy, and its necessity, and its *position*, too, in the range of essential and necessary truth.

And thus this cardinal doctrine of the Christian revelations, not only commends itself to the affections of the soul for its *love* and *mercy*, but carries also the intelligence with it, as fulfilling the *conditions* of law.

8th. The Christian doctrine of *repentance*.

In one who has sinned, repentance is indispensable to rightness of heart again. It is so from the nature of mind and truth. There can be no rectitude of spirit in him, or in his moral relations, until this occurs. Acknowledgment of his wrong is the *first* right thing the sinner can do. All is wrong till this is done, and nothing else can stand in the place of it. This is so at the forum of the conscience, as well as of the Bible. It lies in the elements of all truth and rectitude.

Forgiveness not only cannot be administered to us without repentance of sin in us, but we cannot take it,—we cannot use it without.

Our own minds will revolt, and say we are unworthy, and have not in us the prerequisites for pardon.

Try it at the fireside. You sin against parental authority. You bear false witness or you cheat, or steal. Can you have forgiveness,—can you *accept it*, while you fellowship your sin? Is not impenitence a bar in your way, and would it not be, forever? Is not the first gush of right emotion in the soul inherently, just that which the Gospel requires? ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and in Thy sight.’ You feel that you are a truant and a hypocrite, and an *outlaw* till then, and your sin gnaws at your heartstrings till you get exactly here. *This* done, and you can feel reconciled, and take forgiveness, and look up, and say ‘My Father.’

Thus the Bible condition of mercy is the essential element of rectitude in the wrongdoer, without which forgiveness is inherently incompatible,—reconciliation out of the question, and personal acceptance before God, a solecism.

In close affinity with these thoughts, we may refer,

9th. To the Christian doctrine of *faith*, as the condition of life.

When one has no righteousness of his own, what shall he do but betake himself to a righteousness that is provided for him?—when without strength in himself, but rely on an arm stretched out to save him?—when in himself undone, and sinking in guilt and despair, but ‘look to the Lamb of God, who taketh away sin?’

But this is Gospel *faith*, and it is just what the sinner can do, and the only thing he can do, in the way of being justified, and the only thing the case admits of. Combined with sorrow for sin, it is just the affection that is intuitively in the subject as a philosophical truth. Faith is both subjectively and objectively the required affection, apposite to all the relations of a positive economy of salvation by *grace*. It is the only principle of approach to, and connection with such an economy on our part, and is obviously integral to our deliverance from sin, and our acceptance with God.

10th. Eternal life to the sinner is in the Bible denominated a *recovery*,—a *redemption*,—a deliverance,—a salvation; and if sin is

fatal to the soul, as reason avers, what else could it be? If the claims of the law are right, and obligatory, and final loss and ruin are the inheritance of wrong,—what else could eternal life be but a rescue,—a deliverance,—a redemption through grace? The Gospel has it in its true, and philosophical, and essential relations, when it speaks of propitiation by the blood of Christ, ‘That God may be just, and the justifier of him which *believeth* in *Jesus*.’

11th. The *foundation of morality in religion*. If there were no God there could be no morality. Our inward constitution, if as now, would claim it, but it would have no objective response and ground of obligation. Duty to God antedates all other responsibility. Atheism can preach—can have no legitimate accountability. The vital element of a moral system is not in it. Conventional regulations it may treat of, and get up questions of expediency; but what shall give them the force of law? Why am I bound to speak the truth, or keep my word, or regard my neighbor’s reputation, or property, or life?—or even any conventional rules that I may agree to? All sin is against God, and if there be no Divine

jurisdiction, there is none anywhere, and the words law and obligation are a misnomer among men. We may not reply that reason and conscience plead for morality, and aver that it is inherent in our being and relations. So they do for God, and aver that He is, and that we are under law to Him. They belong to a system of which He is the author, and are out of place and out of play within the precincts of atheism. They could be but half truths there, and without objective validity and obligation. And hence the *essential basis* of morality is where the Bible places it, in the sense of God, and of accountability to Him.

Finally. The principle of *love* as a doctrine and requirement of the Bible. Love is the essential rectitude of the soul and of intelligent beings. 'God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God.' As all the primary colors blend in pure white, and constitute it, so all the perfections of God meet and mingle in love, and constitute Him the One, infinitely loving and lovely. Thus too, 'all the law is fulfilled in this one word, which is *love*;' and this is the all-pervading element of the Bible, and sum of its requisitions. This

it gives as the perfection of the Divine and Infinite—this it seeks as the perfection of the human—and this is eternal—necessary truth in morals, and rectitude in being. This is conformity to right. It is the absolute perfection of the intelligence, and must be: the mind can conceive of no other. All false religions are defective and inadequate here—and here the Bible stands on an eminence of glory, bathed in heaven's own light.

Whence has it this wisdom and knowledge?—this embodiment in all *possible rectitude* and truth; but that it is 'given by inspiration of God?' Whence has it everywhere this basis in the necessary ideas of the reason—this incidental coincidence and establishment in all inherent truth—in that which we cannot but know is true, whenever and wherever discovered, and which when made known, we cannot reject as truth more than we can the intelligence within us; while, at the same time it proceeds on its own resources to its mission in the full communications and disclosures of the spiritual, the unseen, and the future? I ask again, whence has the Bible this, but that it is of God, in mercy revealed to us for doctrine, and correction, and reproof,

and instruction in righteousness, that we may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works?

And hence it is safe to act on the principles recognized in the Bible. They have Divine endorsement, as embodied there, as we shall see, but they are inherently true and in harmony with all truth. They cannot lead us astray. It is good anchorage ground. If we get there, winds and waves shall never drive us from our moorings, or rocks and quicksands disturb us. We shall ride out the storms of life, and make at length a peaceful haven.

The *requirements* of the Bible also are not *arbitrary*. They are innately right and obligatory; they lie in an element of essential rectitude. We could not have forgiveness without repentance and submission to God. From the nature of all truth and of our own being we could not take it without. Penitence is essentially the condition of mind in which to be forgiven. Love is integral goodness, and without it we have none. Faith is inherent in the relation of the sinner to salvation through Grace. So with all the requisitions of the Gospel. They are based in neces-

sary truth. We have no rectitude of spirit without them. There is no restoration of soul for us into the right relations of our being but in their use and by their ministry;—and hence the legitimacy and force of their appeal.

CHAPTER IX.

THE BIBLE AUTHENTIC.

THUS far our course of thought has lain over the domain of essential, intuitive truth. We have traced it in the necessary ideas of the *reason*—in *nature*, and the *Bible*, and seen its substantive harmony in all. We have referred to some of the analogies and reciprocities which subsist between these three sources of truth, and their conformity in common with the necessary laws of belief in the intelligence.

We have seen that the great economy of doctrine and instruction in the Bible, is of necessity true,—that its basis in the recognition of the one Supreme Jehovah, infinite and perfect—of his work in creation and providence—of his sovereignty,—righteous rule and

law, is intuitively manifest; and that its doctrine of the intelligence and responsibility of man,—his sin, and fall, and his utter and irrecoverable loss and ruin thereby, on grounds of law, as well as the principle of restoration for him by a sacrificial atonement, and the conditions of his forgiveness in *repentance, faith* and *love*; are all in the elements of essential truth. We have observed that in all these respects, the Bible hinges on those principles of eternal truth which cannot be gainsayed,—that its doctrines are of the nature of first truths, which lie at the basis of all investigation, and which can be rejected only by ignoring the legitimacy of reason, and stultifying our own intelligence.

A manifest confirmation of this is found in the fact, that no one has had the hardihood to attack the fundamental principles, or body of doctrine in the Bible, or come to his task with any just apprehension of what *are* its contents. Objections have perched on some light wing of the superstructure,—on some mistranslation,—or misinterpretation, or some inadequate comprehension of the truth, from the darkness that rested on the mind of the inquirer,—some distortion of a fact or a sen-

timent, and the wrenching of them from their real relations.

But the grand basis of doctrine in the Bible has never been disturbed, nor ever can be, for it interlocks with the necessary laws of belief and truth in the soul of man. You may as well deny the principles of the mathematics, as those of the doctrines and duties presented in the Bible. As well may you deny that two and two make four,—that a right line is the shortest possible between two points,—or that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right ones, or that the whole of a thing is greater than a part of it; as to deny that *supreme love* is due to God,—that *right* is obligatory,—that gratitude is a meet response for favors received, or that *love* is the essential *rectitude* of the soul;—as well give up reason and conscience altogether, as to deny that grace is the only resort when sin occurs, and forgiveness through atonement to the penitent, relying and loving one,—the only way of righteousness, and method of salvation.

This, then, being the basis of Bible truth, from which it goes forth in all its communications of the supernatural and the future, and

comes to us in the full detail of its authoritative developments and record; the inquiry is legitimate as to what further *testimonials* are needed, that it is a Revelation from God, and is worthy of our acceptance as the authorized expression of His will. We have the essential truth of its doctrines, what more do we need?

The further question is obviously that of *authentication*. Has the Bible the "*imprimatur*" of heaven?

We ask not merely or mainly here as to its essential truths or truthfulness, and credibility in respect to the elements of its teachings. These we have gained already. The inquiry goes to the evidence of their embodiment from God in the Bible, and the associated economy of instructions *there*, that we may have the assurance that it is given by inspiration of God, and that Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, and that through them God has given us the *Revelation of His will* in the Bible.

This it is plain could be done, and this authentication given only in the way of a *miraculous providence*. The case admits of nothing else, and claims just this. The Bible

claims to be a Revelation from God to us. It implies then, and assumes the being of God and our being, and the elements of all essential truth. Its business is to bring to light on this basis, those things needed or not otherwise discoverable, and to present them in a tangible and authoritative form.

And what interposition and attestation in behalf of this can be imagined, that does not lie within the range of a miraculous providence? The substratum we have, in the inherent reasonableness of the things communicated. What *co-ordinate* and *objective* sources of authentication are there in the nature of the case, other than that above referred to?

The more I look at the subject, the more it appears obvious, that other methods of authentication would be anomalous and inconceivable, and that they would, if in themselves possible, be monstrous, and without effect on the mind. All legitimate, external proofs of a communicated, divine revelation, after its basis is seen in essential truth, must arrange themselves within a broad sense of God's *miraculous* interposition and providence in its behalf.

And just this the Bible has.

A *miracle* is an event, aside from the course of nature, or that cannot be accounted for on the known and established laws of providence. It is the hand of God setting aside the laws of nature in a given instance, and producing an event that they would not. It is the raising of the dead,—with a word giving soundness to the lame, or sight to the blind,—causing thus the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.

Such an event must be from the Author of nature, interposing to give it being by a special exertion of power, and as we may know for a sufficient reason. It derives its convicting proof and power from the uniformity of the laws of nature as an ordinary economy.

No one but God can work a miracle, and he would work a miracle for no unworthy end. Hence when wrought, it is a manifestation of the hand and power of God, and His declaration to us of the truth, and divinity, and value of *that*, in *behalf* of which it is wrought.

It is *effective* and *conclusive* at this point. Appealed to and wrought in behalf of a doctrine or economy of truth, or system of faith claiming to be from God, and that the mes-

senger of it is His messenger, and is to be accredited as such; it is every way competent and conclusive. It is direct, comprehensive, appreciable, definitive, and perfect. It stands on the foundation that God alone can be its author, and that He would not sanction falsehood. It is His endorsement, and *that* which He endorses must be *true*, and to be accredited in its claims.

True coin, may be followed by counterfeits; but counterfeits prove the existence of true coin, of which they are the counterfeit, as the genuine miracles of the Bible are manifested as true by the fabulous pretensions that have followed in the legends of Popery and elsewhere.

A miracle is not an unaccountable event. Reason does not reject it. It is but the author of nature,—but the hand and power of God in a new and special attitude for a special purpose, and from a good and sufficient reason, and thus sanctioning that for us which in itself is beyond and above us, and of which we could not be otherwise certified. It is but the voice of God saying to us, this is from me, receive it—‘this is my Son, hear him,’—this man is the prophet of God, and Baal’s prophets are a lie;—these

men, speaking the languages of the nations without learning them, are my messengers for the propagation of my revealed will, as published by them to all people.

The due authentication of the miracle is all that the mind asks, and that the time, place, and circumstances abundantly verify the fact.

And these are just those which attend the Divine interposition in behalf of the revealed economy of God's word, and which stamp the seal of heaven on the Bible.

My purpose does not lead me into a minute examination and detail of this subject. My object is gained if I may but indicate the lines of thought belonging to it, and refer to some precincts of the range of truth within which it is comprehended.

The miraculous providence of God wrought in attestation of the Bible, and giving it Divine authority as the record of His will, may be contemplated under *three* heads, that seen in the *communication* and *care* of it,—that of *prophecy*, and that of *specific miracles* wrought in proof of the given message, or doctrine, or subject, or messenger referred to, appealing to God for His sanction in this way on their behalf.

I shall but attempt a brief reference to the subject under these heads, as summarily embracing the attestation of that miraculous providence which guarantees to us the Divine authority of the Bible.

1st. Its *communication* and *care*. To my own mind the first verse in the Bible proves that book to be a revelation from God. I see not how that verse could have been written under the circumstances, but by inspiration from Him.

How came Moses by the wisdom to do it? He and his people were in the midst of all surrounding heathenism. Why not be heathens too, and on a level with the rest of men? In contact with all the various and conflicting cosmogonies of the world, with 'Lords many, and Gods many,' how came he to give us that succinct statement of exact truth in respect to the relations of the infinite and the finite—the absolute and the conditioned—the uncreated and eternal to the created and phenomenal? How did he get the exact and unembarrassed expression of that great first truth of all religion, which the science and thought of all ages since cannot improve in one iota. '*In the beginning God created the*

heavens and the earth.' How graphic, and how clear,—how antagonistic to all the prevailing and legitimized theories of his time; and how triumphant over them in the scope of its vision, and the comprehension of its thought. It is like a sun shot into chaos.

The truth, when stated, commends itself to all science and research for all time, and ever must. But how came Moses there to state it?—unhesitatingly, and without error, or misgivings, to open his Genesis of the universe in this way, and thus and then to be wiser indeed than the world is yet? What but the tutelage of the Divinity on high prepared and filled his mind, and guided his pen?

The same inquiry is in place in respect to all the Books, both of the Old and New Testament, as to the subject-matter of their composition, and the preparation and endowment of those composing them. They are before us. We see what they contain. History indicates the process of their compilation from age to age, down through successive dynasties of empires, and every change in the condition of the Jewish people, which were chosen as the depository of them, until Christ came, and then of the New Testament Revelations, down

to the closing of the volume, in the visions of John on Patmos.

All is authenticated abundantly every way among the facts of history. But whence the wisdom they utter?—the unearthly and spiritual communications they make,—their consent of testimony, and unity of doctrine and spirit,—their full effulgence of light on the great principles of natural religion, and their unflinching and undeviating harmony with all righteousness, while they culminate in an apex of light and glory pointing to the heavens? It is conceivable only on the principle of a *Divine inspiration*. It could be only on the ground that holy men of God were selected of Him along the track of Jewish history and the Jewish people, and that they spake and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; and that the Books of the Bible, both in matter and in manner of composition, were the result of an influence and help, unerring and efficient on the minds of those, who, as instruments, were employed in them—an influence and guidance which are above nature and an ordinary providence.

The subject might be pursued in detail to any extent, but I pass to that attestation of

the Bible as a system of continuous Divine revelations, which is found,

2d. *In prophecy.* This is part of a miraculous providence, and in harmony with that long train of specific miracles which attest the Divine origin of the Bible. The events foretold may or may not, in their fulfilment, be miraculous, but the foretelling of them is

Prophecy is not a gift of the human mind. Shrewd guesses may be made respecting things near at hand from indications of them already before us, or from the analogies of thought and experience among men. But this is a matter wholly insignificant when set by the side of those stupendous prophecies in the Bible, which look on hundreds and thousands of years into the future of society and of the race, and with precision and exactness foretell what shall be, down the vista of coming time, and under forms of thought and habits of being utterly new and diverse from the periods of their prophetic announcement. Who, but by inspiration of God, could have predicted the redemption of Israel from their bondage in Egypt, of four hundred years,—their restoration as a people to Canaan, and their subsequent prosperity there—or given that minute

programme of Joseph's life, which is included therein? Who could have foretold the Babylonish captivity of 70 years, or the coming and birth of Jesus—of the Virgin Mary—of His death by crucifixion—His rising again the third day—the reception of His Gospel by the Gentiles, and His rejection by the Jews, as a people; or would venture on those many special prophecies of a more individual and defined scope and object, which are contained in the New Testament?

The truth is, the whole Bible is very much an economy of prophecies, and their fulfilment. It is everywhere instinct with the life of a miraculous providence in this respect. It is comprehensive of the past, the present, and the future, 'declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done.' There is in it a reference back to the creation, and forward to the consummation of all things;—a development of the origin and fall, and early history of man, and of the first peopling of the earth, and the diffusion of the nations over it, such as is nowhere else found, and such as demands a divine illumination and guidance equally with the forecasting of future events, and all

verified by the investigations of science and ethnological research, in these latter days. If we may so speak, there is a prophetic afflatus breathing through the Bible. Its history is inspired. Its whole framework and economy embraces both past and future. It shows itself, and the things it details, and the interests it has in charge, to be in the hands of One who comprehends nature, and truth, and futurity, and who is equally conversant with what shall be, as with what is. The presiding intelligence there can as well inform Abraham of his relation to the future of society, as remind him of his coming from Ur of the Chaldees, and foreshow that his seed shall in an after time inherit the land of Canaan; that he shall be the father of many nations, and that in his seed shall all nations be blessed;—can as well give Joseph a dream that shall depict the certain *future* of his people as the *existing* hatred of his brethren;—as well fill the minds of the prophets with visions of Zion's future glory, as with the sense of her existing trials;—as well show to John in the Apocalypse the events of a more distant future, even to the descent of the New Jerusalem from God out of heaven, as those

'*which shall shortly come to pass.*' All are given as parts of a whole in naturalness and order, as belonging to a scheme of things.— All are a comprehensive development of the design and relations of the great aim proposed in the Bible, so that we may say, that if God is in history, and in His ordinary providence, then, with an emphasis peculiar and striking, is He in the Bible; and with a comprehension of His being, and a manifestation of His attributes, elsewhere unknown, is showing us *there* the law of the moral and the spiritual in relation to the past, the present, and the future.

3d. In this web of destiny,—in this economy of the spiritual,—the special,—the divine,—has God interwoven the thread of *specific miracles*, and here and there, as the case needed, and as would substantiate and verify the system of truth propounded, has given the attestation which His interposition in that way infallibly secures.

A miracle bespeaks no more the power of God, than does the course of events in His ordinary providence. Its attestation lies in arresting that course for a *specific* purpose. It should not be often repeated, or be long continued, in a dispensation, as then it would

lose its significance, and become itself a course of nature. Its appropriate office-work lies at the inception of an order of things, or of an economy of doctrine, or a message of truth, or the introduction of a herald, professing to come from God. It is in its nature special, and belongs to *such* an exigency, and is in place there. It is the answer of God to such an appeal, and when given, is valid for that purpose, and is the seal of God on that doctrine or message for all time afterwards. It is given not so much to establish the *inherent truth* of a doctrine, or message, or announcement, or economy of manifestation, as the *divine authorship* and *authority* of it, in the given connection, and to show that the system in behalf of which it is wrought, has the sanction of God as His revealed will.

This is the design of miracles, in the Bible.

Shall we, then, refer to some few of them, for the double purpose of indicating their existence and object.

The first miracle wrought by Christ was at the wedding in Cana of Galilee, in turning at His word the water into wine. 'This beginning of miracles,' says the record, 'did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and *manifested* forth

His glory, and His disciples *believed* on Him.' And shortly after, when in Jerusalem at the Passover, on the feast day, 'many believed in His name, when they saw the *miracles* which He did.' No words will set this matter in a better light than those in the Gospel record. 'I have greater witness,' says Christ, 'than that of John (the Baptist), for the *works* which the Father hath given me to finish, the same *works* that I do bear *witness* of me, that the *Father hath sent* me.' 'If I do not the works of the Father, believe me not; but if I *do*, though ye believe not *me*, believe the *works*, that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in Him.'

Thus, also, at the grave of Lazarus. 'I knew,' says Christ, addressing the Father, 'that thou hearest me always, but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may *believe* that thou hast sent me.' 'And when He had thus spoken, He cried with a loud voice, *Lazarus, come forth*. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes. Jesus saith unto them, loose him, and let him go. Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, *believed* on Him:

Then gathered the chief priests and Pharisees a council, and said, what do we? for this man doeth *many miracles*. If we let Him thus alone, *all men will believe* on Him.' 'Many other signs truly did Jesus,' says the Evangelist, 'in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written, that ye might *believe* that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.'

The same testimony pervades the Bible, and garrisons round about the connected economy of the truth it reveals.

I ask, further, but a reference to that stupendous miracle, in behalf of the claims of the Prophet Elijah, when he stood up alone in Israel as the prophet of God, confronted by the four hundred priests of Baal. It is at the 18th chapter of 1st Kings. 'As the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench, all the people fell on their faces, and they said, *The Lord, he is the God*: Jehovah, he is the God.' Here, both the fact and office-work, as well as the legitimate effect of an economy of miracles, in a Revelation from God, are triumphantly manifested, and the complete-

ness of the miracle as a Divine seal upon a system of doctrine and instruction propounded to us in His name. It would not endorse error, for that would not get its sanction. It could not mislead, for God is truth. But it *does* authenticate truth, and a system of revelations built thereon, as being *authoritatively* the will of God to us, and completes for the Bible all the authentication it needs, or that the case admits of, that it is a *Divine Revelation*.

We have, then, for the Bible, an inherent truthfulness,—a superhuman inspiration and development of the great future and spiritual of our being, and a positive divine interposition, setting upon it the hand and seal of God. The idea that it could be otherwise than of God, is preposterous in the extreme. Do you *want* proof that man did not make the world, or pile up the mountains on it, or speak forth the sun in the heavens, or put the stars there? Study the contents of that book,—analyze its economy of doctrine, and drink in its spirit. Strive to draw its scope into your view, and to exhaust its conceptions. We have only to begin in earnest this work, to find ourselves

launched on an ocean of truth, shoreless,—fathomless,—immortal.

Dr. Beattie, of Scotland, once said, that he never knew a man of any reputation for candor and honesty of mind, who both made himself acquainted with the *contents* of the Bible and disbelieved it. Soame Jenyns, the prince of English sceptics of his day, accepted a commission from them to write a book against the Bible. But on sitting down to his task, he was struck with the conviction of his profound ignorance of the contents of the book whose claims he would invalidate. He *must* then take up the study of it, at least enough to know what were his more salient points of attack upon it. He had not proceeded far before his infidelity took flight, and he saw God in the Bible,—and it is creditable to him to say that his book, when published, proved to be a neat and competent defence of the claims of the Bible, and a warm commendation of it as a Divine Revelation. Thus it will ever be found, that our sceptical notions come more of a *bad* heart than a *sound* head. Ignorance, prejudice, and impatience of restraint from conscience and religion, and a corrupt life, have been the great agencies in

leading men to undervalue the Bible. But this is a profitless work. Infidelity has in it no truth,—no love,—no help. It is an economy of mere negations,—cold as moonbeams on polar snows,—drear as midnight. It is suicidal to the soul, and death to the best interests and destinies of men.

Revelation is no enemy to reason, or to any just principles of enlightened theism: it is inclusive of them, as our course of thought has abundantly manifested. It is comprehensive of all truth otherwise made known, while it brings down to us, and spreads before us those inexhaustible treasures of knowledge peculiar to itself, and becomes thus 'that more sure word of prophecy unto which we do well to give heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in our hearts.'

CHAPTER X.

THE BIBLICAL SYSTEM PURE AND EXCLUSIVE.

THUS far we have, in a brief way, passed over the chief foundations on which the *truth* of religion rests. We have traced the main lines of evidence which connect the *Biblical system* with all inherent and necessary truth. We have referred to that miraculous providence by which the Bible is attested in a tangible and positive form, as the book of God, and by which it is guaranteed to our acceptance, as the authenticated revelation of his will.

Still there are further selections from its exhaustless storehouse of ideas which we do well to appreciate, both for their collateral influence on our main design, and their resultant bearing on the problems of the age, and on the destiny of man. Our position now is:—*the Biblical system pure and exclusive.*

It contains the elements of all righteousness, and holds no communion with what is *false* in faith or *wrong* in practice. This might be expected of it as a Divine Revelation, and not otherwise; and that it would be antagonistic of error, and uncompromising in its morality. God is righteous,—God is one. The race of man is one, homologous in character, necessity and destiny; and hence a divinely revealed system of truth, will regard both of these elements; and be in its nature pure and exclusive,—and in its design and tendency, aggressive and universal. To see that the Bible is so, in fact, falls into the scope of the present chapter.

The divine purity and holiness of the Bible, may be exhibited in many aspects, and in every variety of form and way. Indeed the field of view is so ample here, that we know not where to enter it;—so fragrant with flowers and fruits, that we know not what to select,—so rich with gems, and so bright in its effulgence, that the power of analysis seems gone, and the mind is borne down and dazzled in the full galaxy of its light. ‘Thy word is *very pure*, therefore thy servant loveth it.’

A reference may here be made to the *in-*

stitutes of worship presented in the Bible,—to its *adhesion* to law,—to its *vicarious atonement*, and to its *general economy* of doctrine and precept. Particular statutes may be appealed to,—its requirement of the affections of the heart as its essential claim,—its general tone and spirit, and that state of sinless purity and perfection, which is its aim and ultimate reward in heaven.

Its *institutes of worship* are true to the claims of the one only living and true God. Though its basis is laid and its superstructure reared in the midst of all-surrounding heathenism; it holds 'no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness,' or the 'lying vanities' of the nations. In the voice from Sinai it proclaims:—'Thou shalt have no other Gods before me.'—'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.' It eschews the claims of all fictitious divinities, and holds the mind undeviatingly to the worship of the one *true* God.

The Jewish economy has this characteristic, as contradistinguished from the rites of heathen worship. Its framework of ceremonies was to this intent, and though typical of Him who *should come*, and of the sacrifice

He should make, and the unveiled spirituality of the dispensation, which he should usher in; all bespeak the holiness of God, and the purity of his worship. *They* must be clean, who bear the vessels of the sanctuary. The statutes and ordinances, and ceremonial pollutions and cleansings, and divers washings of the typical economy, all show the same thing.

The New Testament economy also is pure, and spiritual. Its leading and graphic formula of worship is in the words, 'God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him, must worship Him in spirit and in truth.'

In the Bible we descry also an undeviating adherence to *law* and *right*. It propounds the fundamental elements of all law, in the tables of stone from Sinai, and in the comprehensive summary of Christ in the Gospels,—'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,' &c.,—'and thy neighbor as thyself.' Its *ethical* system is based upon these elements. Its theory is 'the wisdom which is from above, which is *first* pure and then peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated.' It never compromises first principles. It founds morality in religion, and religion in the being, perfections, worship, and love of God. This is the lucid

order of the Bible everywhere. Read the devotional books at any point. You see the same reference,—the same pervading element of duty to God, and the moral standard of his own perfections as the gauge and encouragement of all right affections in us. ‘Be ye holy, for I am holy,’ saith the Lord. ‘Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father, which is in heaven, is perfect.’

Adhesion to law is also the characteristic feature of the *atonement*. The death of Christ is a sacrifice to the principle of law, and with a view to the impediments to forgiveness, found in the *administration* of law. The Gospel thus honors eternal righteousness, and asks exemption for the sinner only on the ground of that vicarious equivalent, furnished ‘in the offering up of Jesus once for all.’

The *conditions* of mercy, too, are true to the original and inherent standard of right. They embody essential righteousness. Repentance is the only and the essential restoration of him who has sinned. What else can he do?—how else can he feel, and feel right? He is without works of supererogation or merit, and can make no amends for sin. Repentance in him is his essential rectitude. It

justifies God,—acknowledges the wrong done, and rectifies the state of the heart, and that is all the case admits of. It is a return to God,—it is restoration and reconciliation. Forgiven and accepted, through the atonement which here meets the sinner, he is reconciled to God, and passes into the right relations of his being. It is the legitimate as it is the only restoration of him who has done wrong. We are familiar with the principle in the family, and everywhere in the intercourse of life. The doctrine of faith sustains it, as recorded in the Bible.

Where personal righteousness is gone, its only equivalent is found in the justifying righteousness of Him ‘who bore our sins,’ and we *rely* upon it there; so that in all the Gospel we lose not sight of the sanctions and sanctity of law. ‘The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul;—the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart. The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever. The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.’ This is our unalloyed conviction

when we sit down to the study of the Bible. We never rise from it without feeling that we have been enveloped in an atmosphere of pure and uncompromising truth. We are impressed with the conviction that its spirit is heavenly, and its aim to purify us from all that is wrong, and transform us into the image of God again, from glory to glory.

And this is an excellence *peculiar* to the Bible. It requires the *heart* for God. It is comprehensive of our moral relations, and of their adjustment before a holy God, and in view of the essential rectitude of all moral being and government.

This we do not find elsewhere. The mythologies of the heathen are the result of the apostasy. They have grown up in the depravities of the heart, and they pander to the sinful desires of the flesh and the spirit. They *are*, 'because men *did not like* to retain God in their knowledge,'—because of 'our vain imaginations and foolish hearts.' The philosophy of them "*en masse*," is given in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, as well as of all the excrescences and superstitions which, in professedly Christian countries, have been appended to, and

have obstructed the sway of the truth as it is in Jesus Christ.

But the Bible repudiates them all. This it will, if it is a Revelation from God. They are imperfect, inadequate, and false; and 'what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness, and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?' This is the verdict of reason, as well as the dictate of inspiration. How can truth fellowship error, or light dwell with darkness? They are innately exclusive and antagonistical.

Moreover, religion has existence as a dictate of reason and conscience, and has in charge the highest interests of man and the soul;—it will not lie dormant within us.

The Bible has in it the elements of a mighty activity. It is meant for man and the race. It is comprehensive of truth and duty, and must cross the pathway of error, and confound it. It must be aggressive in its movements, and universal in its tendency.

We have an adage to the intent that "truth is mighty, and must prevail." It is consonant to reason and our own constituent

being, which, when enlightened by the Word of God, and energized by His Spirit, must hold the Biblical economy as superior to any system of mere human device ; and we scarcely need the ken of prophecy in the Bible to prove that it must be destructive of all false religions, and at length become the *regenerator* of the world.

This problem, indeed, is now working out itself in the manifest indices of providence, and the indisputable tendencies of society, and of the changes among men. This is becoming a law of human development,—so much so, that one of the most astute and far-reaching minds of the age,* has predicted “the eventual universality of the Gospel on the earth, from the fact of its *truth*, and agreement with the laws of belief and the principles of reason inherent in the soul. It will impinge on error, and prevail against it. When revealed and brought really to the intelligence and consciences of men, it is of the nature of a first-truth, which common sense will not give up,—which will eventually break through the barriers of ignorance, and prejudice, and superstition, and falsehood, and sin, and the oppo-

* Lord Brougham. Nat. Theology.

sition of the heart, and enthrone itself on the altars and hearth-stones of all people.”

This is surely a desirable vision. It may at least show the process of the world's conversion to truth and holiness, and with the guarantee of heaven in the word, for this end, we may joyfully confide in and anticipate it.

But the thought on which we have fallen here is one of much interest, and may well receive additional expansion. There *is* hope for the world in the vitality of truth, and in its coincidence with the principles of thought and conviction within us. Conscience is of right the reigning faculty in the soul. Revelation locks in with the great principles of our being, and mutually verifies and is verified by them. It stands on a basis of truth as recognized by reason, and our own moral sense; as illustrated by natural religion, and ascertained in the researches of science; and we have much to expect for it, and its universal prevalence as a system of faith, from the fact that it is *true*. The minds of men seldom lose their hold of first principles in moral truth. Witness this in the history of the slave-trade, and of slavery in every aspect. The subject will never be surrendered until the question is

settled on a right basis. So with the question of human rights in other aspects of it,—of international law,—of war and of the doctrine of individual responsibility and claims. The world can never be put back to the Ptolemaic system of astronomy, and will soon learn to treat as puerile, the pretensions of the Pope and the divine right of kings.

Science and general intelligence favor the spread of revealed truth. They help the mind to surmount the ramparts of error, and to appreciate the statements of the Bible. The most intelligent parts of the earth are the most Christian. The Bible has its strongholds in the bosom of the world's civilization. There is reciprocal cause and effect in the working out of this problem. Luther's doctrine of justification by faith, struck a chord in the human conscience which will vibrate round the world, and in all the future. It is an appeal to the reciprocities between the doctrine of salvation by grace, and individual consciousness of sin and helplessness, and ill desert.

The elements of free thought and personal responsibility for the world, lie within the lids of the Bible. The life of the world is *there*. *There* is the centre of its activities, and of the

great alterative agencies in its behalf. Hea-thenism is not aggressive now; nor is the religion of the false Prophet. They are wan with age, and quite content with what defences, in their infirmity and feebleness, they can set up. The keys of the world and of its future destinies are in other hands. Science and the arts,—commerce, wealth, and power, and all those elements which are *aggressive, pervading*, and universal, and which will not be denied, and which will not yield;—are within the precincts of Christian civilization. The contest may be severe, and the end not yet; but we cannot mistake what it shall be. The mind of the world, by an inevitable law of providence, will progressively sicken at the chimeras of superstition and falsehood, and come out into the sunlight of Revelation. The aspects of change and transmutation among the nations indicate this, and sustain in glad coincidence the instructions of prophecy on the subject. The last half century has thrown a flood of light upon it.

The agencies of Christian benevolence are not to be overlooked. They are among the factors of this prospective change, and are to be reckoned in, as we sum up the influences

which concentrate upon the point of the world's conversion to Christ. But providence is doing much to this end, over and above this Christian agency, and independent of it. There is a levelling up among men—there is a community—a brotherhood of nations in process of institution—a cutting of the channels of trade—a system of industrial exhibitions—a facilitated intercourse among nations by means of steam-power, and of the *ubiquitous* telegraph. There is a taking down of the barriers between the people of different countries by means of travel and the reciprocities of commerce, and the generation of a sense of mutual friendly relationship and co-operation,—an idea of mutual benefit; which is changing even patriotism itself into a wider feeling of the brotherhood of all nations, and the fellowship of the race.

And this too is the Bible idea. The common elevation and benefit of man is its aim,—the enlightening and sanctifying of all nations under the common intelligence and agencies which it furnishes. This is its great mission on earth.

I am pointing to no human perfectibility here, independently of the Bible, and the

Grace and Spirit of God. Our reliance is there—integrally there. We speak of the coalescence of truth and intelligent being in the great common result foretold in the Bible. It is the Jubilee we expect from the wonder-working providence of the God of the Bible; but the God also of Nature, of reason, and of man. It is but the conspiring elements of all truth, in their coincidence and harmony under the providence of Him ‘who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will;’ to reconstruct the temple of his worship on earth, and draw all men to it. It is the harmony of forces under God which shall bring in the day predicted, when ‘the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid,—and the sucking-child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice’s den;’ and ‘they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain.’ ‘For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.’

The purity of the Bible *is an argument for its devotional study.* It is a mine of pure truth and essential righteousness. It speaks the mind of God and breathes His Spirit. It

envelopes you with an atmosphere of devotion, and bathes you in heaven's own light. It rebukes all sin, and justifies and encourages all righteousness. Its truths sanctify and cleanse the soul. Devout meditation on them is spiritual life to it. It is assimilation to God, and the happy spirits that minister before Him. The 119th Psalm is a body of pure devotion. The holiest men of all ages have loved it best, and studied it most. I too may drink at the same fountain, and partake of its purifying virtues and its endless life.

The subject of this chapter encourages faith in the universal prevalence of the Bible and true religion among men. Its truth gives a guarantee of this—its unalloyed purity and consonance with reason and conscience, and all the giant principles of thought and being in the human soul, and its repudiation of all wrong—its justification of all right. It need not be timid and cowardly, and evasive, and mask itself under false pretences, and fear the light. 'The righteous are bold as a lion.' 'One can chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight.' The issue of the world must come to this. Providence is a misnomer without it,

and reason a mislead. Prophecy reveals the only rational destiny of man. It is the only restoration,—the only purity,—the only life of the soul.

CHAPTER XI.

THE BIBLE THE ANTIDOTE OF SIN AND WOE.

OUR last chapter referred to the *purity* of the Biblical system. It is based on exact, eternal righteousness. In doctrine and in spirit, it comprehends the pure and the true, and is uncompromising in its standard of morality, and in its elements of religion. Hence it is exclusive of all error and falsehood, and antagonistical to all those systems of religious belief which have sprung up in the imaginations of men, and been endorsed by ignorance, credulity, and depravity. It is a system for man and the race, with the inherent properties of all truth and righteousness.

And hence it is aggressive and universal in its tendency, and from the fact of its *truth* and *sufficiency* to meet the demands of the

reason, as well as from the Divine guarantees concerning it, may be expected eventually to undermine all false systems, and become the only religion of men:—a conclusion which the aspects of providence now favor, as they chime in with the prophecies which have gone before concerning it.

But there is yet another view of the Biblical system which is worthy of our attention, and which still further completes its claim to be a Divine Revelation, and shows its adaptation to the state and wants of man:—It is *reformatory* of all wrong,—it is the *rectifier* of all evil,—it is the grand *catholicon* for the sins and woes of oppressed humanity.

There is evil in the world; and this problem of evil is thought to be most difficult of solution. Theologians and philosophers have experimented upon it, and perhaps have experimented too much. It is a moral question, and should be submitted mainly to the arbitrament of the moral sense. But men have formed elaborate theories concerning it,—various and conflicting,—and yet all designed chiefly to vindicate the Divine character in relation to the existence of sin, and to justify the ways of God to men.

But what vindication does the character of *God* need, in relation to the existence of sin? It is not His work, but that of men and rebel angels, in despite of God's authority and in opposition to His will. He has not caused it, nor allowed it, but forbidden and prohibited it, by all the sanctions of His name and God-head. That sin "is the necessary means of the greatest good,"—or is "necessary to the best possible system of the universe," is what I do not know. The Bible does not reveal such a doctrine,—neither is it a dictate of reason; and we have yet to learn if any explanation of these formulas of thought can make them to convey a metaphysical truth, which is not at war with the moral convictions and common sense of men.

The Divine moral government is not an enigma—a mere drama—a play. It is not a merely formal representation on canvas, in which the Divine Being takes one attitude in the front of the picture, and quite another in the background. Truth in philosophy coalesces with truth in fact. I know not, nor do I believe, that sin is a matter of Divine arrangement, as the means of good in the normal methods of the universe. It is not a

Divine strategy and expedient; but an outbreak *from God* in a plan and plane of its own, and is an intrinsic evil anywhere and everywhere. God sustains only antagonistic relations to it, and His glory as connected with it, is seen in remedying its effects, and securing the triumph of virtue and goodness and grace over it. 'And God called unto Adam and said:—Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I 'commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat?—cursed is the ground for thy sake.'

Intelligent beings are inherently capable of right or wrong action, and the case could not be otherwise under moral government. It is of the nature of all personality and accountability. Virtue is elective, and so are character and destiny. This is the excellency and glory, as it is the nature of all moral government. Its methods for obedience are resistible. Its incipient and probationary stages are an appeal to our voluntary being. It is in its normal ongoing perfect and Godlike, but may be abused, violated, and wronged; and that may occur which its Founder does not devise, or will, or want, and which sustains no more relation to His economy than rebellion does

to the strategy of a State, and which must be put down in the residuary methods of such government, in mercy and retribution.

Thus much seems needful here, and I would be watchful of any theory of sin which tends to install it as a Divine method in the universe, and to contravene the irrepressible convictions of conscience, and of the common sense of men.

Shall it be said that God could have prevented sin? Then He must have prevented moral government, and then there would be no relevancy or value in the question. Moreover, it is not a question of power, but of moral rule. It correlates with the intelligence and a free personality, which to be aught above a mere thing, and to have the dignity and responsibility of personal cause, must, on the last analysis have *self*-control, and may choose good or evil. A foresight in God (if such a term belongs to *Him*) could not change the terms of the problem. A Divine, moral government is a perfect economy and work, and like God, and inherently in place as nothing else is, and could not be surrendered or exchanged, though some, yea, many worlds should sin, and retribution become inevitable. The case admits but of the incentives and con-

ditions of responsible action, which apply to mind, and belong to a moral system. These were supplied and were abundant, and in the right direction,—and yet man apostatized from God, and sin is in the world, and is here as a wrong and a crime against reason and conscience, and against God. It is here as a calamity, a revolt from right, and a condemnation which all good agencies in the universe combine to resist and repudiate. It has brought death into the world, and all our woe. It has brought sickness and pain and grief and anguish. It has darkened, for now sixty centuries, the fair face of this otherwise paradise of God, and entailed in sad and long reversion upon it, “Those unnumbered ills that flesh is heir to.”

And for these ills and this enormity out of which they spring, there are many expedients and methods of cure among men. The Heathen seeks it in his Metempsychosis,—in the expurgatory processes which he connects with the transmigration of souls;—the Moslem, in his stolid indifference to evil and imperturbable endurance of the decrees of fate;—and philanthropy within the precincts of Christendom, is often ready and busy with

her prescriptions and antidotes against all specific, personal, and social ills. But how like rush-lights are these often, when one wants the mid-day sun! How fragmentary and unequal to the pressure of those evils that burden us! They may lop off some branches, but they leave behind the massive trunk and deep-seated source of all our misfortunes. They may alleviate some of our pains and anguish, but they dry not up the deep fountains of our grief. They may cleanse some of the rills of human conduct, but they reach not back to the source of all corruption in the inner man of the soul. They may do some surface work, but seem often not to be cognizant of that elemental aphorism of Jesus, 'Out of the *heart* proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false-witness, blasphemies. These are the things which defile a man.'

But the Bible presents a Divine expedient for the sins and woes of oppressed humanity, and one equal to the pressure of all our wants. It is God Himself, bending in condescension and mercy over our frailties and our wanderings, and extending to us in our helplessness the antidotes of His love.

1st. *The Bible accounts for our present condition.* It solves this problem. It points to the source of all our ills in the fall of man, and in the announced fact, that we belong to an apostate race, and comprehends the sphere of our earthly estate, as *sinner*s on *probation*. It legitimatizes this mixed providence, and explains this riddle of our existence in the present life. It gives the why and wherefore of this passing scene of things—these clouds and this sunshine—this discipline, and this mercy—this instructive chapter of good and ill, crowded on our pathway here. To probe the wound is often needful to its cure. We would look back as well as forward;—would see the cause of evil in the lapsed condition of the race, and our own personal apostasy from God, and thus get at the *rationale* of this earthly providence, and be reconciled to the *perfections* of God, though sorrows crowd on us, and discipline be our lot. It is needful to *justify* His ways to the reason He has given us, and to see the appositeness of His love.

2d. *Mediation*, with a view to *recovery* and *reconciliation* with God. This is the great leading theme of the Bible as a Revelation from above. Its distinguishing and pe-

culiar characteristic is here. This runs through it from beginning to end, as the thread of its history and teachings,—the interpreter of its doctrines,—the key-note of its wonderful economy of truth. Christ, as an atoning High Priest,—as a sacrifice of expiation,—as our passover, and the Lord our righteousness, is 'the end of prophecy,' from that first announcement that 'the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head,' down to the coming of Christ, and the fulness of the New Testament revelations. The sacrifices of the ancient economy have their typical significance and explanation in this. The bloody rite of circumcision itself, and all the emblems of cleansing and purification with which the Bible abounds, are indices of this. Their focal point is in the true atonement by the mission and death of Christ, as the divinely appointed medium of forgiveness and restoration to God.

Here is an adequate basis. It meets the exigency which sin has occasioned. It fathoms the bottomless deep of our miseries by the fall, and is comprehensive of our wants as sinners. It meets the demands of reason as to the righteousness of law, satisfies conscience,

and opens the gate of life eternal to benighted, ruined man.

And here is found the second stage of the reformatory process of the Biblical system. It not only points out the disease, but prescribes the cure. It lays 'help on one who is mighty to save.' It goes to the adjustment of our relations as sinners, with God, whom by sin we have offended, and under whose righteous condemnation the race of man had fallen. It is integral, comprehensive, adequate and efficacious.

And it operates in two ways. It inspires *hope*, and exhibits *love*.

The inheritance of sins, and fears, and woes, is upon us by the fall, and sad experience with all the pressure of our guilt. But where is the stimulus to exertion in the right direction?—the use of effort,—the hope of looking again on the face of God, and gaining reconciliation with Him? It is in *Christ crucified*, and nowhere else. From the cross on which He died, hope beams on a benighted, guilty, and despairing world. Heaven opens benignly on the view *there*,—forgiveness is taught thence, and the whole system of grace, in the Gospel.

Here, too, is love. It is heaven in sympathy over our lost estate,—the yearnings of a Father's heart,—the compassions of Jesus in His mission to save. And it is in the Bible, and only there. It is there for man and the race,—

“ Deep as our helpless miseries are,
And boundless as our sins.”

The remedies of heathenism, and of every earth-born system, are mere torch-light on our path: *this* is ‘the sun shining in his strength.’

3d. The Bible *supplies a new basis of character, at once effectual and available.*

By the apostasy, a legal righteousness and justification were forfeited, and became thenceforth impossible. Man was without strength under law and its condemnation, and without hope of recovery from it, and restoration to the favor of God.

The Gospel preaches peace, and presents its element of life in the matter of the soul's *compliance* therewith. Here is a new basis of character and element of strength. This is a foundation for a *sinner* to stand upon, and of which he may avail himself. It is found in

repentance of sin,—in reliance on the merits of One crucified for him, and in all the graces of the Christian character and life. This is adapted to sinning man. It is the only righteousness he can have,—the only rectitude he can gain. It is the only conformity to law which his case admits of, and it is that which the strongest cannot forego, and which the weakest may reach. It consists in a sense of our own helplessness, and our reliance on the accepted merits of another. It is suited to all,—effective to each, and comprehensive of our wants and destiny. Redemptive in its nature, it is the new commandment which Christ has given us, sealed in His blood and love. It is the new way of attaining the ends of moral government, glorious from the ruins of the fall. It originates in love, and it begets love. It is the grand reformatory element of the world, and the only effectual one in it. It goes down to the sources of action in the heart of man, and *subsidizes* the affections of his soul. It is a regeneration,—a new moral life, begun in the *spirit* of *affiance* to Christ, and germinating in all the principles of piety toward God, and ‘good will to men.’

4th. *The assured hope of immortality.*

This completes the demands of the soul, and the questions of destiny.—And this is found nowhere but in the volume of inspired truth.

‘If a man die, shall he live again?’ was the anxious inquiry of the philosophic heathen mind, and is to this day. But light and assurance beam from the pages of Revelation over all the domain of death and the future. This is its crowning effulgence. It bathes the grave in light, and opens on our view the glories of ‘the celestial city.’ It gives precept and example on this subject,—experience and revelation, and points us ever on to all the issues and guarantees of the life to come, for our activity, our guidance, and comfort here.

Hence, too, the great *reformatory element* of the Bible. It connects the present and the future,—cause and effect,—character and destiny,—probation here, with the retributions of the eternal state, and brings on our pathway all the sanctions of the Infinite,—the glory that is yet to be revealed,—the death that never dies.

Shall we, then, test this element of its power, by a brief reference to the ills of life generally, and to some of their more specific forms?

The ills of life may be generically summed up under two heads,—its *sins* and its *sorrows*,—moral and natural ill. These require specific and peculiar treatment, and demand appropriate remedies.

These remedies are found in the Gospel. The first ill, and that which is the generator and prolific source of the second, it refers to the cross of Christ,—to the fountain set open for sin and uncleanness,—to the forgiving mercy of God sought in repentance, and that rectitude of spirit, of which only repentance and forgiveness can reassure the soul.

The *sorrows* of life are referred to their source in the sinfulness of man, and we *approximate* a reconciliation to them in the conviction that they are the unavoidable inheritance of a depraved and guilty race.

But the Bible does not rest in this reference merely. Its whole remedial system bears upon the subject of human ills. Supports and alleviations are kindly supplied in their endurance, and the hope of deliverance out of them. It brings the condescension and mercy of God into communion with human suffering. It presents the compassions of Christ in this relation,—His life of sorrow and want,—His

example of patience and self-denial,—His death,—His love. It teaches us that ‘God does not willingly afflict and grieve us;’—it shows “a silver lining on the cloud” of all our sorrows. It teaches that ‘tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope,’ and brings into the portions of the godly here, and for the acceptance of all, the assurance of those ‘everlasting consolations, and that good hope through grace.’ Thus it presents a divine hand for the alleviation of our griefs,—sweetens the cup which in submission we must drink, as being the appointment of our heavenly Father, and resultant of sin, and gives us an utter and final triumph over them in the kingdom of God.

But the Bible, and the redemptive economy which it alone furnishes, is the great reliable antidote for all specific *immorality* and *sin*, and *wrong* and *ill*. They all have the reference which is made above, and find their generic and only effectual cure in the regeneration and the new life in Christ Jesus, which the Gospel proclaims and inspires. Here is the eradication of the shoots of sin, and the deliverance of the soul from the principle of evil. ‘Make the tree good and its fruit good.’

Give to reason and conscience, enlightened and vivified by the word of God and His Spirit, the supremacy over the passions,—‘the law in the mind’ over ‘the law in the members,’—bring the world up to the position “*I will, because I ought,*” and under God you have ‘laid the axe at the root of the tree;’—you have gained the victory over sin, and stanchèd the tide of all our woe.

Specific wrong has its origin in the principle of all sin. Religion is the basis of morality. Duty toward God covers the ground of duty toward man. ‘Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.’ From the lusts of men ‘come wars and fightings,’ and oppression, and polytheism, and idolatry, and licentiousness, and slavery, and theft, and robbery, and murder, and every form of overt iniquity. The direct or indirect influence of the Gospel enters into every species of right reform; and it should be more emphatically and implicitly relied on, and made more prominent than by some it is. It builds from the foundation, and takes into the urgency of its motives the solemn sanctions of religion. It embraces the principle of all reform in its element of love to God and love to man. For this ‘Thou shalt not

commit adultery,—thou shalt not kill,—thou shalt not steal,—thou shalt not bear false witness,—thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this, Thou shalt *love* thy neighbor as thyself.' The world cannot be converted by jurisdiction. The case must go to the forum of the conscience, and find its arbitrament there, among the giant principles of the soul. 'Love worketh no ill to his neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.' Let this doctrine and this spirit encircle the earth, and it will remove the covering from the face of all nations, and usher in the jubilee of time. Darkness will flee away,—the Gospel fulfil its mission, and this world become the vestibule of heaven.

I make but one more reference to the ills of life, and that is to its *closing scene*.

Death is the fruit of sin, and is looked onward to by the most of men, as 'the King of Terrors.' But the Bible has an antidote against its fear and against itself. It reveals the second Adam, and triumphs in his name over the last enemy. It opens the portals of heaven, and discovers the grave as the passage to it, and changes to a blessing that dreaded

night of all our hopes. 'Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die.' 'So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption,—in dishonor,—in weakness; it is raised in incorruption,—in glory,—in honor.' 'So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal, immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying which is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.' 'O death,' adds the exulting Apostle, 'where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law, but thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.'

Stand by the bedside of the "*Dying Christian*." In penitence and submission he has returned from the error of his ways, and accepted of the mercy proffered in the Gospel. His sins are forgiven, and he is justified through Christ. He is reconciled to God, and at peace with Him. Conscience is at rest, and he is happy on that bed of death. The future is in his eye, and to die is the way to it. That future is the home of his being,—the perfection of his soul. It is his final, everlasting rest from sin and toil, and darkness and con-

flict. God is there, and Christ, and all the sinless and all the ransomed. The friends that have fallen asleep in Jesus are there, and there is his hope of all that shall come home to heaven through grace. And he is calm, sustained, and peaceful,—buoyant and joyous, it may be,—perhaps triumphant, and with the Apostle exclaiming, ‘O grave, where is thy victory, O death, where is thy sting!’—And he passes into heaven a redeemed sinner,—redeemed from both the spirit and the thralldom of sin.—He enters into rest to go no more out.—He is saved,—finally, everlastingly saved.

Such is the Bible, and such its antidote for sin and woe. It is ‘the wisdom of God and the power of God unto salvation,’—comprehensive, sufficient, unailing, and eternal.

Our trust, then, is in the Bible and the God of the Bible, and the Gospel which He has there given us as the great reformatory element in society, and hope of the world. We go no further,—we abide in no other confidence. We use all other trusts in conformity with, and within the sphere of this. It probes to the bottom. It sanctifies the soul. Beginning in our relations to God, it comprehends both Tables of the law. It brings the

sanctions of eternity on our pathway, and the energies of redemption to our help. It spans the grave, and lifts our burdened, exultant eye to the glory to be revealed.

The world's redemption from sin, and darkness, and degradation, and its admission to an eventual state of intelligence and virtue, lies in the wake of Gospel influences. Its cure is in the progress of Christian truth and grace among men. Its antidote and renovation are in the words of Jesus, 'Go ye and disciple all nations.' This is God's remedy for it, and this must be pressed, with all attendant and auxiliary appliances and influences, on the mind of the world, until the end come.

Personal hope should be in the Gospel. Jesus is a redeemer from sin and the Saviour of the soul,—the world knows not another. He is 'the Lamb of God, who taketh away sin;'—our reliance may be on Him;—He is 'mighty to redeem, and strong to save.'

CHAPTER XII.

THE BIBLE ADAPTED TO THE PERFECTION OF MIND.

INFANCY and growth are the conditions of our being. The law of progress obtains in the sphere of mind as in that of the body. Knowledge is acquired. Experience and development are the method of strength and maturity. It is so in respect to the individual and the race. All history shows it, till we get back to a rudeness and immaturity, which precede authentic annals. There has been progress in science, in general culture, and in the useful and the æsthetic arts. An existing generation stands on the shoulders of that which preceded it, and pushes its inquest onward into the domain of the hitherto unknown. Present knowledge and thought are the collected result of investigation and truth in the past, and we now have the bene-

fit of the research and improvement of all previous time.

But human knowledge is yet in its infancy, compared with what shall be. There are august results in the womb of the future. The world, as a whole, is to be brought up to a higher level of civilization, intelligence, and comfort; and science to prosecute her inquiries in all directions, and gather fresh laurels from the unexplored and the possible. There is to be a millennium of the arts and a perfection of knowledge and attainment of which we may not now conceive. The rough places of the earth are to be made smooth,—its devious paths straight, and luminous with sevenfold light, and angels to hail it as the abode of wisdom and virtue.

We may not always dwell on the dark side of the picture. There is a reversion of good in the economy of providence,—a jubilee is in store for all people,—a period on earth, when ‘in evening time it shall be light,’—‘when the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun, sevenfold.’

Then, there is a *future* life, and it will be in personal identity with the present. Thought

will never be lost, and culture never end. There will in the human mind be ceaseless progress and attainment,—maturity and strength, during the studies of eternity.

The highest form of development is that of our spiritual existence. Our highest culture is that of the heart and the soul. Our best knowledge is the knowledge of God, and of our relation to Him. This most intimately associates the human with the divine, and bears most fully on those great problems of goodness, and righteousness, and worship, which are the ultimate end of our being.

All merely human systems of religion will contain only the wisdom of the age which framed them. They will stereotype society to their own model, or pass away in the light of succeeding times; as we have had occasion for a different reason to intimate already. This has been true of Paganism, hitherto, and of the Moslem faith also, so far as it has not borrowed strength from the Bible. These systems are quiet now in the midst of the world's agitation and thought. They plead no reforms. They make no assaults on the empire of darkness and sin. They are motionless in the precincts, where the night of bygone ages left them. They go into decay and

desuetude, as science and mind advance. They must be utterly lost at length, before the full intelligence and virtue to which society and the race shall come.

But religion is a *necessary idea*. It is a permanent—an abiding want. Man will never cease to be a creature, or God to be worthy of his supreme affections and obedience. Never may he forget his sin, or the problems of his redemption and destiny.

Here we reach the subject of the current chapter, and meet the inquiry into the sufficiency of the Bible as a revelation of the permanent and undying religion of man. Our position is,—*The Biblical system of Doctrine and Worship, adapted to the perfection of mind.*

1st. *Its basis in necessary truth.* This has been presented in previous chapters. It is learned in the coincidence of the Bible and its economy of doctrine, with the ideas of the reason, and the laws and relations of truth, as necessarily cognized by us, both within ourselves and in the universe around us. As a system, it is founded in inevitable, necessary truth. It quadrates with the inherent relations and fitness of things, and is in harmony with all truth, as any way manifested in the being and works of God.

But necessary truth is unalterable and eternal. It has existed for the eternity past, and will for the eternity to come. It is a co-ordinate of the being of God. It must be abiding,—look through all changes, and be itself unchanged. It must be comprehensive of duration, and of the universe of God. Can you change the relations of the triangle, so that its three angles shall not be equal to two right angles?—equal anywhere and forever? Will a period ever come, in which it can be said that God is not?—or that He has not infinite perfections and authority?—that His law is not right, and obedience to Him a virtue?—or that sin is not wrong, or repentance of it right, or gratitude, and prayer, and praise, and love, and confidence in God, the meet response and glory of intelligent creatures? These are first elements of truth, and being. They are immutable as God himself, and the relation of creatures to Him. They are in their nature perduring. They must survive all changes, inhere in all the advancement of knowledge, and in all progress and culture, and enter into all that shall elevate and perfect the human mind.

But these are the elements of Bible truth.

Its principles all hinge here. You cannot select one that has not this foundation in its doctrinal principle, and that does not hold this kindred relationship to the essential elements of reason and truth. It must then abide and be equal to all the necessities of the future and be the companion of our utmost perfection and strength. Thus it is consistent in embracing all the future of existence, and in adjusting the relations of an eternity to come. This is its province. There is one God, and one Mediator,—one economy of right, one law, one gospel of substitution, one principle of responsibility, one inheritance of blessing or woe.

2d. *The Bible is comprehensive of all truth.* There are limits to knowledge; there are limits to truth. Absurdities cannot lie in the domain of positive existence, and relations Two and two can never be five, and you may never have a valley without hills, or an effect without a cause. We cannot transcend the faculties given us, in the apprehension of truth. There is the sphere of the reason, of the emotions, and of the will. What does not lie within the circumference of these, if any thing there be, is without significance to us.

To all this the Bible is adapted,—of all this it is comprehensive. Not that it is a book of treatises on human science or legislation, or literature, or the arts; but that its sphere involves them. It goes to its communications, in consistency with them, and in the unavoidable harmony of all truth. Their utmost expansion will not cross its track, or mar the integrity of its statements. Its economy of doctrine, and duty, does but stimulate their advancement. Their utmost perfection will but the more perfectly appreciate its line of things and gild the escutcheon of its glory.

What can go behind, or get beyond the knowledge of God, and of His perfections and works and ways, or render obsolete the obligations of prayer and praise, and thankfulness and love, or set aside the principle of benevolence and good will? The biblical system may be better elucidated through advancing science and study, and from improved commentary and interpretation. The compass of its elements of belief may be more appreciated and men may, as mind reaches onward, be able to comprehend more of its breadth and length and depth, and height and ‘to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge,’ and be

progressively 'filled with all the fulness of God;' but who shall get beyond it? Mind may be ever welling up, in sympathy with this knowledge and these conceptions, and be maturing amid their boundless communions; but who shall surpass them? Who shall outstrip the relations and alliances of the infinite, and be wiser than God? Who shall ignore the attributes of the absolute,—the necessary and the possible—the limitless and eternal.

3d. *The Biblical system is comprehensive of essential righteousness.* It is law-abiding. It fulfils the demands of law. It honors God and His perfections, and meets the requisitions of reason and conscience, as a rule of moral rectitude. The full claims of moral government are deferred to, and exhausted by it. They can ask for nothing more, can have nothing else. The Bible does not merely approach a perfect standard of right, it meets and endorses that standard, by every guarantee that the case admits of. It does it by precept, authority, and example,—by penalty and mediation. It is the righteousness of God, and must be perfect and enduring. It must be comprehensive of all right action, and be based on the principle of perfect and unerring

rectitude; and hence it is equal to any moral question that may come up,—any relation among intelligent beings that may be ascertained,—any perfection of the human mind that may be reached. Indeed, growth in knowledge does not alter the standard of right, but only gives, more and more, the sphere of its relations. *That* is inherent in the nature of things, and fixed in the abiding attributes of the absolute and the necessary. Reason cognizes it, the Bible has it, and it is, ‘to love God with all the heart, and our neighbor as ourselves.’ This is the sum and essence of right action. There is no greater law than this. The studies of eternity shall find out no other.

4th. *The Biblical System completes the question of the restoration of man to the image of God.* In that image was he made at first,—in that image must he find the perfection of his being, and to it can he be restored by the remedial economy of the Gospel. The Bible here completes the problem of destiny too, as well as the question of right. It goes to the depth of all our wants as sinners, and the terms of our recovery to the likeness of God, and to perfect rectitude. We need no more

instruction on the subject,—no further economy of mediation,—no new conditions of acceptance and reconciliation with God. These are inherently essential and perduring. The mind can conceive of no other. This must be ultimate. When a simply legal economy has failed, can there be substituted any but one of grace,—or any after that—or any probation beyond it? There can be no recovery of a sinner to God but in repentance and reliance on proffered mediation, and acknowledgment of the standard of perfect rectitude, and *thus* returning to it, in a transition from apostasy to holiness. This is by necessity the sinners only restoration to God, and ever must be, and whatever is not thus recovered, must be left to the direct issues and penalties of law. So that in this respect, we cannot get beyond the Biblical system, or lose sight of the recuperative agency of the Gospel. No reach of science, no perfection of mind can dispense with it. No earthly development, no heavenly progress will forget it. The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, will be the theme of the ransomed above, through eternity, while a sympathizing universe of unfallen intelligences, will unite

in the chorus—‘Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive honor, and power, and glory, and blessing,—And hence,

The Bible gives the largest and highest themes of meditation and thought. It does not abide in the phenomenal and earthly. It rises to the absolute and necessary, and holds communion with the infinite and eternal. It puts us in correlation with God himself,—with His thoughts and ways, and our relations to Him, and His government and the destinies of our undying spirit. The first truths of the reason are met in it, and we are summoned out upon themes, elevating and ennobling in their nature, and ever-expanding and exhaustless.

An Apostle felt lost amid the glories of the Gospel scheme of thought. ‘To me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the *unsearchable* riches of Christ,’—‘to the intent that now unto principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the *manifold* wisdom of God.’

These themes will stretch through eternity. They will comprehend the *intellectual* and the *moral* of our existence, and be the law of the mind’s perpetual development and expansion.

In the Bible too, are the resources of the highest spiritual culture and progress. The sphere of right voluntary action is there. It has the perfection of all ethical philosophy, and the elements and stimulus of all that is good in the responsible movements of the soul. It dwells in an atmosphere of accountability. It is the arena of all benevolent affections and purposes. Its first generic requirement is 'love,'—that 'love which worketh no ill to his neighbor, and is the fulfilling of the law.' Devotion to God, and good will to man, are the elements which breathe through its pages and everywhere permeate its instructions. It begins our spiritual regeneration, and carries it on to the perfection of the heavenly state. Its aim is the sanctification of men. There is no sanctification out of the channel of its influences. The Bible is God's agency for the conversion of the world. *There* is that magazine of truth and power which shall enlighten all nations, and renew the face of the earth,—which shall restore man to the image of God, and cause him to stand erect in the dignity and grace of his being.

And there is intellectual growth in this spiritual destiny. Rectitude of heart quickens

the cultivation and development of mind, and this coalescence of mind and heart in the inspiring themes and purposes of Divine truth, leads unerringly on to the highest culture and the utmost perfection of man.

‘He that walketh with wise men shall be wise.’ The study of God and of our relations to Him on the scale of knowledge and righteousness presented in the Bible, and the forthgoings of the soul in affiance and love toward the objects and work of the Gospel; must contribute to our greatest perfection. We can never get beyond those themes,—we can never transcend that spirit. It is the commerce of mind with immortal, boundless truth, in the spirit of essential rectitude and love.

All history confirms the view we take. There is on earth, and always has been, this sympathy between the *Bible* and the growth of mind. Science has been born and nurtured in the wake of revealed truth, ever since its manifestation among men. In His own graphic and comprehensive language, Christ is ‘the light of the world.’ The Bible is now waking up the nations to the first truths of reason, and the principles of all righteousness. The life

of the world is in it, and the hope of the future,—and with its progress to the empire of all nations is associated every interest both of the mind and heart of humanity. The Bible is a book of first principles. It awakens inquiry and stirs thought. We may canvass the *fact* or the *principle*. Where is found the richest imagery—the sublimest sentiments—the largest conceptions—the most manly resort to the giant principles of our being, and to the mightiest agencies of the soul? Where lie the sources of the poetry of all time, of nature, and of man? Where is there lyric song like that poured from the harp of the sweet Psalmist of Israel, or *that* found in the elegiac strains of Jeremiah? Who can treat of the unseen and the infinite like Him, who came from its bosom a messenger of God, on that errand of love? Who can reason like Paul on the subjects of ‘righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come?’

The Bible contains our Bill of Rights. The doctrine of individual accountability is propounded there as it is nowhere else. It sits in judgment on kings and all in authority, and arraigns each man at the bar of the eternal judgment, ‘to give *account* of *himself* to God.’

It is now the vehicle of free thought to the nations,—is testing the basis of human institutions, and preparing the way of the Lord in all the earth.

Hence, also, intellectual strength will be the characteristic of the latter day. Knowledge is power, and will is cause,—goodness is strength, and the fear of God wisdom. Infancy will then begin under better conditions, expand under better auspices, and rise to higher development. Every improvement will facilitate progress—every science and art will accelerate the growth of mind. ‘The light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun sevenfold.’

Hence the privilege and blessedness of the millennial day. Intelligence and virtue shall overspread the earth and characterize all nations. Wars shall cease, and man be at peace with his fellow-man. Every science and art will stride rapidly on toward perfection, and contribute to the assemblage and maturity of all domestic and social enjoyments and blessings. Light will be poured on every subject of thought and study—of morals and piety—of love to God and good will to man, and earth become a type of heaven.

Still we look on to the future of our existence in that other sphere on high. No clogs will be on the mind there;—the inhabitants shall no more say, ‘I am sick.’ Those who shall be found worthy to enter there, will increase in stature and strength, in perfection and blessedness without cessation, and without end. Saints will go on to the measure of angels and of seraphs, and rise from glory to glory up into all the fulness of God. They will study His attributes, and works and ways, and Divine Word, beneath the light of the Throne itself, and the full effulgence of the beatific vision.

Oh! to be there!—to be of that throng above—to bathe in that light, and share that growth and perfection, and blessedness,—that ‘joy unspeakable, and full of glory!’ Reader, would *you* be there,—mingle in those beatitudes, and share those joys? You see them in the distance, and you know the way.

We have now completed the range of inquiry suggested in the opening chapter of the volume. We have looked into the substantive harmony of all truth, and the ground of it, in the Being and operation of the *One Supreme*.

We have carried the subject to the arbitrament of the *Reason*, and of the *Works* and the *Word* of God, and traced the analogies subsisting between these three modes of Divine manifestation. We have observed the basis of essential truth everywhere found in the Bible, and adverted to its objective sources of evidence, in that *miraculous providence* which has attended and attested it as the word and will of God, and which completes the sphere of possible credentials in behalf of a Divine Revelation. We have, in the last three chapters, endeavored to enrich our view of the Divinity and preciousness of the Bible, and its sufficiency for all the demands of religion in its elements of purity and universality, as suited to be the sole religion of man, as a remedy for sin and woe, and as adapted to the perfection of the human mind.

It remains only that we justify the general principles of the method pursued, and show its advantages more especially in their application to the subject of morals and religion. And this in view of recently promulgated theories, and the present type and demands of philosophical thought, we shall do on a basis somewhat independent, and to an extent

not at first designed, and at the risk of recurring to some principles of truth which have been found in place in the earlier portions of the volume. The effect will be, we trust, still further to vindicate the harmony of truth, and of the relations of the intelligence to it, however presented, and to indicate the helps which a legitimate philosophy will minister in solving the problems of existence and destiny.

CHAPTER XIII.

ADVANTAGES OF THE PHILOSOPHIC METHOD IN TRUTH.

THE mind has two forms of thought—*spontaneity* and *reflection*. It wakes to activity with the first. Its incipient movements are outward. It takes cognizance of truth by the senses—objective truth. The eye, the ear, the taste, the touch, and smell, are the instruments of an ever active commerce with the outward world. They are the channels of inlet to the knowledge of a universe of beings and things which are not ourselves. The senses put us in communication with them. They are the channels of the apprehension of them in the mind, and the understanding gives them form and relations.

Thus we look out into the domain of the visible, the conditioned, and tangible,—the finite, and phenomenal beyond ourselves, and

hold converse with the 'things that are made.'

Thus, too, we get at the spontaneous apprehension of the uncreated and eternal—of God as instinct and obvious on the face of His works. It is an inspiration of the reason, affirming the Being of God, as visioned in the operation of His hand. It is like beholding the cause in its effect—time in events—space in substance—the container in the contained. It is a combination somehow inevitable and universal. It is a function of the intelligence created in the image of God, and of a nature to apprehend Him. The rude and unphilosophic mind has it. All nations have it, and have always had. It is in childhood, in manhood, and in old age. It is a sentiment of humanity;—the vision of God in the soul,—the Deity in communion with the intelligence He has given us. An Apostle has caught the idea, and graphically described it in words already referred to. For the invisible things of Him (God) from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead.

Reflection, too, is a form of thought and a

medium of knowledge. This is in part a reaction of mind on the ideas gained in its spontaneous convictions. It is a detention of them for consideration and analysis. It is an investigation of them for richer conclusions, and a more ultimate synthesis.

This brings ideas also from the sphere of our interior being. Attention is introverted. We become self-conscious. We observe our own mental phenomena and states, and hold them for solution and analysis. We take cognizance of the operations and powers of our minds. We have ideas that are not the offspring of the senses. We know what they do not teach. We know ourselves. We apprehend the principles and laws of truth. We generalize facts, and ascertain their relations to each other. We pass from *species* to *genus*, and from *genus* to *species*. We systematize truth in view of its primordial elements. We institute art, and construct sciences. We arrive at necessary truth. We apprehend *that* which cannot *but* be;—*that*, the supposition of the non-existence of which would be an absurdity. We gain the infallible ideas or first truths of reason. We seek the rationale of being, and comprehend the possible idea

as well as the actual law of knowledge and truth.

This is philosophy. It takes cognizance of all. It examines, reproduces, analyzes, and gains a legitimate synthesis.

Philosophy is a second thought. It is a reaction and review for study and comprehension. It seeks the method of truth. In the use of the ideas of the reason, it gains the law of that which *is*,—ascertains the relation and dependencies of beings and things, and sees them in their necessary theoretic connections. It investigates their method not only, but their *reason* and ground, and is conversant with the doctrine of *final causes*.

It refers facts to their principles, takes these to their utmost analysis, and gains the *possible* as well as the actual of being. It is thus to all truth what algebra is in the science of quantities; reducing its manifestations to their simplest elements, and most *generic expression*, and giving its method and principle,—and hence—

Its comprehensiveness. It regards all truth, and would give the law of it. It embraces the three categories of truth—the *finite*, the *Infinite*, and the *relation* between them. Thus

it ascends to God, and comprehends the sphere of His being and perfections, imperfectly no doubt, for 'who by searching can find out God,—who can find out the Almighty unto perfection.' And yet philosophy looks upon the face of God as developed in the reason and illustrated in His works and word. It gives His perfections as necessarily inhering in the absolute. It shows what must be the attributes of underived, infinite being, and thus arrives at the essential perfections of God. Here are infallible first truths. The Creator is not created. His existence is not caused and finite,—not conditioned and dependent. It had no beginning,—it could not have,—and reason apprehends this.

God is not in the finite, for that gives but the limited and made—the conditioned and dependent. But our business now is back of that, with the Creator, and cause of whatever is created and conditioned, and appears in the dependent and phenomenal;—and you infallibly have the absolute being of God, of necessity uncaused, infinite, eternal, and itself necessary as a postulate, as seen in the light of all else. You cannot intelligently conceive of the being of God, except as possessing

these attributes and standing in this relation to all created existence.

Philosophy then comprehends the law of the Infinite, and asserts the indispensable and necessary perfections of God, and finds itself verified in the oral statements of the Revelation which He has given.

Philosophy embraces the finite also, and analyzes its contents and characteristics. It gives the sphere of the finite, and shows what it can and what it cannot contain. There is a periphery to knowledge and fact. It is impossible for God to lie. The finite has necessary laws, which are inherent in it, and which it cannot transcend; and they may be known to reason and embodied in philosophy. Principles are eternal, like God. They abide in the infinite, and have their expression in the things that are made. They are the primordial elements of truth, inherent in the Deity, and coexistent with Him. Infinite wisdom apprehends them from eternity, and, conjunct with all divine perfections, gives them manifestation, in an overt and historic creation, and economy of things. This economy will reflect the intelligence and goodness that formed it, and be the handiwork of such

a one as God is. It will not be an enigma, a solecism. It will be legitimately the offspring of God, and manifest his glory, and philosophy will see it—will ascertain its law, and appreciate its necessary inherence in the perfections of the infinite. She may not know its extent or particularity, but will descry its direction. She will see what may be in it, and what is impossible to it. All is intuitionally known to God, and hence is intuitionally true and apprehensible to reason so far as she has light.

Every science has its laws and limits. Figures are related only to quantities. Here you have all that is possible in the mathematics. Philosophy may see it, and the same of every science and its boundaries. And thus you get the finite in its laws. It is the attribute of intelligence to apprehend them. It is its likeness to God,—the correspondence of reason with infinity,—the soul of man as the offspring of God, and capable of knowing Him and the things which He has made.

Thus, also, philosophy assures itself of the *relations* subsisting between the finite and the infinite, and uses the ideas of the reason to this end.

To the Infinite—the Jehovah, appertain rights, authority, control, government:—obedience and worship, in finite intelligence, are the correlates of this.

A merely material or sentient creation may be only a thing; but created *intelligence* will owe allegiance, duty, love, honor, praise—and you have the theory of all morals within the precincts of philosophy. Intelligence in the finite is the child of intelligence in the infinite, and you may descry its attributes, trace its analogies, and get its analysis there. Its attributes are twofold;—the *receptive* and the *executive*,—the necessitated and the voluntary,—the *reason* with its adjuncts, and the *will* with its inherent *nisus* and element of cause;—and hence knowledge and action,—apprehension of truth according to its nature, and responsible movements in view of it—conduct and destiny. These two are necessary to intelligent existence, and inhere in it. They are all it needs. To see the grounds of action and have liberty to act in the premises, is all the case admits of. It is election in view of the reasons for it, and a consequent responsibility, and this completes the terms of the problem. It is all the truth that lies in the category or

that is possible to it :—and philosophy apprehends it and its legitimate sufficiency.

What can you have but such knowledge and will, to constitute an intelligent agent? What but the receptive and executive faculties of *consciousness*, to be amenable to law, and be the authors of character and destiny?

Here are the laws of mind, and its responsibilities. Here is *intellectual* and *moral* philosophy. And it opens a wide field. On it lies the whole subjective within us, and its relations to all else. It has commerce with all three of the possible categories of thought. It goes to the solution of all mental powers and acts, and all intelligent accountability,—all our intellectual, emotional, and responsible states, and their resultant issues in life, in conduct, and in the future.

Philosophy legitimates it, comprehends it, and justifies it to the reason and common sense, and to all divine manifestations and enactments respecting us.

Thus it passes into the sphere of *religion* and embraces it. Revelation is submitted to it, and is coincident with, and, in its principle, is comprehended by it. Revelation is made to us and for us, and is based on the laws of

conviction and truth, which are of us. It could not be appreciated by us, and would be worthless, if not thus conditioned. It must be so allied to answer its end. The Bible is not so much a revelation of *principles*, as a *manifestation*, to those we already have. It is a superstructure, built on them,—an economy adapted to, and legitimated by them. In its elements, ‘the word is nigh thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, even the word of faith which we preach.’ The Bible lies in a mine of necessary ideas, and appropriates them to its object. Assuming the existence of God as already known in the reason, it begins its manifestations by stating what He did. Its wonderful economy of instructions is verified by all the principles of truth and conviction known to the mind.

It is a body of divine communications made to us, in accordance with the laws of being inherent in us. It is light on our pathway adapted to the economy of vision which we have. It is instruction—authority, righteousness, mercy, and the future, adapted to the principles of thought and feeling in the soul. Gratitude to God is characteristic of gratitude to man. Love, fear, reverence, worship,—peni-

tence, humility, and faith, and every Christian grace, and every state and attitude of soul required of us; are of the nature of our constituent being. They have their archetypes in all our other relations, and in religion are modified by the communications made to us, and the nature of the *objects* on which the required affections rest. There is oneness in the two tables of the law, as well as in all righteousness and in all sin. Love to God is of the generic element of love to man; but modified by the inherent and necessary claims of the Infinite One, toward whom it is exercised. 'He that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?'

Philosophy, then, embraces the sphere of religion, both natural and revealed. It shall descry in its principles what is possible in a Divine Revelation, and what is not. Solęcism and absurdity cannot be in it. It will be on the basis of necessary truth, and be verified and justified by it. It will be the offspring of God, and like Him, and commend itself to reason and common sense. It will be the God of nature and providence, seen in the statements of an express Revelation. It will be

the further exhibition of the one God of the universe, and be a homogeneous manifestation. Its statements, falling within the terms of all necessary truth, reason will see, and approve them. And thus philosophy has the same jurisdiction here as in the other works and manifestations of God. It will not know beforehand the subject-matter of Divine communications in a Revelation, for if known, how are they thus needed, and why miraculously given? but she will comprehend the principle in them and approve it. They will be so consonant with her dictates that only a due authentication of them is requisite for her full recognition and belief. She understands them as she does their Author, as elsewhere and otherwise revealed. She ascertains their economy, and justifies it to all truth and all intelligence. The reason will take this prerogative, and it is deferred to and acknowledged in all exegesis of the Word of God,—in all commendations of it, and all voluntary and responsible issues based upon it. This appeal is ultimate and inevitable in all explanation of the phenomena of the physical, the intellectual and moral universe.

Philosophy, as has been well said,* is an ultimate form of thought. Its full development awaits the maturity of the intellect of the world. Its history hitherto has shown this. It shares the influence of the revival of learning and truth for the last century or two, and is seen more and more to take its just position of succour and support in solving the practical problems of life and destiny. The Protestant Reformation did much for it. Nothing so stimulates and justifies it as acquaintance with the Word of God and its devout study.

And there is deep reason here too. Why should not the thoughts of God be in harmony with all ripe philosophy? All truth is intuitively seen by the Infinite. Reason has her home in the bosom of God, and why should not a Revelation from Him commend itself to the reason which He has given us, and be justified by it? There is reciprocal cause and effect in this. The Bible is conversant with the 'deep things of God,' and brings them to our behoof and benefit. It enters into fellowship with the highest elements of our spiritual being, and subsidizes

* Cousin, History of Philosophy.

them to its truth and sway. Reason and Revelation are correlates, and in sympathy with each other. They spring from the same source, and are adapted to each other. The last is an aid of the necessities of the first in a world like this, and the first is the eye to behold the goodly vision spread before it in the last, and justify its manifestations to all righteousness and truth. And it is the design of this chapter to present the advantages of the *philosophical method* in the investigation of truth, and more especially in its application to the subject of *morals* and *religion*.

1st. *It gives the sphere of knowledge.* There are limits to knowledge, as we have stated. There is a domain of reality. Imagination may conceive of that which cannot come into the actual of being. A place is denied it by the existence and relations of the things that are. Two infinite Beings are an impossibility. There can be but the One Supreme—but one universe—one governing economy of existence—one God over all, and He must in all respects have infinite perfections. The created and conditioned can be but by reason of the uncreated and unconditioned. It must have had one to create and condition it, who, from

the terms of the statement, is not created and conditioned, and who is therefore limitless and eternal.

Knowledge is the offspring of mind, and is limited by its capacities. We shall know only what we are capable of knowing. The notions of sense are limited to the senses that give them. We have but five forms of contact with, and cognizance of the objective world. What these do not supply we cannot have from without. The understanding cannot construct a notion from the domain of objective, material existence, which has not one of these as a basis or medium of it. Whatever there is external to us in the created that is not palpable to some one sense at least, is to us as though it were not: we can know nothing of it. Forms of being that may have been created on the outside of this periphery we cannot appreciate. Considerations based on the intelligence of man and his responsible destiny, indicate that he has capacities for all needed knowledge, if not, indeed, to know all that is.

The reason has laws, and these laws respect the boundaries of knowledge. The necessary relations of things show what can, and what

cannot be. Substance can be only in space—events imply duration.

Philosophy gives the principles of truth, and thus shows what may and what may not be known. There is a science of the *possible* in science, as well as of the actual. The scientific geologist will not search for coal-beds below certain other strata in the earth's formation. The astronomer will determine an eclipse without pointing his instrument to the heavens. The perfections of God show what must be in the finite, and what must be excluded. The terms of the pure mathematics are necessitated, undeviating, universal, and eternal. You can never alter them.

These necessitated relations reason apprehends, and philosophy gives them in her suggestions of the possible in science and truth. And it is thus a helpmeet and its ministry of use. It is well to be advised of the possible as well as the actual—to know that there can be but one God, as well as that there is but one,—that God cannot lie, as well as that He does not,—that it cannot be, but that He has all perfections, infinitely—that His ways and commands must be right, as well as that they are so,—that no unrighteousness can be in

Him, as well as that there is none, and from the principles of all being and truth, to take cognizance of what can be and what cannot.

2d. *This method gives the legitimate and satisfactory basis of truth.* Here we enter the positive side of the subject, though in commingling relationship with what has been already stated. There is a science in truth. There is a basis to knowledge in the human mind, and in the nature and relations of things. Reason apprehends it:—philosophy collects and teaches it. We may not only have knowledge but may *know* that we have it. Its elements are in our own intelligent being. The principles of truth and conviction are there. The ideas of the reason are a first truth that we cannot gainsay. They are an intuition, a vision,—an intuitive sense and cognition of truth, and its necessary conditions, to which we refer all proof, argument and illustration. It is the sight of the intellect and the end of demonstration. It is truth in the presence-chamber of the soul seen spontaneously and without qualification, in the light and from the nature of the intelligence that God has, and has given us.

With the being and perfections of God,

we infallibly get the principles of all necessary truth. From that central element radiate all the relations between the infinite and finite, —between God and all else, and we have the economy of the physical and moral universe.

Taking our stand with the Being of God, as cognized in the reason; we have an emanating and dependent creation, and the law of it. God is a power, and the only independent and self-existent power, and hence all the laws of the physical universe are but the expressions of that power. Independence is not a communicable attribute. That is a characteristic of Divinity, and Divinity is not derived;—and you construct the physical universe, and frame its sciences on the known principle that it is the dependent economy of God, and the valid exponent of His will.

God is intelligence, and hence the leading feature and crowning work of creation will be intelligences after His own likeness. There could be no object in creation without this,—no end in His works. There could without it be no communion with the created,—no Divine manifestation to it. Unless intelligent creatures were embraced in it, creation might as well have been a conception as a reality. But in-

telligence in the created apprehends God and His perfections, and has communion with Him, and accredits His laws and will, and feels obligation to Him. It is characteristic of intelligence to appreciate right, and respect virtue. God does it infinitely—and all other intelligences do entirely, except when drawn off by temptation, and corrupted by sin. They have in their measure all the attributes of Divine intelligence which are possible in the created and finite, and all its inherent relations to character and destiny.

It can but be that created intelligence owes to God allegiance, duty, and worship;—that righteousness is obligatory, and unrighteousness a sin. Authority and obedience, and all the correlates of intelligence in the Divine and the created, vest here, and have their legitimacy in the necessary relations of the subject.

And there is satisfaction in *thus* arriving at truth;—in seeing its necessary inherence in the intuitions of the reason. It is a privilege not gained from the loose-jointed and only approximating calculations of the empirical method. It is not the slow and aggregating process of comparison which abides ever in

the finite, and derives its strength from the suggestion of more or less. It comes to its perfect conclusions at once—sees its whole doctrine in an atom as much as in a universe, and anchors itself contented and at rest by the side of the necessary Being of the Infinite, and His infallible relations to all else.

3d. *It authenticates religion.* Religion is not a mere prescription. It has inherent fitness and adaptation to us. It is integral to the relations of the finite and the Infinite. It has both a subjective and an objective validity. It is a necessary first truth of the reason, founded inevitably in what God is, and what we are, as His intelligent offspring. Conceive, if you can, of God with all the perfections of Infinite intelligence, and originating all else, without vesting in Him the essential ground of all that religion imposes from those made in His image;—or of their attributes and relations to Him, without finding its responsive demands. Man, by the laws of his intelligence, is bound to the Throne of God, and owes Him supreme love and obedience. Allegiance, submission, worship, are inherently due from man to God. Reason and conscience, in their

fullest development claim this, and will be contented with nothing less.

Revealed religion accords with necessary truth in this. Its doctrinal statements are parallel with the ideas of the reason, and inhere in the primordeal elements of all truth. The pages of the Bible are instinct everywhere with those ideas of the One God, Infinite and perfect, and of our relations to Him, and with those resultant obligations and issues in destiny which reason foreshadows and avers. It affirms every doctrine of natural religion, while in the discharge of its appropriate functions, it is disclosing the further will of God. It brings in the whole economy of redemption and the future life of the soul, and, endorsed by the miraculous providence of God; is altogether coincident with the first truths of reason. The Bible, thus authenticated, inheres in the principles of all truth, and should no more be refused its place than we deny ourselves, and turn false to those convictions which are the inheritance of reason and the soul.

4th. *It gives stability to the principles of morals.* They are based in religion, and have the same reference which is here given to that.

Morality is not the artificial manifestation of authority for the sake of an end, and as the means to it, but the intelligent element of character and prelude to destiny. It is not simply discretion or expediency, or the contrived policy of States, or a result of conventional arrangements among men. In its essential features and ground it does not vary with climate or nation, or fashion, or time. Its elements are deeper in the constitution of things. Its laws are as enduring as humanity and the Throne of God. It is but the application of the principles of religion to the relations of society and the walks of life. The first and second tables of the law are essentially one. Love to man is in the element of love to God. Divine authority comprehends the doctrine of human rights. Reciprocities and mutual obligations among men come out of the law of allegiance to God. The principles of morality are of the intelligence itself, and moral obligation is legitimately predicated of all 'made in the image of God,' though its objective validity and correspondence would be wanting, save for the relations of the Infinite. The germ of all morality is in necessary truth. Its application may be wide spread

and diversified, but its principle is simple. In common with religion, it is based in the laws of our intelligence, and in the law of God. Beings such as we are can but be under obligation to do right, and obey the laws of eternal rectitude in all their relations toward God Himself, and toward each other. Reason apprehending God, and the principles of all necessary truth, has its concrete expression in the aphorism of Jesus, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, &c., and thy neighbor as thyself.'

Reduced to its last analysis, the sum of all religion and morality is in the word 'love.' Here is the whole law, as foreshown by the philosophic mind of Paul; and it presents morality as a first truth of reason,—stable as the Throne of God and His Government—unyielding as the laws of our being, and universal as our relations.

5th. *It gives unity to human thought.* Intelligence is a unity, and so is truth. The subject-personality and the subject-matter in the premises possess this generic quality, and indicate the strength of our position, that the study of man, and of truth,—of him who thinks, and of that which is thought, and is

the objective basis of it in the one universe, which God has formed; gives direction and homogeneity to the results to which on reflection we come. The reduction of that which may be known to its principles and to the philosophic and comprehensive statement of them tends to check the vagaries of the imagination—the wildness of error, and the extravagance of those incoherent dogmatisms which float on the surface of human opinions, and to which society is more or less subject.

The human soul is the offspring of God, and was made in His likeness. The faculties of reason, of conscience, and of will, bear His impress, and in their elements are alike in all. Humanity is itself everywhere. All men are *essentially* alike. They may differ in culture and growth of mind,—nations and ages may cast their light and shade upon the picture. The concrete history of the race may be attended with great divergency in the action, habitudes, and practical judgments, and more speculative notions of men in respect to leading subjects of thought and attention; and yet these differences are circumstantial rather than integral in the laws of mind, and of its manifestations.

Thought is unique, and like itself in the law of its rise and propagation. You have everywhere the same innate faculties, and in the same relation to each other. There is the same element of intelligence, more or less crippled, it may be, in its development and manifestation by local or general, and perpetuated sources of change and discrepancy. Still the same organic structure and laws of mind are by a careful analysis seen to run through and underlie all the accumulations of system, and opinion, and work, and device, that the history of the world has recorded; and they may be reduced in a succinct and comprehensive synthesis within the range of those primordial elements of thought, which a ripe philosophy finds in the mind. Indeed, to say this is but to utter a truism. How could it be otherwise? Is not all history the product of mind, and is not the race of man one? Is not *will* cause, and, as comprehended in the Infinite and the finite, the only cause?

There is then generalization, in a reflective philosophy. It sees facts in their principles, and arranges the apparently anomalous features and masses of human history and opinions under the generic laws of thought, inherently in the mind.

Truth has oneness and homogeneity. We can get its esoteric idea as well as its manifested law. We can take cognizance of the possible as well as the actual. We can *forecast* what *must be* false, and strike at once at the roots of theories which have not their basis in necessary truth. The elements of truth are in the mind; the algebra is there, and it is of use in detecting the falsehoods that, from the looseness of the empyrical method, or from any cause, have become rife in the extant history of man. Suppose the error be the doctrine of a multiplicity of gods—or that sin may be in the infinite—or in the finite, as created—or otherwise than by apostasy—or that character is necessitated—or man saved without atonement. A philosophic statement shows those issues to be necessarily false. It is a short and comprehensive method, coming with infallible certainty to a legitimate result. The appreciation and study of the scientific method of knowledge, can but have a beneficent potency in authenticating all truth—in undermining whatever is false in theory or practice, and in giving a right direction to the thoughts and researches of men on all subjects. It would give the basis of thought in the laws

of the intelligence and the elements of all truth as they lie in the ideas of the reason. It would increase the intellectuality of men, and give a greater validity to speculation and inquiry. Truth would be studied more in its principles, and theories be more homogeneous and legitimate. Faith would be more the child of reason—the Bible be seen to be more a book of infallible first truths, and in the parallelism of all that can but be true and incapable of being gainsayed, and the moral history of man would be more reduced to an intelligent statement.

6th. *It gives oneness to human destiny.* Man is one. The characteristic of intelligence is the same in all. The laws of mind are fixed quantities. They will work out results for which they are adapted. The great sphere of the working and products of humanity will be from the given principles of mind.

Truth is in unison, and is consistent with itself always; it runs off from its own central element in parallel lines. Mind is adapted to it, and it is adapted to mind. There is reciprocal harmony between the laws of the intelligence and the eternal fitness and verity of things. The apprehensions of the reason are

necessitated by the truth, and in correlation with it. Pure truth and pure mind are at one, and homologous in their manifestations. Disturbing influences have come from the inception of sin, and the depraved passions and thoughtless ignorance of men, but in the great scale of being this is the exception, and not the rule. It is the perversion of powers given us, and not their legitimate use. This will mar the working of the economy of which it is an abuse, and vary the result; but it is not the great primordial law of mind and truth in the universe. And it will be circumvented and controlled, and eventually worked out of the kingdom of God, and in retribution be confined to its own place.

Sin, with its progeny of error, mistake and mischief, is an anomaly—an excrescence—‘a lie, and not of the truth.’ It is not the normal state of the intelligence; it could not be. It is in the finite and in the concrete, and by craft, falsehood, and vitiated propensity. It is endorsed by no apprehension of the reason—no conviction of conscience, and no formula of truth. It has no agreement with the fitness and normal verities of things, and no place in the legitimate working of a moral system. It

is the fruit of temptation on the susceptibility of finite being; an antagonist influence on the order and economy of the universe. It is a mistake as well as a mislead. Though self-propagating, its inception is more conceivable in the immaturity of mind than afterward. It entered our world in the first age, and through outside temptation, and cunning, and deceit. It is so without reason, that all right intelligence will get beyond actual liability to it, and the confirmation of angels and saints in holiness and bliss, be seen to be as much a law of mind as a doctrine of Providence and the Bible.

Sin must have entered through the improvident and wrong use of powers in themselves right. Thus it did enter, as appears from Eve's account of the matter. It is always a witness against itself, and stands condemned at the bar of the honest convictions of the soul. Experience of it, in the universe, will give wisdom concerning it, in all orders of created intelligences in all worlds. Even the Infinite has more resources for its cure than its prevention. Mind and truth, and God, will get the mastery over it eventually, and make it and its persistent abettors like 'the tares of the

field,' when 'the harvest of the world' shall come.

The universe of mind and truth consent in an issue, and *will prevail for its coming*. They will in concert work out the problem of destiny, when all the forms of error shall be developed and be overruled,—when all the results of improvidence and inexperience shall be sufficiently manifested, and all the lessons of truth and right appreciated, and the wisdom of God, and His great end in all His works, be fully issued.

The divine economy is one whole, and ever in harmony with itself. The cord is three-fold which binds the universe to a common destiny. It is the administration of the *one God*,—under one economy of *mind* and *truth*.

There will be weal or woe in the finite, according to conduct and character; but even this is only a feature of the uniqueness of the system, and of the universality of its laws. It is a combined destiny, but its element is simple; it is the operation of the One Supreme, according to the laws of all intelligence and the principles of all righteousness and truth. It is one vast whole, and must issue gloriously for all rectitude as the in-

herent result of the triple force that ensures it.

The popular mind of the world seldom loses sight of any great practical or moral question that rises before it. It will go to the moral sense of men, and posterity will inevitably give but one verdict. The unparalleled popularity of "*Uncle Tom's Cabin*," a few years since, was indebted less to the skill of its gifted Authoress, than to the sympathy of the public mind and of the age, in the subject and aim of the work. Leading aggressive influences on the earth, are those of mind and truth awakened by the Gospel. Such a commerce is a continued activity. Men will die for conscience' sake, but seldom for a lie. Error is fitful, spasmodic, and without heart, in an open field with truth. The oppressive and anomalous dynasties of Europe are but awaiting their fall. The end may not be yet, but they must enter into decomposition before the free thought of the world, ever welling up from the deep fountains of justice and truth in our conscious being. The anomaly of the Popedom is every day more obvious and annoying to those who sustain it, and with its surrender must also go the doctrine of absolutism on the Continent.

The transition from the prescriptions of mere authority to the intelligent sway of conscience, on the principle of a personal, individual responsibility, is not easy or rapid, but it is sure. It is no less a first truth of reason, than it is fundamental in the instructions of Revelation. 'The foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God stronger than men.' As the Bible is in harmony with all right intelligence, so the deep fountain of right influences is there, and the arbiter of human destiny. As it will yet move the mighty masses of the world's population, so it will arrange them on the line of its instructions. Providence is not less a natural result than it is judicially and divinely imposed. It is the working out of universally right principles under the Divine hand. It is the manifestation of the thoughts of God to those created in His image, for their spiritual blessedness and culture, and His own great end in all things. It is the Infinite in *all* His relations to that which He has made, and in the instructive chapter of events in discipline and in mercy, showing us what is good,—giving ascendancy to the dictates of mind and truth, and leading the way to that high destiny of

the future which He has taught us to anticipate in His Word.

7th *This method facilitates a valid and satisfactory exegesis of the Bible.* Bringing a comprehensive and scientific statement of the principles of all truth to that which is revealed, it goes to the study and analysis of the doctrines of the Bible, from known and familiar premises. It proceeds from an intuitive basis of thought, and on grounds common both to reason and the Word of God. It takes the elements of all truth to the inquiry concerning both doctrine and precept in the Bible. It regards revelation as built on principles known and familiar to us, and as legitimated by the laws of conviction and belief which are inherent in the soul. And well would it have been if the exegesis of the Bible hitherto had been the fruit of *riper scholarship* in the principles and scientific statement of necessary truth.

No more suggestive reference can, perhaps, be made here, than to the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans.

In the light of philosophic truth, *that* appears to be as natural and easy a train of suggestions as are found in almost any portion of

the Bible. Why, then, the volumes of commentary and controversy which have been expended on it, and all with but little benefit or satisfaction from either side? It is unaccountable that such men as Chalmers, and Barnes, and Stewart, and Hodge, in the present, not to refer to the scholars of past times, should have so magnified the difficulties of this passage, in the chain of the Apostle's masterly argument in the premises, and should so have wrought confusion and feebleness, and apparent self-dissatisfaction into their own best thoughts upon the passage; but from want of reference to the first principles of truth as applied to it.

Paul appears in this passage to be a better philosopher than his commentators. He states succinctly and lucidly the parallelism of contrast between principle and passion,—between reason and depraved appetite, and motions of sins,—between 'the *law in the mind*,' and 'the *law in the members*', and the deadly struggle between them, in this our common, fallen humanity, and the yearning necessity there is for that new element of victory and triumph to the first, over the usurpations and malignant prevalence of the last, which he brings out so

fully in the next chapter. His stand-point is not the new birth. His object is not to give a version of Christian character, or of the impenitent man, except as by implication his thoughts may interlap with, and throw light upon that subject. It is reason, and conscience, and simple law, in conflict with depraved passion and the spirit of sin in any and all men everywhere since the apostasy; and the weakness and incompetency of reason and simple law, in the struggle against this spirit and tendency in the race; and the need,—the imploring necessity of another element of character, and another economy of life. He is treating of the ‘law in the mind,’ and the ‘law in the members,’ and the war between them. He is distinguishing between these attributes in us now as sinning men, and showing their deadly conflict. He refers to the constitutional sympathy of reason with the law of God, and its ‘delight in that law,’ except as obstructed and overborne by depraved propensity, and describes it as sighing after help to follow up its legitimate adhesion to right and truth, and the Divine law, against the domination of passion. The Apostle in the process of his argument may be on the one

side of the line of conversion, or on the other indiscriminatingly. He passes on irrespective of it. It may be true, as it doubtless is, that the Christian acts usually from the law in the mind, and pursues the dictates of reason and conscience in his relations to God; and that the impenitent man does not, but follows 'the law of sin in the members.' Yet this is not the point of the Apostle's thought here, or the scope of his reasoning. He would present the insufficiency of an economy of simple law, to man in sin, in the matter of *sanctification*. He would show how 'the law is weak, *through the flesh,*' and *wants help from the Gospel,*—how the principles of all truth and reason in the mind are *incompetent* to the warfare with sin and sinful lusts, without the facilities and encouragement which a provision of grace administers.—And he does it in his own person, because it is there that he has the most vivid experience and conviction of the matters at issue, and is with greatest poignancy led by the anguish of the conflict, and the mastering prevalence and dominion of the 'law of sin in the members,' to cry out: 'Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?'

But this is a common experience: all men have it in its elements and analogies. The victim of 'strong drink' will *rend* your heart with the recital of it in his case. It has worn out health and life not infrequently, and sent men, by suicidal hands, to the grave in the issue. The awakened,—the convicted sinner has it,—the converted and the unconverted man. It is in its simplicity and without transformation of thought, 'the law in the mind,' and 'the law in the members,'—the principles of all truth and righteousness as apprehended by reason, and endorsed by conscience, battling with depraved lusts, and *unequal* to the contest, and crying to God for the encouragements of grace,—for the sanctifying power and processes of the Gospel. This is in place in this passage, as nothing else is. It chimes in with what goes before, and what comes after, and is the indispensable link between them, in the design and scope of the Apostle. It is clear as sunlight, and brings into bold relief the conclusions on which it terminates in the next chapter. 'For what the law *could not* do in that it was *weak through the flesh*, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.'

The statement of the Apostle, 'so then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh, the law of sin,' is a perfectly philosophical one. It is the discrimination which runs through the whole passage, between reason and passion in man,—between conscience and principle on one side—and lawless and depraved propensity on the other. This is in harmony with all mind and all experience. It is the expression of that generic truth which we might expect, if intelligence in man is of the intelligence in God. It authenticates the identity between the principles of *reason* and *revelation*, and the wonder is, that so much misdirection should have been given to the passage; and so much learned criticism have been expended upon it, to make it utter sentiments which would be out of place, and intrinsically untrue.

8th. *The philosophical method brings religious experience within the sphere of an intelligent statement.*

Experience, to be legitimate, must be located in the ideas of the reason:—philosophy necessitates it as a child of the intelligence. The emotional is the offspring of the intellectual. Truth is the parent of feeling. Light in

the understanding should instruct the movement of the sensibilities of the soul. That cannot be a legitimate experience which is not according to truth. Nothing should be in the emotions or affections of the heart or voluntary state of the will which truth does not justify, and which reason may not apprehend. That is of course fictitious experience which may not be thus referred.

There was a shrewd truth underlying the sarcasm of Voltaire, that "ignorance is the mother of devotion." French infidelity knew no religion but that which was built on superstition, and which abjured thought and reason. Popery was seen to be but the prescription of authority, and that authority the jugglery of priests to forestall legitimate conviction, and accomplish private ends. Ignorance on the part of the uninitiated *was* essential to its sway. This is indubitably the condition of all false religions and systems of faith. They prosper amid darkness. They rise like spectres in the twilight of the human mind. They grow rank and intolerant in the absence of first principles of truth, and the ability thus furnished, to 'lead captive the souls of the simple at their will.' They have their corrective in the prevalence

of these principles, as brought to the investigation of religion in the sanctified intelligence of men. But for Popery, Voltaire might have been a Christian. Puritan training and convictions might have forestalled his corruption of sentiment and life, and held him to the sway of conscience and the truth. Bad theology—a weak and incompetent system of faith, is ever an apology for rebellion against it. The infidelity of the period here referred to, could not have taken the popular mind with it, but on this principle. The intellect of France had outgrown its religion, and as a matter of course became sceptical.

The type of the leading minds of continental Europe, is infidel to-day, proximately because they cannot give up the ideas of the intelligence and succumb to the dogmatisms of a faith at once puerile and oppressive—which has its basis chiefly in the dictation of Popes and Cardinals and Councils, and which, though it glitters before the imagination, has little communion with the real elements of conviction and truth in the mind. A certain stage of culture in society, and in the general intelligence of a people, must abjure Romanism and *turn infidel*, if it cannot find a better faith.

With the progress of the common mind in the discipline of all knowledge and truth, religious creeds and habits of worship must become more trustworthy and intelligent. Gewgaws may amuse children, but full-grown men will tire of them. They will not give up reason, and the elements of religious truth which lie in it, at the bidding of any who, perchance, may come in the garb of a prophet. They will require an intellectual statement and a reasonable ground of belief. They will demand that the ideas of the reason be justified in the requirements of faith, and that the religion submitted for their acceptance, have its subjective basis in the principles of conviction in their own spiritual being. This, under God, has been the support of puritan Protestantism hitherto, and will be more and more its help as the intellect of the world advances. Truth is not such by prescription. It may have an authoritative statement, as it has in the Bible, but this is only a *mode* of it and of its manifestation. It must be *truth*, or it could not be so *stated*. And this inherence of truth in the nature and fitness of things, and this reason for its authoritative statement which is found in its intrinsic verity and value, is what cultivated intellect

demands—and it is what society and the world *will* demand and *must* have. It is too what religion can and ought to give. It is what is due alike to reason and the Author of it in us, and to the Revelation of His thoughts and will to us in His Word—and what we find there—and it will come progressively in the creeds and formulas of uninspired theology. The day will arrive that shall bring it, and though in its coming it shall separate the chaff from the wheat, disintegrate the false elements of many a religious system, pour contempt on the rites and pomp of a merely legendary service, and establish a simple and pure worship; it will take the intellect and the affections into its method, and enthrone religion and piety as the dictate of reason, and the law of our conscious being and rectitude.—And hence,

Finally. *This method gives the subjective basis of the universal prevalence of the Gospel.*

The Gospel is true, and has its counterpart and correlative in the principles of all truth, as cognized in our intelligent being. Here lies its inherent element of prevalence and success. It has objective validity as embodied in a Divine Revelation. That is the

mode of its manifestation, and the assurance of its authority as an explicit economy from God to us. But its principles are a first-truth of reason. They can but be true, and can but give to its statements a response in our intellectual being. Its economy of help and grace is consistent with all righteousness, and has its justification and plea in the dictates of the moral sense. It is inherently right, and good, and true, and stands approved at the inner shrine of the soul. Conviction from it, and faith in it, are but a reasonable service. Did the Gospel teach an untruth, or fail in the righteousness of its precepts, it could not hold in our intelligence. Investigation of it would invalidate its claims. It would become obsolete in the maturity of the human intellect, like all false religions. But if it lies in a mine of necessary truth, and is comprehensive of all truth, and adapted to the perfection of mind and thought; then as mind and thought mature, and all truth prevails, will it become a supplanter of false belief, as before indicated, and become universally the religion of men. The statements of prophecy and the recorded pledges of divine aid which the Gospel has on its pages, have their subjective verifica-

tion and guarantee in the inherence of its principles in those of all truth and the onward progress of mind.

False religions will die out amid the increasing light and grace of the future. They cannot stop the car of progress, and must be crushed beneath its wheels. And this is the metamorphosis now going on over the face of the earth. As mind advances and asserts its individuality and discretion, false systems of religious faith fail of its confidence, and lie inert, and without vitality. Polytheism has no aggressive movement or power. The Koran has ceased to proselyte, and with the prevalence of truth on the earth and its rising above the dictation of passion and the sword, will become effete, and among the things that were. The crescent is already on the wane, and will go out in dim obscurity and forgetfulness, amid the effulgence and more spiritual destinies of the latter day. Popery, too, will fall before the inevitable law of progress, and be shorn of its strength in the intelligence of the ages that are coming. It is now the creature of the civil power, in concert and communion with old and oppressive and tottering corporations, against intellectual culture and popular rights. This is an

anomaly, and cannot be perpetual. As well bottle up the North wind, or stay the avalanche from the mountains, as prevent the progress of truth and thought, and the eventual prevalence of the rights and freedom of man. They lie in the scope of Providence and in the teachings of the Bible. They are the irrepressible idea and the asserted law, of the eventual condition of the race as foreshown both in reason and revelation. The Gospel unites both terms of the problem, and presents in its prophecies and redemptive economy but the counterpart and assurance of that perfection in the future of man on earth, which philosophy and nature implore. In its inspired forecast of what shall be, it is but the *verification* and *guarantee* of *that* for which the whole creation waits, in earnest expectation of 'the manifestation of the sons of God,' and of its promised deliverance 'from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of His children.'

There is then validity and value in the philosophic method of inquiry after truth. It is good as a discipline, and as a source of ideas. It contains the law of progress for humanity and the future. It is of right associated with the well-being of man, and the coming of the

kingdom of God. It verifies religion both in its essential elements, and in its authoritative Revelations, and asserts the binding obligations of virtue,—and with this feeble tribute to it, and to the harmony of reason and faith in all that the Bible teaches, we close the present chapter.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE RELATIONS OF MORAL EVIL.

No subject has so embarrassed the claims of religion as that of the existence of sin. Objections to the being and perfections of God, and the demands of moral government, are summed up and have their generic expression here. The conflicts of the ages have lingered on this field. Theology has been put to her defences here, and many have deemed them lame, and inadequate to the encounter imposed. Irreligion has made her boast at this point, published her scandal, and hurled her defiances. Respecting God, as related to the prevention of sin, she has said, "If He would and could not, where is His power?—and if He could and would not, where is His goodness?" And it cannot be denied, that replies have been faint, and timidly given, from

the friends of truth. Both the questioning and the answers have shown immaturity in the study of moral science, and much want of a discriminative analysis as to what legitimately belongs to the subject, and what is of necessity excluded.

Nothing is gained by resolving this whole matter into a mystery, and saying to the irreligious, we cannot understand the relations of God to wrong; and can make no scientific, no valid and competent statement concerning it. This only strengthens his cause and weakens our own. It is treason also against the truth and its Author, and can never satisfy conscience and the common mind. Nor may we say that "God is above morality" and superior to the "behests of rule and law."

*"Non tali auxilio, nec defensoribus istis,
Tempus eget."*

There is a more excellent way. God has not left Himself without witness in this thing. Nor can it be without avail to state the principles on which the difficulties may be relieved, which have so long and so injuriously hung over this subject.

Some incidental and fragmentary refer-

ences have been already made in this direction in our work. But in view of the spirit of inquiry now awakened on the subject, a more integral and comprehensive statement of principles seems needful to clear away objections, and to admit to their rightful sway the unembarrassed convictions of reason and religion.

Some undoubted first truths lie in the foreground of the subject:

1. *Sin is intrinsic wrong.* It is conceived in a wrong spirit. It is essential wickedness, falsehood and mischief. Its nature is iniquitous. It is endorsed by no formula of reason, or goodness or truth. The man who commits it falls alike at the bar of his own conscience, at the bar of God and of all righteousness. It is opposition to reason, to right and to God, and its legitimate fruits are only evil continually. It is graphically described and conditioned by an apostle in referring to a specific form of it: 'Then when lust is conceived it bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished bringeth forth death.' Sin is an immorality, and no intelligence in heaven or earth, in the finite or Infinite, can esteem it otherwise; or come into propositional relations toward it,

without imbibing its taint and endorsing a wrong.

2. *Sin is essentially anti-theistic.* It does not acknowledge God, and is not acknowledged or allowed of Him. It is inherently counter to Him in its conception and in all its movements and ways. Its nature is rebellion against Him, and opposition to His will. All sin is against every attribute of the being of God, and every principle of allegiance to Him. It is transgression, and disobedience, and counteraction to Him. It does not ask His leave to be; its nature is, "Who is the Lord that I should serve Him?" The Infinite has not an attribute that is in sympathy with it, or that can enter into a propositional relation to it. This could not be. It would be suicidal in God. It would abnegate His own perfections, and authority and law and way, and demand of Him that He should take part against Himself, and deny His own Godhead and throne. It would be logically impossible, and morally so too. He could not and He would not deny Himself. This sin does—not formally always. But it repudiates God. It passes out from the legitimate terms of the Infinite, into a plane of its own, where God

cannot be, and which He cannot recognize but for reproof and correction. And it is the anti-theistic nature of sin and a competent view of it, which is an integral element in the question of its proper and satisfactory solution. That this must be logically the relation of sin to God, reason avers; that it is its relation to Him, conscience and religion demand. How could God deny Himself—play false to His own perfections, or enter into any strategic arrangements for that which denies and wrongs Him?

3. *Sin is a trespass on right, and supposes it.* It is an outbreak in a moral system, and implies the antecedent existence of a moral system, with its relations and responsibilities. It is the disruption of bonds rightfully imposed, and involves the existence of rightful authority and law. It is not the normal condition of a moral system. God is, before sin is possible. His being, economy, method, and government antedate it, as do the principles and obligations of all righteousness. It is not an original state of the intelligence, or of an intelligent system. It is a breaking away from all these, and an abuse against them. It is disorder and misrule. It is an invasion of

Divine authority, and all the methods of the Infinite in a moral system. It is an antagonistical force that mars it; that superinduces on it an element of wrong, with which it in no sense affiliates, and which must be cast out as wholly a wrong seed, and no way of God or of His will, and which the resources of the Infinite will in the best time and way overrule and overcome, as an intruder in His kingdom, and an invader upon His rights, His methods and His ways, and on the peace and good of the intelligent universe. Sin may never be wholly destroyed and done away with. Neither probation nor retribution may wholly destroy and cure it. But it shall be as the tares of the field, when the plans and purposes of God against it are accomplished.

4. *Sin is a liability in the finite only.* It is not a normal state of the intelligence. It is by mistake, misdirection and mislead, and in misrule and violation of right; all of which show it to be without liability in the Infinite. Moreover, it is of the nature of an occurrence—an event—a deed or fact that is done, and a matter of record in the ongoing history of the universe, and thus its concrete relations locate it with the finite of being. It

is there inherently liable; for how in that state could there be election, or character, or destiny, without such liability? *There* is of necessity imperfection of knowledge and experience, and may be weakness of purpose and perversity of will. In the finite is exposure to external influences—to the force of example, and to all the liabilities and “changes and chances,” to which an untried and incipient stage of existence is exposed. The liability of wrong in finite intelligence is actual and obvious, and has its truthful exponent in the fall of man. But it is conceivable as a concrete reality, only in beings whose existence begins—whose life is a growth in knowledge and experience—whose history is an accretion and a culture—a trial and a probation. *They* would eventually get beyond it, and be too wise and too good to be under any actual liability of sin, as the angels who kept their first estate already are, and the spirits of the just made perfect, of our own race. They are so, it is true, through a Divine providence: but that providence is no less a law of mind than it is a Divine economy. But we must deal further with this thought, in its place below. All that is needful now, is to

locate its liability in the finite, and to see how it is, by all the laws of the intelligence, confined there. Infinite wisdom knows too much, and is too good for it. God is ever without liability to it, as he may never mistake in judgment or have perversity of will.

5. *Sin can be only by apostasy.* It cannot be the normal state of intelligent beings. It is logically impossible in the Infinite, and all other intelligences are dependent on God for existence and are His work, and His work is perfect like Himself; and hence all derived intelligences, as they come from His hand, will bear His image and be in His likeness. This must be the intellectual and moral of creation as at first formed. God would have no heart to any thing else in the moral sphere. With nothing else could He enter into communion and hold correspondence, as His work, or be satisfied with. He could but repudiate it. So that an originally wrong-minded being is the veriest solecism. How could wrong be a primary state of existence? It would exhibit God as indifferent to virtue, and as preferring evil to good at a point where the election and responsibility is all His own. To do it, God

Himself must become anti-theistic, as well as be a derelict from goodness and right.

Sin *is* possible, through apostasy from God. This possibility lies in the freedom of the intelligence. It is of the nature of mind, nor could the case be otherwise. All personality involves this—all election, and character and legitimate destiny. Transgression is possible. Derived intelligence may act unwisely, unreasonably and wrong, and man or angel may turn false to the lessons of truth and rectitude, and disobey God. This is an inherent liability of moral government. Its methods are resistible, so far as character and conduct are concerned. They must be, or it would not be moral government. Its nature and perfection and glory lie in the element of a voluntary and unconstrained obedience. This only admits a real personality in intelligent beings, and gives legitimacy to the question of right and wrong in the universe. This thought will come up again farther on. I refer to it now to show how *only* sin and wrong could occur, and that it must be by disobedience to righteous law, previously imposed, and that it is in no sense the method of the Deity in the moral sphere—that it is an outbreak from Divine

authority in finite cause, toward which the economy, purpose, perfections and government of God can be only in antagonistical relation. And this accords with the facts in the case, as illustrated in the garden of Eden, in the fall of the angels, in the recovery for man through grace, and in the whole course of Divine Providence toward sin.

6. *An apostasy from God is most conceivable in the outset of a moral economy.* Then, if ever, will sin be most likely to occur, and transgression to take place. Then have intelligent beings the least experience, and the most susceptibility to foreign influences and impressions. Then would they draw least instruction from the past, and be most improvident of the future. If derived mind begins at zero, it accumulates knowledge and wisdom thence forever onward—and if not early in sin, will be less and less liable to fall into it, and will soon get beyond any actual liability of apostasy from God. The angels that ‘fell not’ are an example of this, and so are the spirits of the just, as before remarked. Sin is without reason and without apology. Infinite reasons fill the universe for loving and obeying God, and being every way conformed to Him.

And we may trust that they have been successful, under a Divine Providence in moral government, in holding the great mass of intelligent beings that people the universe, to a normal state of existence, and that *they* have long since ripened into confirmed holiness, in the love and likeness of God.

Sin is by the wrong use of faculties and susceptibilities, in themselves and in their normal exercise, right. This was so in Eden, and must have been so with the angels that kept not their first estate. In no other way could transgression occur. It must have been through the disobedient and improper exercise of capabilities inherently right and good and of God. This is largely characteristic of all sin, though when once committed, it tends to perpetuate itself. The sinner once in the wrong is out of harmony with God and with himself—breaks from the power and help of a legal economy, gets into the habit and the toils of sin, and in many ways hedges up before himself the path of recovery to holiness.

There is, too, a point of change in character and destiny, where probation naturally and by the laws of mind loses itself in its results, and passes into a confirmed state and

relationship to law and government, which are consequent upon it. We see it in this life. Most changes of moral character and conduct occur in youth and early manhood. It is difficult to encounter the vices of a lifetime. Few are the trophies of grace gathered from the vale of age; while the young Christian sometimes quails in the midst of temptations, which spend their fury in vain on the aged saint. He is like the beetled cliff of the mountain, or the sturdy oak of the forest, pointing steady to the heavens—strong in God and in the power of His might.

We think, then, that we are right in regarding apostasy from God as an early aberration of mind. Sin will occur, if at all, in the instep of a moral economy. A thing so unreasonable and so wrong will not succeed against the ripe manhood of the intelligence, and its confirmed estate in holiness. It may become a giant evil, and be perpetuated through eternity, but its first entrance is from the inexperience and immaturity of virtue. Adam and Eve were the first of the race, and *they* sinned through foreign temptation. Rebel angels may have fallen through pride, issuing from extravagant self-respect; but the first

pair of earth were tempted from without. 'And when the woman,' through the crafty assurance of the adversary, 'saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and gave also to her husband, and he did eat.' A bait was held out to constitutional susceptibilities, against the command of God. And thus sin entered our world, as only it could, and has thence impressed the history and changed the relations and destinies of the race for all the future.

7. *The doctrine of descent, as related to the subject of moral evil.* The inquiry is significantly and seriously raised—why should the fall of Adam affect his posterity, and beget the hereditary proclivities of the race toward sin? But what else could be true in the premises? All nature—all existence, perpetuates itself in its successive generations. This is the law of universal being. No other is known, if indeed it could be supposed to be possible. It is the doctrine of every shrub and plant and seed, and thence up through every grade of physical and moral being to the Infinite Himself. God the Son has the

moral nature of the Father, and inherits the "*status*" of being of Him that begat Him. Providence, without this law, would be a continual creation, and the lessons of the past be obsolete and valueless for the present and the future. Without it there would be no light in history, and existence would possess but a barely current meaning and responsibility. Without it a Divine economy of any sort would have been scarcely possible, or knowledge or an appreciation of the perfections or purposes of God.

Besides, had the normal state of the intelligence been maintained, this law would never have been the subject of complaint. It would, by all, have been viewed as a wise and felicitous provision that the future should receive the benefit of the past, and existence be a continual accretion of light and strength in the ways of virtue. The entrance of sin would mar any economy, however perfect, in itself, and in its true, and Divinely constituted method of work and ongoing. Sin works badly anywhere, but its mischief must not be set down against a Divine economy inherently beneficent and kind; and which cannot be altered, notwithstanding the evils consequent

on sin. These may be deplored, but cannot be changed. The economy is itself a perfection; and that it works unpropitiously under the lead of sin, is not a Divine responsibility. 'God made man upright: that he has sought out many inventions,' must not be charged to his Maker, or the wise order of being in which *he* was created.

This perversion of a good, is even now the less a hardship, in that it does not compromise the first truths of reason in the matter of a personal responsibility. A proclivity towards sin, is not itself sin. It is a proclivity to it, and must be personally complied with and indulged in and acted from, in order to a personal accountability in the premises. The doctrine of the freedom of the will applies here, as elsewhere. A proclivity may be hereditary—an indulgence of it, is personal and voluntary. If the one is a temptation and of the nature of habits or propensities of any kind; then the activities of the soul as correlated with them, should be in the direction of resistance and counteraction. The whole matter when thought through, falls easily into the category of all right action, when tempted to that which is wrong.

The law of a legitimate voluntary and personal responsibility obtains here, and the whole vexed question of "*original sin*," as thus and rightly viewed, contains no-exception to it. One may as properly be required to resist a hereditary temptation as any other,—as much to repudiate and rebuke the wrong of his first progenitor, as that of any intermediate age, even to the special waywardness and generated depravities of his immediate sire. A propensity may be propagated, a sin is personal. We are rightly bound to resist and overcome all those that lead to sin or are resultant of it, whether innate or acquired,—whether descending from a more or less remote ancestry, or growing out of the wayward indulgences of our own life. All sin begets a proclivity to it, and in this, the first sin had but the nature and tendency of all, and of all habit and history. Of the "federal headship" of Adam as a special divine constitution, differing views obtain. Adam *was* the first of the race, and he sinned, and by apostacy sundered the terms of a legal economy, and took with him the inheritance and destinies of the race of which he was the head and outgoing. This was the fact adverted to

by the Apostle in the 5th chapter of Romans, where he contrasts the first and second Adam, and sets in bold relief under the last, the preëminence and glory of the economy of grace. The law broken, what could supervene but this, and a commitment, and a gathering up of the interests of the race to its merciful behests? This would, in this direction, be the boundary of a moral system, as it is the wisdom and goodness of God, to us sinners.

With these preliminary suggestions, I pass to the statement of those generic principles of thought, on the basis of which this whole subject adjusts itself, and in the light of which the relations of *moral evil* to the government of God are legitimately and satisfactorily apprehended.

1. *A holy and happy universe of intelligent beings in the image and likeness of God, is the Divine method and end, in creation.* Of this we can scarcely doubt. It is of the nature of God, and of all goodness, as well as the demand of all morality. God is a power in the lead of his own perfections. They are fully and always in the direction of all righteousness and goodness and truth. Any thing below or different from this, He would account

as unworthy of Him—to anything other than this He would have no heart, and must regard with utter abhorrence and as the loathing of His soul. So indisputably clear is this, that all reason harmonizes in the Biblical assertion of it, and accounts God as One ‘who *cannot* lie; and with whom evil cannot dwell.’

This, also, is the generic law of all mind in its normal ongoing. Its thoughts and devisings and plans and purposes and work and economy of work, will be like itself. If right itself, it will enter into complicity, and hold fellowship with no wrong. Its methods will, like itself, be pure and transparent, in the light of a perfect morality. One faltering conception, one connivance at wrong, or contrivance of it, or any incorporation of it, into its economy and line of things, would ruin it before the eyes of the intelligent universe; and all the more from the elevation on which its author may have stood, and the light and resources which were his own. This would be worst of all in the Infinite and the least possible there. Any strategic leaning to wrong, as a Divine expedient, in the original and integral methods of the universe, is, from the nature of mind, utterly ungodlike, and inconceivable. ‘God

cannot be tempted with evil,' or sustain any propositional relation to it, in his own scheme of things. If sin break in upon the Divine order of the universe, through finite cause, God will interlock, and antagonize with it, in the best ways possible, for its discomfiture and overthrow, and for the instruction and recovery of the universe, from its hateful sway, and baleful tendencies and effects. This is godlike. This would be the part of any good being in his appropriate sphere, and alike the demand of the original economy and "great end" of God in all His works.

Nor do we need the inception of sin, as a culture to goodness, and a confirmation, in virtue; though if actually occurrent, it may be turned to account to this end, as any evil may be. Wrong is ever an argument for right, and sin a critique on its own deformity and wrong. This is its instruction by the laws of mind, and truth; but to say, that for this reason, the universe needs it, and God has instituted it, is to sanctify it, and change all the relations of the subject. It would be to hold, that in its place, wrong is better than right, sin than holiness, and vice than virtue. Morality could not survive such a position, or the char-

acter and perfections of God, be other than an utter solecism. Besides, the coördinates of truth are abundant, for the exigencies and growth of mind in *holy* beings. Intelligence takes to itself all the elements of a true balance and expansion of its powers, and a full development, under the tuition of virtue, more than in any other way. This is its normal method. This inspires it with the largest themes. This leads it after God, and the things of God, and into the midst of all the harmonies of creation. Sin belittles the mind, and perverts its faculties. It has dwarfed the intellect of the ages in our race, and humbled it to the worship of stocks and stones. It has extracted the godlike and the ennobling from our being, and allied us to all that is grovelling and sensual. Man has lost immensely through its malignant agency; and to myriads, sin will be an utter destruction, rendering their existence, through eternity, a failure and a curse. The sufficiency of God will arrest this calamity through Grace, that it be not universal, and do not doom a race to ruin. But, even this is not to be accounted an apology for sin, or for any strategic relations of the infinite, that sin should be. Besides the logical impossibility of this, as before

stated, how, then, could God oppose and punish it, and make Himself glorious in the redemption of Grace?

The conception of wrong is inseparable from a moral system. It arises out of the nature of mind in the correlates and contrasts of truth and right. All right-minded intelligence has the apprehension of it as a conviction and counsel for virtue. God has it perfectly, and so in their measure have all who are made in His image. It is necessarily the concomitant of all knowledge and truth, and sense of obligation and righteousness. Such a conception is of the nature of implied truth, and must be, wherever mind is, to apprehend the nature and relations of being. The idea of obedience suggests that of disobedience, as its correlate or counterpart—that of right, the idea of wrong—that of love and submission and duty to God, its opposite. So that a holy and happy universe in the love and likeness of God may apprehend the evil of sin, and have its wrong and wretchedness as an argument and safeguard in virtue. Indeed, the conception of sin must ante-date its actuality. God knows it from eternity—its wickedness and misery—its misrule and ruin, and has

made all the safeguards of the Infinite against it. It has broken out without His leave and with His condemnation, and He has resorted to the recuperative energies of grace to repair its desolation, and regain, in the recovery of the lost, His own great end in the right ongoing and welfare of the universe. All law and authority involve the recognition of it—all sense of character, desert and destiny; so that all the correlates of a moral system would be in sufficient play without the malign and fearful experiment of actual wrong.

This view of the Divine method of the universe is transparent and vital in the principles of all morality. It holds God to be undeviatingly on the side of virtue, and as in no sense accessory to wrong, or as sustaining any strategic correlation towards it; and is freed from the insuperable difficulties of those schemes of theology which constitute wrong a Divine expedient, and in common with all righteousness and goodness, to be of the counsel and purpose of God.

2. *Intelligent creatures in the image of God and after His likeness, with a subordinate physical and sentient universe, adapted to their necessities and growth, are a perfect work.* This

would be the transmission of God's own image into the finite, and the propagation of a social, moral system *there*, with which God could have correspondence, communion, and fellowship. It would be the extension of the intelligent commerce and felicities of the Infinite into the finite, and the creation of a universe for Divine society and blessedness. Than this nothing could be better. The mind can apprehend its perfectness. It can see that nothing else and below this would be competent, or worthy to stand in its place. A creation must be in the finite, and *this* would be of the nature and perfections of God, and all that the finite could minister and manifest. This is a Divine forthgoing in a perfect way, and for a perfect end, in all rectitude and goodness, and spiritual growth and felicity. This would be the Divine in creation, and God's method in it. Nothing else would meet His mind or His end. Thus He did. The universe has this expression on its face, as the Divine idea of it. It is the conception and work of the infinite perfections of God. 'And God saw every thing that He had made, and behold it was *perfectly* good.'

Of creation, right-minded intelligence would

be the last, crowning work, to go forth to self-culture and the enjoyment of God in the Eden formed in its behoof. And this, so far as we are informed, was the Divine order. Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them, and then 'God rested from all His work which He had made,' and celebrated a Sabbath over it as 'very good.'

Finite, derived intelligence, of any order, will begin at zero in development, for knowledge is an experience and a growth, and not a creation. This implies no imperfection in God or His work, but is inherently of the nature of that which is in the finite, and has a beginning. This is also of its excellency and glory, in the end of all right character and legitimate destiny. It may indicate its alternate liabilities, and its incipient exposures to temptation and wrong, but the case could not be otherwise than that *that* which had a beginning in existence should also have a beginning in experience and spiritual life and character.

3. *Intelligence is cause per se.* Intelligent beings are inherently, and in their own right as such, cause, in the voluntary sphere, and have on the last analysis the control of their voluntary states and acts. This is true of

God Himself, and of all constituted in His likeness. This is an integral property of all mind, whether derived or underived—whether created or uncreated. It is a distinctive feature of all personality, and essential to it. It is *that* which marks the characteristic difference between a person and a thing, and constitutes the true element of responsibility, in contrast with all that is irresponsible, and of the nature of mere effect. Without it, mind would not be mind, or man be man, or God be God. All that is excellent and peculiar in a moral system hinges here. You cannot have character or virtue, or legitimate destiny without it. He that is without self-control is without self-respect. He must have the power of choice and exercise it. He must decide what he will do and how he will act, or he is no real factor, and can have no proper responsibility.

All mind is a *cause, causing*, and competent to decide either way on every voluntary matter submitted. It is a real agent in its voluntary issues, with a proper sovereignty over them, without which a moral destiny would be without signification, and a moral government impossible.

But this doctrine of cause admits the possibility of wrong, and its liability too. It does not excuse its actuality. Much is possible and even liable that is under no necessity of being, and that ought never to be. The converse of all right is possible, and there is not a holy aspiration or act of loving obedience and praise in the universe, without power to the contrary. *Necessitate* it, and you *spoil* it. Make it otherwise than the free act of a free mind and freely rendered, in the place of a possible alternative, and you quench the light and glory of a moral system, and annihilate the characteristic distinction between the intellect of man or angel, and inert matter or brute force. God will never be betrayed into wrong, for He is infinite in knowledge and wisdom and goodness; but finite intelligence may. This is evident from the constituent elements of voluntary action—from the innate susceptibilities of finite being, and from the fearful experiment of wrong which some worlds have made.

The truth of what is here stated is further confirmed in the fact that,

4th. *Moral government has only moral means for the prevention of sin.* The matter

lies in the moral sphere. The case is submitted to the arbitrament of the will. The issue rests on free choice, and is inherently elective. All the considerations which lie in the foreground—all the grounds of action which are possible to it, may be accepted or resisted. They may be complied with, or counteracted and rejected. Physical force and control in the premises, are out of place. They cannot be correlated with the responsible acts of the intelligence. It is of necessity the region of motive influences and moral sway, and they are inherently resistible and may be resisted, as their nature indicates, and as the fact has shown. This is no limitation of Divine power, but the inevitable liability of a moral system. It could but be that the question of right and wrong should be submitted to finite cause, and an issue gained on the principles and responsibilities of free will. A sovereign prevention of this, on the part of God, would be foreign to the subject. It would be the surrender of a moral system—the merging of the supernatural into merely physical effects in nature, and the giving up of all that is transcendent and glorious in the elements of free cause. These elements are of God Himself and like Him.

They are a perfect and Divine method of the intelligent universe, and could not be abandoned, though one or many worlds should apostatize. A moral government and system flow integrally out from the being and perfections of God, and are as enduring and stable as His throne. They have no *dernier resort* nor can be resolved into any more ultimate and residuary method of prosecuting the interests of the universe or God's great end in all His works. Finite existence itself might be blotted out, to prevent its aberrations. But how would this be legitimate? Intelligent existence in its creation is a Divine, a perfect work, and why should God destroy His own perfect work? This, it is obvious, could be done only in dereliction of His own perfect methods of moral government, and through an arbitrary avoidance of those natural tests and liabilities which are inherently of it, while it would indicate a hesitation in God to admit to its operation and behests, an economy which was resultant of His perfections, and in itself perfect and right.

There is, there can be no other method of Divine administration for intelligent beings than what lies wholly within the sphere of a

moral system, with its means in behalf of virtue and its restraints against sin. This is and must be the Divine economy of prevention against disobedience. Any thing more or less would be essentially monstrous, nugatory, and out of place. It would be like the request of Dives for a mission of the dead to bring men to repentance on earth, and might well meet with its recusant reply: 'If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be *persuaded* though one rose from the dead.'

Thus also the taunt of the sceptic referred to in the beginning of the chapter, is without relevancy or force. A perfect government is perfectly administered. All is done in the way of the prevention of sin and wrong that the case admits of or that belongs to the subject. More than this would be nugatory on the one hand or monstrous on the other. The laws of mind and the principles of moral government are coördinates of all truth. It could not be of the wisdom of God to transgress or transmute them. They must be eternal as His being and His throne, and there is no way of arraiguing the goodness or power of God, at this point, but by showing some remissness or deviation in the Divine administration of

this perfect economy of government. Can this be done? Did the treatment of rebel angels show it? Do we see it in the garden of Eden? Have we seen it since? What is the language of Providence in the inspired Word or out? What that of grace? What is the testimony of probation or of retribution? What of that heaven promised to the righteous? What of that final award to those who persist in their wrong, and condemnation and sin?

5. *A Divine moral government may not see its entire will and aim effected in its probationary methods.* Its means, being resistible, may be resisted. That which is possible may become actual. Moral government implies the liability of an alternative in conduct and character. Probation is but an incipient administration under it. It is in the sphere of personal will. It has its tests. It is a trial for more ultimate results. 'The will of God is our sanctification,' but how many come short of it! His will is for 'all to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth;' but this will not be. All the sin of earth and hell is counter to the will of God, and the recuperative methods of grace, may not be entirely successful against it. Its full agencies may be exhausted, and yet

not all be recovered from sin, and even God may complain as by the prophet, 'What more could I have done for my vineyard, that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?' A principle of truth underlies this Divine statement, which is integral in moral government. There must be in it the element of free-will and personal cause and ultimate self-control and individual responsibility. Such a government is a reality and not a pageant. The doctrine of cause inheres as properly in finite intelligence as in the Infinite. To invade it is to annihilate the intelligence and give up the system to which it is adapted, and of which it is an integral part, and to reduce the universe to a mere thing.

Thus a *dernier resort* is of the nature of such a government. As it may not prevent all sin, or gain the recovery of all from it, so it will be resultant in retribution. In that, is the element of physical power, but yet in application only to the matter of physical condition. The moral state of apostate Spirits, in retribution, is not in accordance with the will of God, and never will be. Their physical

state is the *dernier resort* of Omnipotence. It is not in itself a chosen result of the Divine will, but only a necessity of moral government, in view of persistent sin. It is the only legitimate and possible conclusion in the premises under the government of law. It is not the primary choice of the Deity, or, in that sense, the fulfilment of His will, but a residuary result from the necessities of the case.

6. *Sin is a mistake as well as a mislead.* It is an error as well as a wrong. As it never should be, so its inception has been in unreason and folly through the misdirection of mind. This is not its apology, but is matter for our instruction concerning it. As sin is without good reason, so we need not attempt to give a good reason for it, or disconcert ourselves in view of its theological relations. In diving deeper than the truth, we give ourselves needless trouble. Sin is no correlate of the Deity. God is not its Father, nor is responsible for it. It is essentially anti-theistic in its origin, plan, purpose and end. It lies in a plane of its own, and antagonistic to God. As it is essentially unreason and folly as well as unrighteousness, He would see no reason for it. As it is a possible alternative, under a government

in itself perfect and right, and would be but an abuse of it; and as the prerogatives and relations of the Infinite are all in antagonism with it, and as God is using the best methods for its circumvention and overthrow, He is not implicated in its existence and effects, and needs no vindication at the bar of His own intelligence or ours. These methods are necessarily within the sphere of a moral system, but they will be availing. They are more in number and strength for the discomfiture and cure of sin than for its prevention at first, as has elsewhere been shown. Sin is its own condemnation. All experience of it, in any races or worlds, exposes its wickedness and folly to others. It may perpetuate itself in some of them who have apostatized, and lost ground thereby, but the unfallen universe will become too wise and confirmed in virtue for it, and so get beyond the actual liability of it. Truth and goodness and the resources of moral government will prevail against it, in races, where it has not broken out, and it will become like the tares of the field when the harvest of the world is ripe. The great triumphs of the future will be in the way of redemption and holiness. The myriad races

above us may even now be confirmed in righteousness and the future of earth will be transcendently bright in this respect. This is of the laws of mind, and of the councils of God.

7. *The inception and history and products of sin will be a salutary lesson to the universe.* This could not be otherwise. Lawless rebellion is always an argument for good and right government. Crime in the family is a plea against itself. It cannot be a parent's strategy or have his permission. This would neutralize its element of wrong—destroy *his* character for goodness and demoralize the household. Sin is intrinsic wrong, and no good being may stand in a propositional relation to it; but the universe will see its hateful nature, and the woe and ruin consequent upon it, and be instructed by it. Such is all sin, and such the relation of all goodness to it. God knows perfectly what it is, and what it will do. The machinations of every evil agent He sees, and the mischief thereby threatened, and in the cycles of the Infinite, is recovering the universe from the grasp and plague-spot of sin and accomplishing His own great end in rectitude and goodness. Whether the inception

of sin, and the prevalence and continuity of error and wrong will be comprehensively a calamity to the universe, will depend on the rebutting agency and recuperative sufficiency of God. But for this it would be unmixed evil—calamity and death. Such is His relation to it that He can bring order out of confusion, and light out of darkness. This is the only redemption from the mischiefs of sin. The help is wholly from another quarter than that of its nature and effects. It is in arresting these effects, and warning an intelligent universe in view of them. It is in the doctrine of restraint, correction, remedy, and punishment. And this is just the Divine relation to wrong; prohibiting it at first in view of the tests which moral government and all intelligence imply—driving out the lapsed progenitors of our race from the garden, and planting the interdict there to the way of life except in the promised ‘seed;’—grieving over the malignant prevalence of sin, in the early generations of the earth, and bringing in the deluge of waters upon it—in the one great lesson of God’s providence on men and nations since, and in the eventual, final triumph of virtue over sin, through grace unto righteousness

and eternal life on the one hand, and the discomfiture of persistent wrong in the world of the lost on the other.

Finally. *God is our Heavenly Father.* The whole question is, after all, a moral one. It appeals to the sensibilities and wants of the soul, and our filial relationships to God. It is in the sphere of conscience and obligation and all rectitude of beings and relations. As such we should regard and understand it. The relations of God to wrong should be a transparency in our minds, clear as sunlight. This is not the place for enigmas, or for constructive and subtle dialectics, or for misgivings and doubt. As it is a first truth of reason, so it is at the foundation of morals. If I may not know where God is, in relation to sin, I cannot know where I am myself, or what are my obligations to truth and righteousness. If I must distinguish between the "secret" and "revealed" will of God, and legislate on the nature of "*permissive decrees*" for sin, then indeed am I confounded at a vital point, and all morality becomes so by construction merely. It may be one thing in God, another in angels, and another in men or nothing, anywhere in either. "*Obsta prin-*

cipiiis." God is our Father, I repeat, and we want to look intelligently, right into His heart, and feel that we know the whole of it, and that no dark enigmas lurk there—no mystic apologies for wrong or strategic compromises with it, and no disclaimer against the ever-repeated appeal, 'My son, give *me* thine heart?' This religion demands, and this is our doctrine. This, too, the conscience must and will have, whether theology ventures the scientific statement of it or not. The moral nature of man will avail in its behalf, and the future will account it as the lessons of childhood, in its conquests for truth and the Gospel among men.

Thus much seemed needful to indicate the relations of wrong, and free from embarrassment the demands of religion. I give a moment's attention, in closing, to the inquiry in this connection; Did not God deliver up His Son into the hands of his betrayers and murderers, to be crucified? This was, in God, a governmental movement, in the end of recovery from sin and rebuke of it. It was no Divine permission of the sin of the Jews in crucifying Christ, but a method by which its *result*, in the sufficiency of God, was turned

into a blessing. It was a sovereign act of God, in conflict with wrong, and overruling it for good. And it hinges on a general principle of rectitude and truth. Any good being may take advantage of another's wrong for a good end. We are conversant with this everywhere. The culprit shall serve the state, while expiating his crimes, and even help to build the walls that enclose and secure him. Men and nations shall reap that which they sow. We will not concoct the wrong or project it as a method; but if men will do wrong, we will turn it to what account we can. They shall 'grind in the prison-house.' They shall be a critique on themselves. Indeed all punishment has this element in it. It is the estimate held, and the verdict passed on sin. Thus, that God should take occasion from the sin of the Jews to secure a good—that He should hold back the thunders of omnipotence from the whole tragedy of the crucifixion, except in the fearful testimonies that followed it; and even hide His face from the dying Jesus, and say to His betrayers and murderers, 'This is your hour and the power of darkness;' introduces no new principle in moral government. It is the way of right, with wrong;

bringing light out of darkness, and good out of evil. Christ, as God the Son, could be put to suffering and accept it, though personally innocent and perfectly holy; and God the Father, for purposes of mediation, could 'afflict Him and put His soul to grief,' and thus in the way pointed out, both in the Old Testament and the New, make His own offering up of Jesus, a triumph over sin, and the life of the world.

The existence and mischiefs of sin are supposed, in all effort at recovery from it. It is a calamity, or it admits of no remedy. It is without God, or it needs no cure, but is according to God. It is a disturbance in the moral sphere. By it, the right ongoing of moral government is broken in upon, and there is transgression. A legal righteousness in the sinning one, becomes thence impossible, and a new exigency arises. God knows things as they are, and in the relations subsisting between them. From this point, and in view of the *status* occasioned by sin, the best method of recovery is all that is possible. And it must be through grace, and a sacrificial atonement. There must be the shedding of blood—the compensation to law—the offering up of the body

of Jesus once for all.' Necessity was laid upon God, in view of the exigency which sin had created, if He would institute redemption, to surrender His Son, as He did, that through His death we might have life. It was only taking the wicked in their own craftiness, and letting Satan 'fall into the pit which he had digged.' God was under no obligations to sin, or sinners, that He could not do this, and gain, through their wrong, a purpose and an end, over which humanity and a sympathizing universe are made glad. The prerogative of right over wrong here seen, is only that everywhere recognized, and which was imperatively called for by the exigency which sin had occasioned. The same is in providence, and in our own being, and is inherently the claim of right and virtue over vice and crime.

We need then no new theory of moral truth, in view of the Divine treatment of wrong, in the end of mercy. It is the same God, within the legitimate sphere of all righteousness, in the prosecution of a perfect moral government, to His own great end in all things. His relations to sin are right, and appreciably so. No unexplained enigma rests on the front of the picture, or conceals itself in the back-

ground. God deals with sin, as a righteous moral governor. It has complicated His acts, but not His character. Its outbreak has brought the resources of the Infinite to the subject, but all in the line of eternal righteousness. In this He is happy, as in all His works. In it, He commends Himself to reason, and all appreciation of character in the finite. We behold Him here as elsewhere, in the rectitude and perfection of His being. We love Him for His truth's sake. We appreciate the principles of the Divine Government, both under law and grace; and see in God a perfect, moral nature, which it is our wisdom and excellency both to apprehend and follow.

FINIS.



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