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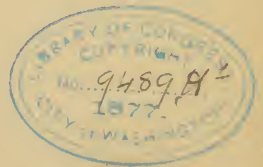
# THE RELIGIOUS FEELING.

*A STUDY FOR FAITH.*

BY

NEWMAN SMYTH.

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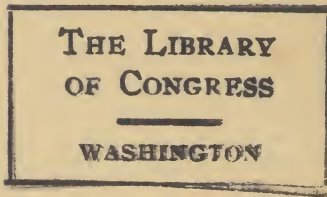


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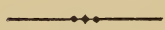
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Trow's  
PRINTING AND BOOKBINDING Co.,  
PRINTERS AND STEREOTYPERS,  
205-213 *East 12th St.*,  
NEW YORK.

LMW 4033

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## PREFACE.

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IN the struggle for existence which is ever going on in literature, as in life, a new book should show some variation, however slight, from others of its kind, by means of which it may be better fitted to the surrounding conditions of thought, and hope to survive for a season.

The reason this little book has for its appearance is a slight departure from the usual forms in which the evidences of faith are presented, by which it is sought to adapt them more perfectly to the sceptical surroundings of thought in our day. The variation by which this new venture, among the great multitude of books, hopes to live and to be useful, may be said to be the result of a process of natural selection, in an American mind, from the German idealism, and the English positivism.

The substance of it first formed itself in the author's mind during a season of quiet study of modern German thought, and he has since found the reasoning, which then enabled his own faith to survive, useful in conversation with friends whose scientific studies had both brought them into unwilling doubts concerning those spiritual truths which give to life its real value, and, at the same time, thrown the prevalent proofs of religion out of all relation to their habits of mind.

Though the principles unfolded in the following pages have long been fruitful in the German literature of faith, and are evidently at work leavening the whole body of our own theology, there is no one book in the English language, so far as I am aware, in which they are consecutively and thoroughly thought out; and even among the Germans, unless possibly an exception be made in favor of the excellent, but voluminous, philosophical writings of Prof. Ulrici, they have not been developed with sufficient reference to modern scientific theories of man's origin and history.



Faith in spiritual and divine realities may in some of its older forms be passing into Herbert Spencer's favorite family of extinct beliefs, but it certainly has had a marvellously persistent life in human history, and in new forms may prove itself able to survive vigorously even in the midst of those theories of evolution which constitute, undoubtedly, the general environment of thought in our generation. That the following pages should contain a complete adjustment of faith to its new surroundings, would, of course, not be possible—the problem of life is ever greater than our last and largest thought concerning it; but that they do contain a restatement of the evidence of things not seen somewhat more in harmony with the present condition of our knowledge, the author cherishes the belief; that they may draw forth other and better statements, and help on the general movement towards a faith at once simpler, more rational, and more assured, is his hope and expectation.



# THE RELIGIOUS FEELING.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE QUESTION STATED.—THE TRANSFORMATIONS OF THE RELIGIOUS FEELING.

ACCORDING to the Gospel of the Spirit, Adam is the Son of God; according to the Gospel of the Senses, man is the son of an atom. The two genealogies become contradictory only as either is regarded as the sole account of the descent of man.

The problem of problems upon which the thought of our times labors, may be reduced, in the last analysis, to the simple alternative: Is man, through whatever intermediate forms he may have descended, the Son of God, or is he the unintended product of molecular forces? If the former prove to be the true descent of man, then we are capable of religion, and we live in some personal relationship to a Being higher than ourselves, from whom we came. If the latter be the exclusive genealogy of man, we only deceive ourselves by cherishing

sentiments religiously colored. Our spiritual emotions, the bright and evanescent forms which come and go in the higher zones of thought and aspiration, are to be looked upon only as emanations from our lower and altogether earthly selves—the unsubstantial clouds of our mental firmament. Our chief end of life, then, would be to adapt ourselves, as well as we may, to our surroundings, and to survive as best we can.

It is surely not a loss, but a great gain, that in the discussions of modern times the main religious question becomes more and more disentangled from the minor perplexities of theology. It is a sign of progress that the religious question upon which the printing presses in these days are most busy, is not a question of sect or school. Messengers of reconciliation to-day meet each other from almost every theological camp; and few are the churches which continue to demand unconditional surrender to a system of bristling theological propositions, as a condition of admission to the household of faith. The question facing us to-day, which we can avoid only by retreating from the nineteenth century, is a question of the very life of religion itself, a question between any theology and no theology; between faith in the spirit and the Father of all spirits, and faith only in this visible order of things.

The very attempts made by some writers at half-way solutions, or compromises, between these two antagonistic beliefs, serve to reveal more clearly the real matter at issue, and the inevitable line of conflict. Thus Matthew Arnold's "Literature and Dogma" is a proposed armistice between religion and scepticism, with which neither party could long be contented. The "stream of tendency which makes for righteousness," in the course of the Hebrew literature becomes too well defined, is determined by too many metes and bounds in the descriptions of the prophets, and called by names too familiar in the language of Hebrew shepherds, to satisfy those minds to whom the Deity must be, if God is at all, an unknown and unknowable Power. And as Mr. Arnold's "God of the Bible" is too well known for the worshipper upon the Mars' hill of modern nescience; so, on the other hand, is this "not ourselves which makes for righteousness," too vague and metaphysical an abstraction for the believer in the temple of Jehovah, and the Shekinah of its holy place. Mr. Arnold, after his own dexterous manner, has performed the feat of the very metaphysics which he ridicules as a jugglery of phrases; for he has thrown another bridge of words between the two spheres of human experience, the world within us—our subjective knowledge, and the eternal



order without us and above us, in which, as it were, our self-consciousness lies ensphered—the outward reality of God. “Literature and Dogma” is a bridge of words over this fundamental antithesis skilfully put together—a finished piece of literary mechanics; but it only seems to unite opposites, and it will hardly bear the weight of either of the beliefs expected to meet upon it. But religion is the way from ourselves, and our own moralities, to God, and His righteousness; or it is nothing. And the “Zeit Geist,” the Spirit of the Times, however ruthless of old sanctities, and iconoclastic of established theologies it may be, is by no means a light and trifling spirit, content to play at hide and seek among the masked forms of things; it is an earnest spirit, at heart reverent of truth, and searching for its Lord. Neither unbelief, nor faith, seems disposed, then, to catch at the new phrase which Mr. Arnold, so much to his own satisfaction, has spun out of the old Hebrew faith.

The power of Israel was a persistent faith in a law of objective reality; in a Being whose word was a positive commandment; and in a kingdom, unseen, but having foundations more enduring than the hills of Zion, and of whose sublime verities, altar and temple, and throne of David, were but types and shadows. And still the deepest currents of thought set to-

wards the reality which men believe to lie beyond their visible horizon; and even our physical science pushes its discoveries towards the shores of the unknown land of faith.

As a timid armistice between faith and unbelief, a compromise, like Mr. Arnold's, between the lower and higher beliefs and forces of morality and religion, can, from the nature of the case, prove to be, at best, but a temporary reconciliation; so, on the other hand, is it equally hopeless for believers in the Bible and the Holy Ghost to seek to subdue the questions uprising in many quarters against the traditional faith, by clinging to antiquated methods of thought, or by standing still, marking time, in lines of defence which have been already completely turned. The opponents of faith in revelation do not deploy their ranks now in front of Paley's formidable array of evidences, or within the range of Butler's weightier arguments. The issue is joined on other grounds, and must be settled upon a broader field of discussion. Whoever, therefore, would run in the course of modern thought, and win the goal, must throw aside every weight which encumbers theology, and press forward in the spirit of the apostle who could forget those things which are behind. Faith has ever a nobler task than to build the sepulchres of the prophets, or to stand

guard over defunct bodies of Divinity. To let the dead bury their dead, and to follow the living truth which ever goes before us, is the Divine commission of the disciple in every age. Burdens of human interpretation, therefore, too heavy to be borne, need not be carried by the champions of faith into the arena of modern controversy. Under clumsy and oppressive theories of God's method of creation, government, or revelation, he need not labor. To the main religious question of our times the Church may best go forth in light marching order. The believer may yield without controversy some once hotly contested points as now unessential. He should seize with his eye, and devote his energies to the few great strategic points of the Christian doctrine.

Neither, on the other hand, can unbelief win the day by storming abandoned lines; by showering its shafts of ridicule upon beliefs no longer held, if they ever were, by the Christian world; or even by the defeat of detached doctrines, or capture of dogmas unduly advanced by theologians. He who would dispute the possession by the human spirit of its land of promise, must wage a better than Philistine warfare; mere raids upon exposed beliefs, the plunder, now and then, of an article of faith, will not prove



sufficient to disinherit the human heart of its birthright—the inheritance from the fathers to the children's children, with its fountains of refreshment and broad prospects—a land still flowing with milk and honey.

The main religious question of our times concerns, first of all, the reality of our spiritual perceptions. Are we capable of coming to a knowledge of God, even if there is a God? Can He *touch* us, and we *feel* Him? Do we, by any valid experience, become aware of His presence, of the presence of real spiritual being and goodness without and above ourselves?

Our capacity, or want of capacity, for religion, it will be observed, is a question of fact, which must be determined, therefore, as other facts are, by observation and testimony. The same methods which are used for the discovery of other facts of the creation are to be employed in the investigation of man's religious nature. It would be in the last degree unscientific to shut out observed facts, or possibilities even of observation, by the necessities of any theory. A theory has served its purpose, and should be broken up, so soon as experience brings to the foreground a single form which cannot be drawn life-size within its frame. If man's moral stature should stubbornly refuse to find room for itself within the limits of

a theory of natural selection, then science, unable to dwarf man, must simply enlarge her Darwinian conception. The Baconian method would become a *felo de se*, a philosophic suicide, should it dismiss the possibility of a religious nature, and the disclosure of truth to that organ of spiritual perception, on account of any theory of man's origin, or of the ultimate constitution of matter. The facts observed along any line of investigation must give the bounds to our generalizations, not previous generalization determine the facts. Science should be full of eyes, and travel slowly. The observer who spends days at the microscope may miss the grandest facts if he hurries at railway speed over the common moral experience of man, or across the uplands of the spirit. Yet we can hardly resist the impression, while reading, for example, Mr. Darwin's chapter on "The Moral Sense," that he has not devoted to the observation of the facts largely written in human history which determine man's moral nature and descent, the same patient, scientific eye that has followed with close scrutiny the minute particulars which determine man's physical origin and structure. Writers who make haste to decry the want of familiarity on the part of metaphysicians and clergymen with the facts in evidence concerning the uniform processes of nature, should, at least, admit that the moral

order of the world, and the continuity of moral forces, may have impressed their signs and evidences as strongly upon the minds of those who have made their distinctive phenomena the pursuit of their lives. Clouds may envelop the heights, and darkness be over the deep places of the human soul. Prof. Huxley,\* with David Hume, may think it wise advice to commit to the flames any "volume of divinity which does not contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity and number, any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence;" but, nevertheless, there *are* heights and depths of being of which we cannot always be unaware, to whose mysterious influences, at times, even that stout-hearted positivist, Prof. Tyndall, confesses; and surely it would be ignoble for human souls to live like the poor peasants among the Alps, who cultivate their few acres in the valleys in seeming indifference to the awful grandeur overshadowing them. And though we must climb oftentimes through the mists, we may have solid rock beneath our feet; we may gain a larger horizon than we dreamed, and have moments, at least, of clear, sunny certainty in the vision of unseen and eternal things!

Our point of departure in the investigation

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\* "Lay Sermons," p. 145.

of the religious nature, corresponds with the point from which physical science starts upon its voyage of discovery. In exploring either hemisphere of our double nature, we must begin with corresponding facts, and proceed by analogous methods; and the experiences gained have similar claims upon rational credence. Our point of mental departure, both in science and religion, alike in physics and metaphysics, is feeling.

Our knowledge of the external world is given in and through sensation. Our consciousness is affected so and so; these affections or sense-perceptions are grouped in our several conceptions of things; are combined, corrected, and held fast in various judgments and beliefs with regard to an external world. It is not to our purpose, at this point, to discuss the laws by which the mind advances from sensations, or sense-perceptions, to a reasoned knowledge of the world without, which presses in upon its consciousness; it is not necessary to our argument to decide whether, as Mr. Mill would say, a perception is only a transformed sensation, or whether, as Sir Wm. Hamilton would hold, sensation is the condition, or necessary form, by which the mind becomes conscious of outward things. The fact here in point is simply this, that sensation is the condition and the beginning of that knowledge which our science takes



for granted. We know the world by touching it. To that touch, to that feeling, and to no origin less humble, science must trace back the lineage of its proudest demonstrations. Sensation is the first stage of knowledge. The genuineness of the knowledge gained through our sense-perceptions is admitted by all with whom it is worth while to argue. The validity of our sensations, the worth of the raw material of science now passes current at almost every centre of philosophic thought, and it is never questioned by the multitude. Our knowledge gained through the senses is valid knowledge; genuine on the face of it, and good so far as it goes.

Is there, then, any corresponding basis for religion? Are there any religious ideas equally valid, worth all that they appear to be? There has prevailed among men a general and persistent belief in an order of things other than that disclosed to the senses; in a law, and purpose, and power, of which this visible framework of things is but the type and the semblance; in an intelligence and goodness of which our minds, and all that our homes have taught us of love, are only image and reflection. As by the scientific use of the imagination Prof. Tyndall is led to believe in an ether, which he has never seen, or weighed, or touched, but which surrounds

and pervades all objects, as the necessary condition of material forces, the indispensable medium of light; so, by an exercise of faith—is it any less scientific?—the mass of men have believed in an Infinite and Omnipresent Intelligence, in whom we live, and move, and have our being—the necessary presupposition of all thought, without whom truth itself could not be, and light and darkness would be alike inconceivable. Does this general and persistent belief in the reality of God's Being rest upon foundations as firm as the grounds of our belief in matter, force, and ether? Does the use of the imagination by religion in the confession that there is an invisible and moral Reality, from whom came the heavens and the earth, and into whose spiritual dominions they are passing and shall be dissolved, proceed upon the same true principle, and justify itself to the reason as the only sufficient explanation of known results, in the same manner as the scientific use of the imagination makes good its interpretations of the visible world? Or is faith only a dream of the restless heart; but the sight of the soul's own shadow,—the projection, as it were, of its own vague shape, enlarging as it recedes, upon the limitless darkness?

This alternative, to which we come, can be

rationally met only by a close scrutiny of the religious feeling, and by observing whether under examination it conducts itself similarly to the feeling of existence, or the feeling of an external world; whether in it, as in those affections of our consciousness, perceptions are involved; whether, in fact, the religious feeling yields, under all available tests, the evidence of immediate contact with moral and spiritual reality; whether it is the inward *sensation*, and its accompanying *intuition* of the Divine Being and presence; as on the lower and outward side of human consciousness, sensation, and its involved perception, come directly from contact with the external world.

When we seek, for this purpose, to bring the religious feeling under investigation, we are perplexed by its constantly recurring forms, its evanescent character. But the variableness of the forms of any given force is now one of the first lessons of natural science. The sunshine, we are taught, not only lights the skies over our homes to-day, but also is stored up in the depths of the earth for our winter's use, not dead but sleeping; for the glow upon our hearth is the resurrection of the light of other days. The great forces

sweep through a vast range of effects ; all nature seems to lie open to the touch of a few master-powers !

The doctrine of the transformation and conservation of energy has a rôle to play, hardly less important, in moral philosophy, and in the history of religions. If religion is one of the original elements of man's being, one of the great forces of human life, we must expect to find it under most diversified appearances ; in unlooked-for quarters ; at work in many forces that go by other names ; disappearing in one mode of activity only to reappear in another ; always continued and conserved in the play of the forces which enter into human life, and make human history. We may find the religious feeling now glowing in the life of a saint ; now touching the lips of a prophet ; now making heavenly harmonies audible to poet's ear ; now opening the eye of a Raphael to beauty never seen on earth ; the religious feeling this moment may shine forth as truth, another moment burn as a consuming fire ; it may blaze in a fanatic's zeal, or be the steady light of a thinker's doctrine ; and again it may lie darkly and unperceived, a hidden power, in men who know not what is in them. We shall find it not always active, but often latent in human hearts. It may exist waiting to be called forth in men who, because they have not recognized



its presence in themselves, fail also to understand its many mighty works in history. It has sent forth to do the will of God more than one Cyrus, who knew not by what power he was girded. If the religious feeling is a real motive power, an original element of human experience, from the very nature of force it is, and must be, a pervasive and manifold influence; and though its ways of action be endlessly diversified, and its names be many, the science of religion may follow it, and recognize it, through a wide range of its transformations. We are not to assume, therefore, that it is not present in any soul, or among any people, because certain familiar marks of it may be absent. It was long before men learned to recognize the same force in the fall of an apple and the poise of a star. Not many years ago men would have laughed, had they been told to dig for the rays of the sun in the darkness of the earth. But we strike a match, and discover that the black heart of the coal is a treasury of sunbeams. We cannot say that the religious feeling is absent in any heart which has not been so heated as to set free its latent forces. We cannot say that a tribe is incapable of religion until, at least, a light has been struck among them, and their inherent capacities thoroughly tested. There may be hidden much of God's grace where we see only hard-

ness and sin. The blackness may yet be made to glow and shine. When a tribe can be found incapable of being rekindled by religious zeal, and Christianized, then it might be regarded as a proof of the absence in the lowest races of the religious nature. But no missionary has ever found a tribe incapable of religious education.\* Man has, therefore, the power at least to become religious. At the lowest stage of his development, upon the most unfavorable view of "the primeval man," there is in his soul "the promise and the potency" of the idea of God, and a distinctively religious faith.

We are not warranted, then, in giving up the inquiry as to the real and universal existence of the religious feeling, of the capacity of the human soul for religion, because instances may be found in which it does not appear in familiar forms, or even in which it seems to fail altogether. The person who imagines he is destitute of it may simply be ignorant of the real nature of his own motives. Or the seeming want of it, in any tribe of savages, may be but the inability of the traveller to observe the same forces under unaccustomed forms, or to notice the germs of an experience which he has learned to call religion only from its full-grown fruits. It is easy to test the nature of a tree,

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\* See Mivart, "Lessons from Nature," pp. 140-1, for instances in proof of this statement.

when its fruit appears ; but he who says, there are no fruit trees in a grove, because he finds no fruit, may not know how to name the tender sapling, or the first green shoot.

One other caution should be observed in the pursuit of the religious feeling through its ever-varying transformations. It should be remembered that, like other feelings or forces, it may exist in different degrees of strength at different times, and even when it is recognized, it may make itself manifest in changing degrees of vividness. The religious feeling may vary in the same individual, like the feeling of personal existence, which is by no means a constant element ; for it changes with health ; it runs low in sickness ; it is suspended in sleep, or stirs vaguely in the dreamer's consciousness ; or it is capable of sudden increase of intensity, and every nerve may thrill with it. It is the nature of everything living to be variable ; life is possible only in an unstable organism,\* whose atoms are in perpetual motion ; only death is stillness. If we would persuade, then, this sensitive witness to reveal its secret, and discover what is really in it, we must not be content to take it in its worst hours, or in its feeblest motion, but we must catch it, and study it, as

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\* Balfour Stewart's "Conservation of Energy," pp. 164, 188.

we do any other feeling, as we do magnetism, not merely at its lowest, in its unexcited conditions, but also at its height, in its brightest glow. To observe the capacity for religion, to reason from the religious feeling in men, or among people, who manifest but a low degree of religious activity, would be as unscientific as it would be to study gravitation only in a body at rest, or the nature of light at midnight. We may learn something of gravitation from an inert stone, something of light from the shadows, something concerning religion even from worldlings and savages; but we have to account for bodies in motion, as well as at rest; for the noon, as well as the twilight; for Judea as well as Philistia; and from the highest moments and grandest hours of moral as well as of physical forces, we may learn to understand aright their nature and laws, and to infer their presence where we can see perhaps only equilibrium or indifference.

There is undoubtedly in the study of religion, as of every developed organism, much to be learned from inquiry into the germinant forces, the earliest traces of it, in the world's childhood. The value of embryology, indeed, to the right classification of organic forms every naturalist would emphasize, and the embryology of religious growth is equally



indispensable to comparative theology. But embryology is valuable in science, and in religion, chiefly as it throws light upon developed structural distinctions. Differences are not accounted for simply by reducing them to their lowest terms. Life is not explained by reducing it to its minimum in an egg. The question is, what made two eggs of similar appearance develop into two unlike types? Differences must be accounted for at their points of greatest as well as of least divergence, in any scientific conception of species. So the religious feeling must be studied and explained not only in the rudimentary forms of it which approach most nearly other feelings, but also in the most perfect developments of it which differentiate it from all other feelings. What is there in it which causes it to develop into a peculiar species? What is there in it which, after a short process of growth, makes it a feeling distinct by itself?

The parabola, at the beginning of its curvature, may seem to coincide with the arc of a circle; but there must be a difference in the impulses which generate the two curves, for soon the latter returns into itself, while the other has measureless sweep; so the religious feeling may appear, in its first moments, to be identical with certain lines of experience which only take in the things of this world in

their little circle, and soon return into themselves; but it quickly shows itself to be of larger impulse, for the religious spirit cannot be satisfied with the possession of the things which are seen, and it reaches out towards the Infinite.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE FEELING OF DEPENDENCE.

HUMAN progress is always the resultant of conflicting forces. Our age is moved by opposite tendencies, but the real line of advance will be found to be the resultant of them all. The present tendency of thought is strongly in the direction of the physical sciences, but there is also a constant impulse to return to metaphysical problems. Even our men of science cannot resist always the temptation to become metaphysicians, and to reason concerning causes never caught in their crucibles, or detected in their laboratories. In fact physics leads as directly to metaphysics as the shadow leads up to the substance; and no thoughtful mind can pursue any path of investigation far without coming out in view of the great questions of theology. It is not surprising, therefore, that the century which has witnessed rapid advance in science, has also been alive with philosophical and theological energy.

There are human experiences which lie beyond the range of the senses, as there are in-

fluences subtle, but real, and known in their wonderful effects, on either side the colors of the solar spectrum. And there have arisen, within the century, not a few profound students of this outlying side of human knowledge, these mental and moral influences which, though imponderable forces, have had much to do, more perhaps than we can know, in forming human history. The very age in which natural science has grown to be an absorbing passion; in which physiology has risen to the dignity of a branch of mental philosophy; in which the story of man's origin and destiny is read from the records of the rocks, and from the secrets of the stars; this very age of the successful pursuit of the physical sciences began in a new, widespread, and profound philosophical movement; and more unobserved, perhaps, but no less earnest and eager for the truth has been the study of the testimony of the human soul to itself—its revelation and prophecy of its own being and life.

Towards the beginning of the present century a general philosophical interest was revived in Germany; and each of the leading faculties of which we find ourselves possessed had its recognized advocate and school. Representatives, so to speak, of the four quarters of the world of human consciousness met, and held high debate in Berlin. Wolf, and the "Illum-



inists," advanced the claims of the understanding, and maintained that truth is a matter of logic, and clear statement. But a philosophy which laughed at enthusiasm, and which would admit as real only that which it could drag into the common light of day; a philosophy which sought to possess every realm of thought and even to enter the kingdom of God by the syllogism, soon provoked a reaction;—there were powers from the hills which could not be brought so easily under the rule of the plain. Lessing revolted from the bare-faced Illuminism, no less than from the soulless Orthodoxy of his day. But Immanuel Kant introduced a new era. Kant was the John the Baptist of modern philosophy. He came with a mighty call to repentance to philosophical Pharisees and hypocrites. He represented an essentially Judaistic tendency of thought, for he proclaimed, with the voice of a prophet, the imperative of the law. He reduced religion to conscience, and as of the Baptist so of him it may be said: "He that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." \*

But the pride of the intellect rebelled against the menial service to which Kant

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\* Ullmann, "Das Wesen des Christenthums," pp. 49, 50, justly says that in this preparatory work of Kant consists its importance, and at the same time its insufficiency.

had subjected it. The pure reason, Kant had insisted, could learn nothing of the realities of being; the office of the reason is to serve, not to rule; let the practical understanding govern life; duty is bondage to the stern imperative of the law. Then Hegel stood forth to represent the power of pure thought, and for a season he upheld the prerogative of the reason to universal dominion. Religion, which in the shallow age of the Illuminists was evaporated, so that only a dry morality was left as its sediment; which, in the sterner system of Kant, had been confined within the limits of unyielding commandments—the very fountain of life held bound in a narrow rocky course—in the pantheism of Hegel seemed finally to lose itself in that boundless speculation, where all is fluid, and in motion, and distinctions emerge only to disappear in the ebb and flow of the universal thought-process. In the Hegelian philosophy Thought is the great High Priest, whose office it is perpetually to make the finite and the Infinite one, to reconcile contradictions, and to realize God in humanity. But the same philosopher who exalted Thought to be priest and king, died complaining that none of his disciples understood him; and the mediation of the pure reason did not leave human hearts believing in the friendship of God. From Hegel's philosophy one of the

chief beatitudes was wanting, for among his disciples the poor in spirit do not inherit the kingdom of God.\*

When it became evident that men were failing by these ways to enter the kingdom of God; that the syllogism of Wolf was not the key to it; that the will of Kant could not take it by violence; that the speculative reason of Hegel could not overleap its walls; there was but one other way left, a way of lowly entrance, but when once entered a straight path; and to Friedrich Schleiermacher belongs the praise of having found for the philosophy of his time that overgrown gateway, and having led the thought of his age into the true way of approach towards God. Schleiermacher not only made religion respectable in Berlin by his famous discourses, but he vindicated in philosophy the place and authority of man's religious nature. He met the vulgar rationalism of his day by compelling reverence to the immediate revelation of the Divine through the religious feeling; and whoever goes down with Schleiermacher to that sense of dependence in which he found the lowly source of religion, goes beneath all rationalism, and cannot deny henceforth the presence of the Holy Ghost.

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\* Kraus, "Lehre von der Offenbarung," p. 29.

That Schleiermacher himself did not follow, without sometimes wandering, his own better way, that he himself became at times enveloped in a misty pantheism, can indeed hardly be denied. It is rarely given to a reformer or to a thinker whose idea is, as the Germans say, an epoch-making idea, to reap the full harvest from his upturning of the soil, the fruit of his own germinant thought. Schleiermacher left his fruit largely in the seed, but growing. His followers must show more completely than he did the relation of the religious feeling to other elements of man's complex being, and particularly the manner in which, through the feeling of absolute dependence, we come to the knowledge of God. But as Schleiermacher sacrificed a lock to the shade of Spinoza, so it is fitting that a lock should first be sacrificed to the shade of Schleiermacher by him who, amid the reasonings of our natural science, and the perplexities of unbelief, searches in thirst of soul for a life which is more and better than the dust of the earth.

The perennial source of religion, opened afresh in every new-born soul, is the feeling of absolute dependence. We feel our dependence as we come to feel our own existence. We have not made ourselves, we found ourselves in existence; and our earliest, and our latest, our only consciousness of ourselves is a



consciousness of dependent being. This sense of dependence which we find to be an integral part of our consciousness of existence is not merely a feeling of limitation by outward objects, or of their resistance to our wills; it is a consciousness of absolute dependence for our existence, and our individuality, upon something not ourselves, and not the world which, like ourselves, is finite and of which we perceive ourselves to be a part.\* We bring ourselves into subjection, and become partial masters at least of the outward world; our dependence upon that we feel to be but limited; often in fact, and always in thought, we may rise superior to it; but we feel our dependence upon something other than ourselves and the things that appear, over which we have no power even in thought, and with regard to whose orderings we have no will but to obey. This is the religious feeling in its simplest form; the feeling of absolute dependence.

The book of Genesis betrays a deep knowledge of the manner in which man came, and perhaps every new-born child must still come to the knowledge of himself and his personal superiority to finite objects, when it represents Adam as at once, after his creation, giving their

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\* Schleiermacher, "Der Christliche Glaube," § 32, 2.

names to things. If we cannot exercise lordship in any other way over material objects, at least we can throw over them the lines of language, which go forth throughout all the earth, and show our personal prerogative over nature by giving to everything its name. But there is a nameless Power. The words in which, from the hymns of our Aryan ancestors to the last prayer of faith, men have tried to utter His name, are so many confessions of our inability to find any one word by which He may be declared—as we represent all finite things by their proper names. Our very words for God ever varying, no one satisfying the feeling which calls it forth, betray our absolute dependence upon the Infinite One. He must declare Himself unto us before we can know Him in the speech of men. He must reveal His own name that we may worship no more at the altar of the unknown God, but offer the prayer, Our Father which art in Heaven.

We are not discussing here the possibility or the fact of a special revelation, but I simply adduce this feeling—which we do not have concerning anything in the world, or the material universe as a whole, that we cannot give it a name, but that it must name itself to us, or remain unknown; but which we do have towards Deity—as an indication of the distinction between our consciousness of partial

dependence upon the world, and our absolute dependence upon the Infinite God. The three feelings—the sense of self, of the world surrounding self, and of the Being upon whom self and the world are alike dependent, coexist in our minds; are developed perhaps by the same experiences; never are wholly separated in our actual consciousness, but are distinct and co-ordinate feelings. And the fact that upon the lips of men like Spencer and Tyndall these phrases are repeatedly found: “The Unknown Cause,” “The Unseen Reality,” “The Ultimate Existence,”\* “The Inscrutable Power,” † show plainly that it is not to be the mission of scientific knowledge to expurgate our consciousness of this most human feeling.

Man neither created this feeling out of nothing in his own soul, nor reached it first by reflection. We have always been possessed by it since we came to ourselves in self-conscious life. It may have been in the first infantile feeling of existence, uttered in the first cry of life from the womb; it is certainly with us, a vague sense of dread, a sometimes oppressive consciousness of our finiteness, when we think of ourselves—who we are, whence we came, and whither we go. We do not succeed in

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\* “First Principles,” pp. 123, 117.

† Pop. Sci. Monthly, art. Fermentation, Dec., 1876, p. 154.

banishing our helplessness by all our conquests over matter and force. On the contrary, the knowledge of our personal insignificance grows with our growth, and the wisest are as little children. The more self-contained and masters of ourselves we become, the more deeply conscious do we grow of the limits to our being and our will fixed at the points of contact between ourselves and the Being who measures the span of our years. Our very independence of nature and sense of superiority, increasing with every discovery of science, over the world, of whose dust—gathered perhaps from all worlds—we are fashioned, serves only to deepen our profound feeling of dependence upon the Power that holds us and all the spheres in the hollow of its hand.

Thought itself, to which Hegel declared the secret of the universe is open, and which has learned the language of the messengers of light from other worlds, and listens to their story of the structure of the stars, still is baffled by the mystery of existence which is older than the things which do appear, and cannot break the silence of the eternal Mind. In thought, most kingly prerogative of our natures, nevertheless, we feel ourselves to be but servants, and we must wait and watch for the disclosures of the wisdom which is higher than we. Truth is always a discovery, and the joy of its posses-



sion is the joy of one who finds a pearl of great price. Our best thoughts come as surprises of light to us; not as our own creations, but as visions and revelations of the truth, which no man calls his own, for it is before all men. "Man," remarks Cousin, "may say, 'My reason;' but give him credit for never having said, 'My truth.'" Our minds have no power to make a single truth what it is; and we feel in every effort and triumph of thought that our reasons are absolutely dependent upon the truth, which in part we can perceive, but not one jot or tittle of which do we create; for it is before us, and speaks with authority to all finite minds.

As we neither lay aside with our growth the feeling of absolute dependence, nor in our moments of highest intellectual attainment are freed from the horizon line of our finite vision; so, also, in the moments of most decisive action, when we act with the most conscious freedom, we never lose the sense of our dependence. Rather, great men seem to be called to their noblest endeavors as by the voice of destiny; they who lead their age to memorable advances themselves seem to follow, as though impelled by a purpose into whose mighty movement their lives are taken up and carried on often to grander issues than they dreamed; and they who work works that remain on earth

serve humbly, and do the will of a better thought, and a larger Providence. Hence it is that heroic actors in human history have been burdened with a sense of responsibility to a Divine Power whose decrees they were commissioned to fulfill. Nothing great, heroic, and enduring has been achieved in history except in this humble and reverent feeling of dependence upon Him whose will is to be done on earth as in Heaven. Constantine's vision of the cross before his victory, whether fable or fact, represents the consciousness of a Divine commission, and a Divine promise, in which the great and enduring triumphs of Christian civilization have been won. Faith in a higher law to be fulfilled in human history has been the vital principle and fruitful power of human progress from the days of old, when Abraham went forth to found a nation, to President Lincoln's proclamation of emancipation, and to the death of the last martyr to liberty. Frederic the Great presaged coming victory when one of his columns marched by singing one of Luther's psalms; and as he reviewed his own career he acknowledged that his battles seemed to have been decided for him by a higher power. And even the first Napoleon, who believed that Providence is always on the side of the strongest battalions, learned in a life of exile to confess that there

is a kingdom of Divine love more enduring than the conquests of human might. Man, then, in his freest action, as in his highest thought, feels his absolute dependence. Human freedom is itself a Divine decree.

The feeling of absolute dependence, then, is the earliest, most general form of the religious feeling. It is the feeling, inseparable from the sense of existence, of the reality in which we live, and move, and have our being. In short, as a circle is not only a centre, but also a circumference, and centre and circumference must coexist to complete the circle; so our personal consciousness is not merely the central sense of self, but also, and at the same time, the sense of a being circumscribed and limited; the generating point, so to speak, of personal consciousness is the ego, the indivisible self; but the circumference touches the Infinite, from which we, in our little life, are measured off, but in which, nevertheless, we are, and out of whose all-encompassing presence we can never escape. Always around the soul's horizon line is—God.

An interesting, though obscure field of investigation is opened by the question, What are the physical antecedents, or natural processes by means of which man comes to this consciousness of himself as a free, but dependent being? It is altogether possible that in

the quiet of the womb, and during the unremembered hours of infancy, there may begin, also, the growth of a germinant soul, individualizing itself by its inherent power, as the members of its body are formed, and giving shape to its outward organism. The first indications of conscious, intelligent life in the child suggest the idea, not of a soul completely individualized, but of a soul coming to itself, in the process of formation; all its powers—physical, intellectual, and spiritual—working together towards the type of man. And the fact, established by the observation of the naturalists, that the period of human infancy is prolonged much beyond the time required by the young of the higher animals to provide for themselves, is suggestive, to say the least, of some special retarding influence over the early development of man. Prof. Fiske, in his "Cosmic Philosophy," finds the cause for this phenomenon of prolonged human infancy in the greater complexity and specialty of the nervous connections in the human brain. But this very complexity and specialty of structure may be the effect of a cause operative only in man; and the supposition of a higher cause—the growth of a soul—yields at once the adequate explanation of this, as of those other differences between man and the brute, which



are not uncovered, indeed, by the scalpel of the anatomist, but which are revealed in every thought; for the symmetrical growth of the child's rarer faculties may have need of a retarded physical development, and the presence of a soul, coming forth into full self-consciousness, may be a restraining influence upon the coarser, and in animals more rapid construction of the body. We may need, little by little, to grow used to the weight of personal freedom; to expand our consciousness of existence slowly to the measure of a full, rounded soul. At least, it is a fact, however explained, that the longest time is spent in the complete individualization of the higher forms of life; the child learns many things before it begins to use the personal pronouns, me and mine.

But, whatever may be the physical antecedents, or conditions, of self-consciousness, the fact remains that the feeling of absolute dependence is inseparable, as a shadow and its substance, from our sense of personal existence. Every man may verify it in his present experience; for, however he may assert his freedom against the world, that proud sense of self-determination and superiority to the creation sinks into a feeling of helplessness and a sense of awe, before the mystery of his origin and his destiny. And this relig-

ious feeling is, at present, an integral part of our sense of existence, which neither in its distinctive character, nor in our earliest recollections of it, betrays any marks or signs of derivation from any simpler elements of experience. So far as I am aware, those writers who will admit only an earthly origin of man, have not succeeded in pointing out any instinct, or natural association, as the possible father or mother of this specific feeling. They seem to know only the *remote* ancestors of it. Büchner busies himself in bringing up savages destitute of religion to disprove the already abandoned doctrine of innate ideas; and when one reads in general his arguments for a coarse materialism, it is easier to imagine, for the time, the truth of his own dictum, "that thought after all is only a movement of stuff!" His metaphysics does remind one of stuff! Mr. Darwin, generally a cautious writer, and nowhere a gross materialist, waives the higher question as to the existence of a Creator and Ruler of the universe,\* and devotes but a few pages to the origin of religious beliefs. "The complex feeling of religious devotion" he regards as of comparatively late occurrence, possible only after considerable intellectual and moral ad-

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\* "Descent of Man," vol. i., p. 63.

vancement;\* but he enters into no exhaustive analysis of this complex feeling, though he thinks that the earliest trace of the ideas finally developed into the belief in God may probably have been the notions of spirits gained in the dreams of savage brains.† As Mr. Darwin brings the belief in one God into human history from the land of dreams only through the slowly-advancing ideas of the intellect, and the developed moral sense, his opinion can be most fairly questioned when we come to consider the origin of the moral sense.

The fact, however, should not here be overlooked that to trace the natural history of religious ideas and their progress, is not in itself an account of the impulse from which the whole movement of ideas was first originated and is carried forward. So far as we can follow religious beliefs downward to their lowest forms among savage tribes, the feeling is always found to be before the idea of God, often existing vaguely before any words for Deity are formed in their rude speech. The civilized traveller may bring to some tribes for the first time the language of worship, but the religious feeling is in them before the

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\* "Descent of Man," vol. i., p. 65.

† *Ibid.*, p. 63.



coming of the missionary, and, as he teaches, it begins to fill out those words with meaning. Could religion ever be taught to beings absolutely destitute of the feeling for it, any more than a dog can be taught to worship, or a monkey to pray? The fact that among all men the ideas of religion are communicable thoughts would indicate the existence, alike in the civilized and the barbarian, in the missionary and in the savage, of that common human feeling of dependence which is the source of all religions. For the distinctive character, the peculiar and persistent power of this feeling of absolute dependence, natural science is as hard pushed to find among its known forces a sufficient cause, as it is unable to find in matter that first little germ of life which materialism sadly needs to discover. To follow the development of the idea of God, already existing, through its successive historic forms is one thing; but it is quite another thing to find in the history itself the origin of the idea which has been at the root of its whole unfolding theology. Herbert Spencer, in his "Sociology," has not accounted, therefore, for the feeling which leads men to worship, by his induction of facts to prove that ancestor-worship is the earliest form of religion. The feeling and the form which it assumes, the impulse of soul and the successive conceptions

thrown out by it, are to be carefully distinguished; the one is no more to be taken for the other than the heat of a fire is to be confounded with the rings of smoke it may send forth. Mr. Spencer's method is mainly one of *quantitative* analysis, where differences in *quality* are the very points to be determined. A qualitative analysis of human consciousness does not indicate the derivation of the sentiment of worship from ghost stories. Mr. Spencer can evolve the conception of a mental self out of "dream experiences," only as he follows the mere order of appearance, or possible succession in time of ideas. But the idea of self, the idea of an entity, remains still to be accounted for, whether or not the occasion of it was the contrast between the first man's waking consciousness and his "dream experiences." The same lack of close qualitative analysis vitiates the process by which man's religious consciousness is reduced through the worship of dead ancestors, and the fear of ghosts, to the idea of "the other self" gained in a dream. The spirit which is in man cannot, without further ado, be constructed out of the conditions of its existence; for the conditions *of* it are not even necessarily conditions *before* it. Neither can the origin of our spiritual ideas be determined simply by a study of the conceptions

of savages, or guesses concerning the fashions of thought among primitive men. They have in themselves the secret of their descent, and we must follow with the most searching investigation every hint which they let fall, as they come and go, of their own birth and nobility.

Men began to reason about blocks and stones, to study things, and at last to become scientists, because they felt the presence of an external world, and its strange phenomena were ever starting up new ideas—but what has led men from remote ages to think about God? Why has man become a theologizing, as well as a naturalizing animal? Whence comes the sense of Divinity which has been before, and still is in all thoughts about the nature of God? The age in which this religious feeling first began to make itself felt in tremblings of heart, and questionings of life, can no more be found than the hour in our own memory when the presence of the Highest first overshadowed us. The religious feeling alike in the individual, so far as we can remember, and in history, so far as we can descend, is before all conscious thought of God, the fruitful parent of religions; and the earliest recognizable theology is the outcome of a deep human sense of God before all theology.

It has already been observed that in the moral sphere, as in the physical universe, force has a great variety of manifestations,—a modern doctrine of the transformation and conservation of force which in morals an apostle seems to have anticipated when he said, “Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. But all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit.” This sense of absolute dependence, the simplest form of the religious feeling, may be traced through different modes of expression. Among our Aryan ancestors it seems to have taken the form of a worship of God in nature. Among the most degraded tribes of men it appears as a superstitious fear of spirits, a sense of anxiety or fear before higher and often hostile powers, who cannot be met and slain with bow or spear. Very early, and very generally, it occasions the belief in the need of propitiation, and shows its power even over the most human instincts in the flames of sacrifice. In the mind of the Apostle Paul, bondman in Cæsar’s palace, the consciousness of absolute dependence upon God manifested itself in a grand sense of freedom and joy in finishing his course. Marcus Aurelius, emperor on Cæsar’s throne, was bowed by it in forced submission to the inevitable. In the mind of Herbert Spencer,



in its present stage of evolution, at least,\* it takes the form of faith in an Unknown and Unknowable Power—a belief in which it is easier to see how religion and science can be reconciled, than how the blessings of the Sermon on the Mount shall not pass away. The religious feeling, in the play of the molecular forces which constitute the brain of Prof. Tyndall, seems to survive, according to one of the latest manifestations of those forces through his organs of speech, as the sense of “the inscrutable Power, at once terrible and beneficent, in whom we live, and move, and have our being and our end.” † In the groups of possibilities of sensation, which formed the consciousness of John Stuart Mill, the possibility of the religious feeling was not wanting in that indefinable melancholy in which at one time the kingdom of God seems to have come nigh unto him. And even Matthew Arnold, that veritable Don Quixote against the windmills of metaphysics, with his frequent hard riding, lance in rest, against the Bishops of Winchester and Gloucester, can do no more in the end than invent another metaphysical term for the Divine influence which he feels enters at least into three-fourths

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\* See President Porter's keen note on Spencer's philosophy in Ueberweg's "History of Philosophy," vol. ii., p. 433.

† "Pop. Sci. Monthly," Article on Fermentation, Dec., 1876, p. 154.

of life; and his religious feeling preserves morality with its leavening faith in "The not ourselves which makes for righteousness." With a modern school of Dutch philosophers, religion is the sense of the "Moral Ideal ever coming to us." "Not we," they say, "took the first step, the Ideal drew us to itself, before we thought of it; we loved God because He first loved us. The Ideal exists, it is not developed out of humanity, but impresses itself on the consciousness of humanity."\* With the mass of men, those who know from hard experience what the struggle for existence is, the religious feeling generally takes the form of belief in an overruling Providence—that word which often appears to be a kind of compromise, a half-way word, between unbelief and faith. With Christian believers of every name, the common form and expression of the religious feeling is, "Our Father which art in Heaven." In the childhood of religions the feeling of dependence became a slavery, often cruel, to earthly elements; modern science would substitute in place of the bondage to superstition rational accommodation of ourselves to our environment, and final submission to an eyeless and heartless system of laws; its supreme

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\* For a fuller account of this school (*Die Modernen*), see Tulloch, "The Christian Doctrine of Sin," p. 208.



Power being, as some one has well said, "a mighty but blind Samson," whose hands are on the pillars of the universe, and who shall at last shake this whole system of things down into one undistinguishable and lifeless mass. And Christianity has still living and prophetic its Gospel of a Divine Sovereignty, which is neither the reign of an Almighty Cæsar, according to the "secret counsels" of theology; nor the dominion of heartless and lifeless Force, according to the doctrine of the senses; but which is the kingdom of perfect Love, according to the revelations of the Spirit.

Such are some of the forms in which this original impulse of religion, the feeling of absolute dependence, has worked, and still is manifest. Always in one form or another; in hope or in fear; in belief or in doubt; among the unlettered and the learned; in the halls of science and between the reasonings of naturalists, as well as before the altars of the Church and in the thoughts of theologians; this distinctively human feeling has been present and operative; it is an elemental force of human nature, working beneath reason and above reason, before thought and after thought; the fear of God, which is the beginning and the end of wisdom.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE FEELING OF MORAL DEPENDENCE.

THERE is another phase of the religious feeling by which it is to be distinguished from all other feelings. It involves not merely the sense of absolute dependence upon some power above ourselves and all finite things, but also the sense of dependence upon a supreme authority or absolute right. It is the feeling not only of finite being, but also of moral dependence, or the moral sense. There is a something other than ourselves and the world, which puts us both into dependence and under obligation. There is a feeling of responsibility from which we cannot free ourselves even in thought. We cannot conceive ourselves to be, no man ever for a moment was conscious of himself as being both absolutely independent, and without law. The feeling of our finiteness, and the feeling of obligation, or the sense of dependence for our being and for our well-being, are but different phases of the consciousness of absolute de-

pendence, which is the religious feeling in its most general form.

But an issue has been raised, at this point, which our argument ought not to avoid by any roundabout appeal to prejudice, or stolen march in the dark : courses, however common they may be in polemical tactics, not to be followed by any who would prefer to be beaten by Truth, rather than to succeed for the time with error. The vital issue is joined upon this question, whether the moral sense, or our human consciousness of moral dependence, like the feeling of dependent existence, is simple, and underyived from other feelings ; not compounded of different experiences, but a primary element, an original force of human life.

The question just stated leads us into the very thick of the latest scientific and philosophical controversies. As the field of Bœotia was called by Epaminondas the dancing plot of Mars, so may this inquiry concerning the nature and authority of conscience be said to be the field where the opposing spirits of our times hold perpetual controversy. Recently the utilitarian ethics of Bentham, and the elder Mill, have been badly broken up by the onslaught of the Intuitionists, who, not contenting themselves merely with a defence of their own fundamental faiths, turned many of the

arguments of their opponents against them. Even John Stuart Mill's close reasonings have been pierced by arguments derived from his Autobiography for the "Reality of Duty." \* But the broken line of the utilitarian logic has been reformed upon the ground of natural science, and the whole derivative school of moralists, as opposed to the Intuitionists, holds a more tenable position under the cover of Darwin's theory of man's origin, and looks more formidable in the defences chosen by Herbert Spencer.

Mr. Darwin in his plausible chapter on "The Moral Sense," does not wish to dissolve the reality of duty into the mere desire of pleasure, and would not impute to morality the base origin of selfishness. He seeks, however, to render probable the view, that the moral sense may have been derived, through a long succession of inherited experiences, from the social instinct, including sympathy. He regards it as in a high degree probable, † "that any animal whatever, endowed with well-marked social instincts, would inevitably acquire a moral sense, or conscience, as soon as its intellectual powers had become as well developed, or nearly as well developed as in man."

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\* See "Contemporary Review," Aug., 1876.

† "Descent of Man," vol. i., p. 68.



In this view the moral sense is fundamentally identical with the social instincts.

It should be noticed that in Mr. Darwin's own attempt to trace the development of the moral sense from purely animal instincts, ideas of morality drawn from other sources quietly slip into the argument. The detection of these excites suspicion of the whole performance. Much of the plausibility of the chapter on the Moral Sense is derived from the unobserved manner in which the idea to be gained at the end of it steals into the beginning, and helps on the argument, where otherwise it would be brought to a halt. \* Thus, in the passage just quoted, the very supposition includes some power of moral discernment; for it is impossible to conceive of intellectual powers as well, or nearly as well developed, as in man, without the existence of ideas of good and evil, or the mental discernment of some standard of conduct. But these ideas, this power of moral judgment, is the very thing at issue; and to say, therefore, that any animal, as soon as he has become intellectually like man, would acquire a moral sense, is very much like saying that as soon as an animal possessed moral ideas he would acquire moral ideas. Mr. Darwin,\* besides "highly developed" mental faculties,

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\* "Descent of Man," vol. i., p. 69.

throws in "the feeling of dissatisfaction;" and also the acquisition of "the power of language," and the distinct expression of "the wishes of members of the same community;" and also, the idea of "the good of the community," and, "the power of public opinion," and "habit," and "obedience to the wishes and judgments of the community,"—all these, be it noticed, originating *before* the moral sense is finally acquired, and being necessary to its acquisition by animals! The exclamation of Dominie Sampson seems appropriate, as we read this purely natural history of the moral sense, "Prodigious!"

Moral ideas not only slip into the statements, by means of which Mr. Darwin, at the opening of his chapter, proposes to account for the origin of the moral sense, but also they run through the whole process of his reasoning. Thus he remarks: "As the feelings of love and sympathy, and the power of self-command become strengthened by habit, and as the power of reasoning becomes clearer, so that man can appreciate the justice of the judgments of his fellow-men, he will feel himself impelled, independently of any pleasure or pain felt at the moment, to certain lines of conduct."\* Notice, up to this point in the reasoning, he has under

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\* "Descent of Man," vol. i., p. 83.



investigation only social instincts. But here, through this one sentence, at least four germs of moral ideas enter into the process of evolution; viz.: (1,) "Love," which is here subjected to no analysis, but which usually means more than an instinct of pleasure in another. (2,) "Power of self-command," which involves the distinct consciousness of self, and of a struggle between self and something else, or between different motives within the self-consciousness—which is a moral process. (3,) "Power to appreciate the justice of the judgment of his fellow-men,"—but in this phraseology we are a long ways beyond social instincts; and (4,) "Feeling himself impelled, independently of any pleasure or pain felt at the moment,"—which is all the feeling of duty that the most developed Intuitionalist would require of an angel! Mr. Darwin brings in besides to help on the development, the phrases, "law of honor," "the standard of morality," "the higher standard," "the noblest part of our nature;" but these words carry in them a moral judgment, and the idea of a reference of conduct to something external, necessary, and authoritative; and Mr. Darwin on his own theory should substitute, in the process of evolution, at least for all such phrases, simply the words "social instinct," "persistent social instinct;" and his chapter needs revision by striking out of it any

word which he has brought into the account from his own fully-formed moral consciousness. Indeed Mr. Darwin's reasonings need to be tested by an examination as strictly scientific as that which has disappointed the hopes of the believers in spontaneous generation. Pasteur seems to have shown, and Prof. Tyndall has confirmed his experiments, that if all germs of life are carefully excluded, matter never ferments, never of itself produces life, and would remain inorganic matter for ever. If Mr. Darwin had been more careful to exclude the unnoticed germs of morality from his reasonings, he would have found it more difficult to believe in the spontaneous generation of conscience. But, as Prof. Tyndall\* says, the great source of the error of those who have imagined themselves possessed of proofs of spontaneous generation is that they have worked "in an atmosphere charged with the germs of these organisms;" so the Darwinians, who have satisfied themselves with their proofs of the spontaneous generation of conscience, have been working all the time in an atmosphere charged with moral influences. Eliminate all moral ideas let into Mr. Darwin's reasoning from existing moral judgments, and you will have in the end not the first sign of conscience, no approach

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\* "Pop. Science Monthly," article Fermentation, Dec., 1876, p. 135.

in the natural process to moral life. Mr. Mivart \* very fairly gives the following as an example of a sentence of Darwin's so expurgated, and calls attention to the fact that such substitution eliminates every element of morality from the passage: "Looking to future generations, there is no cause to fear that the social instincts will grow weaker, and we may expect that enduring (virtuous) habits will grow stronger, becoming perhaps fixed by inheritance. In this case the struggle between our stronger (higher) and weaker (lower) impulses will be less severe, and the strong (virtue) will be triumphant" (vol. i., p. 104).

The derivative theory of the moral sense is stated in its strongest form by Herbert Spencer. "I believe," he says, "that the experiences of utility organized and consolidated through all past generations of the human race, have been producing corresponding modifications, which, by continued transmissions and accumulation, have become in us certain faculties of moral intuition—certain emotions responding to right and wrong conduct, which have no apparent basis in the individual experiences of utility." † Experiences of utility grown into an instinct, experiences of good

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\* "Lessons from Nature," p. 114.

† Quoted by Darwin, "Descent of Man," vol. i., p. 97.

heaped up and inherited as habits, furnish, it must be confessed, a better clew to conduct, a more immediately available rule of right and wrong than a calculation of profit and loss at each moment of moral action. It is true that experience, on the whole, does make for righteousness. It is a fact, as Rothe finely said, that "conscience and the issues of things go together." But conscience and the nearest results of action do not always go together; and the very separation between virtue and happiness in this world has compelled profound thinkers, like Kant, to believe in another life. There is some difficulty in conceiving how the experience of the utility of goodness to some individuals, could so greatly have overbalanced the prosperity of the wicked as to work a general conviction among men of a necessary and unchangeable law of right. Or, granting that amid the moral confusions of this world the higher moral order may gradually disclose itself through inherited individual experiences of happiness, it is still hard to see how, in this conglomerate experience, the two ideas, utility and right, ever became separate, the two lines of experience ever became disentangled, as they are actually held apart in our moral sentiments, and have been kept distinct in human language from antiquity. Moreover, it is an obvious fact of



our present experience that a moral standard based on utility does not tend toward a high moral ideal, but, on the contrary, falls to the level of the average morality of a community; and it is not easy to see how Mr. Spencer's accumulation of experiences of utility provides a principle and law of moral progress, by which the standard of judgment is itself kept up, and the average morality of men raised towards the superior ideal of the few. \* Mr. Spencer might be referred, perhaps, to his own essay on "The Morals of Trade," for examples of the tendency of a standard of utility downward to a low average of morality; and the question might fairly be raised, in view of the commercial profits which have legalized questionable customs, and brought into common vogue practices which originated in fraud, whence did Mr. Spencer derive that fine moral sense which leads him, contrary to the heaped-up experiences of utility of several

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\* Mr. Spencer ("First Principles," p. 148) substitutes the word evolution for progress, and in his "Psychology," and in his "Reply to Criticisms" he rejects the idea of progress whose force is free will. Freedom he holds would be only "a disturbing element in the beneficent movement carrying man on to a nobler character." Evolution, he also holds, involves the progression of parts of the universe at the expense of other parts. ("Sociology," pp. 107, 8). Is there no law of progress for the universe as a whole? There can be no progress of the whole without the influx of Divine energy. See "Conservation of Energy" (Intern. Scientific Series), pp. 199, 200.



generations of successful business men, to condemn them as he does ?

But, not to insist upon these questions concerning the power of man's experience of the good policy of honesty to create that high ideal of honor which puts millions beneath the contempt of virtue, and leads men to choose death rather than a lie—this whole derivative theory of morals, in every form of it, must be brought to the test of the facts of man's moral consciousness and history. Does the derivative theory of conscience account for all the observed facts ?

In a thorough consideration of this question, also, we must distinguish carefully between the natural history of conscience and its distinctive character. The manner of growth, and the specific nature of an object are obviously too very different subjects of inquiry ; but precisely this palpable difference seems to have been ignored in Mr. Darwin's attempt to derive the moral sense from the social instincts, without first subjecting the contents of conscience to a careful analysis. Let it be admitted that he may have given a possible, natural history of the growth of the moral sense, a description not improbable of the manner in which man came to the full possession of himself, as viewed from the outward or physical side of life. This account, indeed,

at some points is questionable, and at others no little "scientific use of the imagination" is needed to follow it. Thus, the statement upon which much weight is laid, that the strictly social virtues are at first alone regarded, should at least be punctuated with an interrogation mark.\* The more strictly personal virtues seem to be first in the order of nature, and the virtues necessary to the existence of the family take precedence of the virtues necessary to the welfare of the tribe, or the strictly social virtues. The instances which Mr. Darwin adduces, as notably that of courage, are examples of "self-regarding virtues," which are developed in the individual life before they can be emphasized by the praise of a tribe. The natural history of virtue seems to lead down to a deep personal root, and we do not go below the surface, if we begin only with the social virtues, and do not search for the hidden personal feeling from which the whole growth springs. But, admitting the value of Mr. Darwin's chapter as a study of the development of man's higher powers, viewed from the physical side of the complex process of human growth, the nature of that

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\* Mr. Lecky, "History of European Morals," vol. i., p. 136, says, "The courageous endurance of suffering is probably the first form of human virtue." Herbert Spencer says, ("Sociology," p. 79,) "Sociality, strong in the civilized man, is less strong in the savage man," etc.

growth, the *contents* of the moral life, remain still to be considered. You have not told what the ripe ear is when you have described the blade and the husk. Because the coarser husk may be the first in time to appear, and may serve to protect the grain, it does not follow that the corn is like the husk, or even grew out of the husk. Both have grown from a hidden root, and in accordance with a law which made each after its kind; as both the natural and the spiritual may grow from an unseen and divine principle of life, and in accordance with a purpose which fashioned them in the depths of its wisdom before ever they were brought forth. The real nature and worth of things may be guessed from their manner and order of appearance in time; but *what* things are can be determined only by a critical analysis of their contents. That which was natural was held to be first long before modern theories of evolution were propounded. "Howbeit," says that apostle who in his epistle has drawn with a bold hand the outlines of a Christian philosophy of the creation, "Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual; but that which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual;" and to Mr. Darwin belongs the credit of having brought forth many examples from his rich store-house of biological facts, to confirm this order of the

creation long ago insisted upon by a Christian apostle. But because the natural may be the first to emerge, it does not follow that the spiritual may not appear afterwards; because the dust is first, and the human mind second in existence; the social instincts first in history (if they are), and the idea of a moral law second; it by no means follows that the spiritual is derived from the natural; that the mind is but a better combination of particles of dust; or that conscience is only the social instinct dressed up in a later fashion; as it does not follow from the order of growth that the husk is like the grain, or the wheat only chaff. The very question at issue is, whether within the natural there is a distinct, spiritual growth, having its own quality and worth? And this decisive question the naturalist simply begs, unless he subjects the moral consciousness and history of our race to a searching analysis, as patient and as microscopic as the investigation with which he is accustomed to honor the facts of physics. But whoever does not choose to beg the question, and endeavors to make a scientific study of this subject, becomes, thereby, more than a physicist, and is, of necessity, a metaphysician. He enters upon the legitimate domain of mental and moral philosophy, and, while there, he disregards, at his own peril of becoming bewil-



dered, the guiding voices of those whose lifelong pursuits have made them at home upon these grounds; as moral philosophers in their turn neglect, at the peril of their own confusion, the guidance of naturalists in their chosen fields.

Moreover, it should be noticed that the question concerning the origin of the moral sense is not identical with the question whether conscience is not developed in experience, and strengthened by inherited lessons of life. Whatever is in man would seem to be subject to certain general conditions of growth, and it may be at once admitted that conscience likewise is at first a germinant feeling, capable of vast development. Experiences of happiness, or suffering, may be to conscience as the heat and the cold, sunshine and storm, are to the plant—necessary conditions of its growth and hardihood. Suffering, indeed, seems sometimes required, to bring out into one's consciousness moral meanings, as the flames make legible invisible writing. Gwendolen—proud, mistaken girl—consents to a sinful marriage, and in suffering finds her conscience. It is so true, as to be but a truism, that the moral sense grows from childhood, and through life. And as it is in the individual, so may it be in history. The moral sense of mankind may have already passed through



a long process of evolution, until the wild, thoughtless conscience of the savage has matured into the highly organized morality of Christian peoples. There has been undoubted and gratifying progress of the public moral sense in modern times. We condemn unsparingly, for example, acts of intolerance against which, not many generations ago, hardly a protesting voice was heard. Every sin seems darker, and is blacker, against increasing light. As mankind advances in moral intelligence, the sin of the world grows worthy of the greater condemnation. I would rather have Cain for a client than almost any of his imitators. He had never seen a gallows, never looked upon a corpse. He had not before him the language and habits of generations to educate him into abhorrence of blood. No crime had then been stamped and branded as crime by long years of judgment. He had not around him even the restraining laws of civilization. Murder then was bad enough, a crime against nature; but it was worse after the word of the Lord came to him, showing it to be also a crime against God. And the Lord suffered nature only to punish Cain, setting a brand upon him lest any finding him should kill him. But other criminals heaven judged not so lightly; afterward God required, at the hand of man's brother,

the life of man. A crime, in itself, in its *quantity*, that is, the same, may be better, or worse in *quality*, according to the ignorance or enlightenment in which it is committed. Some wrongs into which even good men were betrayed as late as the seventeenth century, in this nineteenth century could be committed only by thoroughly bad men. After every moral advance of mankind the same evil deeds require for their performance worse men.

As conscience in the past has grown, and become sensitive to many evils of which it formerly had little or no perception; so it is possible for us to conceive of beings in whose highly organized spirits the feeling of moral dependence may become a sensitiveness to goodness and to God, as far transcending our moral impressions as the fine touch of the artist, in whose fingers ancestral talents for music culminate, surpasses the rough hand of the day-laborer. We may be, still, low down in the scale of moral development—above us hierarchies of angels! But the fact that any taste may be susceptible of almost indefinite cultivation, is of itself no proof that it is derived from some lower instinct. It is one thing to say that the moral sense is capable of development, or that its growth may depend upon quite earthly conditions; but it is

another thing to assert that it is a recent product, a mere composite of other tastes or instincts; and the evidence of the one assertion is no shadow of proof of the other. We may find, on the contrary, the principle which develops into the full moral consciousness of our race, and which is capable of we know not what higher growth, existing as a living germ in the original nature of man; through history growing ever from its own root, and by its own vital force making increase of itself out of the earthly experiences from which it springs.

Neither does the question as to the simple and underived nature of the moral feeling concern the conflicting judgments of right and wrong which have prevailed at different times, or in different communities. The forms and objects of the moral feeling may vary, while the feeling remains essentially one and the same. We do not conclude that the simple affections which bind families together differ in kind, because the tastes of men are not agreed as to what is lovable or beautiful, because savages often select their wives for charms which to civilized men seem deformities.\* Love is love always, though in any par-

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\* Sir John Lubbock cites instances to show that "true love is almost unknown" among the lower races; marriage being "the means of getting their dinner cooked." ("Origin of Civilization,"

ticular case it may lead to a false choice of its object. It is idle, then, to adduce the numerous diversities in moral judgments, or even instances of perverted moral choice, as an indication that the moral feeling itself is the product of non moral experiences. Like applied mathematics, moral conclusions may need, from time to time, revision ; but, as the miscalculations of the algebraists do not lie as an objection against the axioms of pure mathematics, so errors of application in morals do not invalidate the intuitions which render any moral conclusions possible. The question, therefore, with which we have to do, concerns not the growth, or the conditions, or the different manifestations of the moral feeling, but solely and directly the nature or contents of the feeling itself. Does experience show any simpler form of it? Can our most powerful methods of analysis break it up into any constituent parts, or is it one of the elements of human consciousness and history?

The first step to be taken in our search for the facts bearing upon this question is, to ob-

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pp. 50, 51.) But this apparent absence of the "social instinct, including sympathy," between men and women, is no proof that it does not exist germinantly in human nature, and that love and the family life are an artificial product of society. So of religion and the moral sense ; the earliest notions about them may be as indefinite as the Australian's idea of marriage. But they exist, nevertheless, as the germinant life of civilization.



tain, if we can, the *unconscious* testimony of consciousness. The first words of a witness before his testimony can have been manipulated by others, or pressed by his own thoughts into a desired form, is justly regarded as of the greatest value. Lawyers, for this reason, often advise their clients to waive a preliminary examination. Testimony obtained before a case can be made up, often lets the truth out. In like manner, the unconscious testimony of the soul to itself is of prime importance. What the mind discovers in itself and discloses concerning itself before its thoughts have received the impress of any philosophy, or its feelings have been turned in the direction of any creed, should be held, as evidence, in the highest repute. The testimony of the human consciousness under preliminary examination, without the aid of counsel, scientific or theological, may give the clew to the mystery of our being, for whose secret we anxiously listen and wait.

But this spontaneous witness of the soul to itself it is hard to obtain. The case in life is well made up for us before we come to take our part in it. We are impressed by what we hear from others before we begin to speak. Our very memories go back to fathers' counsels, and mothers' faces, as the earliest recollections of childhood. Geologists find in many places,



upturned to their inspection, what they call the azoic formation, matter before all life. From the still depths of the ocean the sounding lead brings up the earliest organic forms. But the long-continued storms of controversy, the restlessness of thought, and the raging passions of men, have disturbed the very depths of the consciousness of this nineteenth century. The azoic formation of the human soul, that which lies beneath individual life, our elemental being, is so overlaid by our later life; so hidden beneath strata upon strata of past beliefs and hard prejudices, that sometimes only by a general intellectual convulsion, a moral earthquake, as it were, can the deep things of the soul be brought to the surface, and what is in man be revealed. The associations of a mind like that of Mr. Mill, for example, whatever value may attach to them as logical products, are of little or no worth as evidences of the structure of the human soul. For Mr. Mill's mind, more remarkably, perhaps, than any other in history, was a made mind, the predetermined product of his father's work. Nature has little to say in his Autobiography. Or an example, from a different order of minds, of the difficulty in seeing upturned to view the azoic constitution of the soul, is to be found in the life and works of John Calvin. For Calvin had by birth a Latin rather than

a human soul. His personal appearance is said to have resembled that of a Roman Censor. He had by training a Latin rather than a human theology; and though in the heat and movement of the forces of his powerful intellect many deep, grand truths of God and the human soul are thrown up into the light, there are elements of our nature which rarely, or never, appeared in his reasonings; there are ethical ideas which lie unworked beneath his theology.\*

Often one of the most difficult tasks, as it is one of the strongest desires, of an educated mind, is to sink a shaft through its own beliefs, and to reach the primary convictions, and first laws of its being. We long to find ourselves, and not others in us; ourselves—and not our ancestors; ourselves—and not our early teachers, or the last book. Are my convictions part of my very self—what I must think and feel and do in order to be myself—or are they importations from without? Every candid mind must realize this difficulty.

But the true investigator, Prof. Tyndall remarks, guards himself against saying it is impossible. Though often difficult it does not seem to be impossible for us to find in human

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\* See Dörner's "Geschichte der protestantischer Theologie," pp. 374-395, for a profound estimation of the truths and the ethical defects of Calvinism.

history the bottom facts of human consciousness; or even in ourselves, at times, to reach the fundamental basis of all our faiths. There are experiences of life which lay bare the foundations, as there have been periods in history when the underlying strata of society were brought to the surface. There are times when the native energies of the soul burn through all superimposed customs. There come moments in every man's life when out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh, and we know what manner of man he is. Such times are the hours of danger, fear, great endeavor, sorrow—and the last hour of life. These are seasons of soul disclosure, of moral revelation. Thus, there was one moment in which Voltaire ceased to be the artificial product of French society of the eighteenth century, and acted as a man; for, during a terrible thunderstorm among the Alps, he is said to have fallen upon his knees in awe, and prayed; and then, speedily recovering himself, he arose and began to curse! The spectacle of human wrongs, the cry of the injured for avenging help, the peril of the lives and the liberties of men; all emergencies, in short, or great crises in history, are seasons of moral revelation; by their coming to us, as of old it was said of the Son of Man, the thoughts of many hearts are revealed. And men who

for years have worn masks before their fellow-men, and deceived even their own souls, drop them in the last dread struggle of life with death. The final hour of life often seems to bring men nearer the first faiths of childhood than do the intervening years. Death seems to be to memory the opening of the book of life, as it is to faith the unsealing the book of revelations.

If, then, we watch others in those crises when life takes them by surprise, and they act or speak out of their reserved power; in these supreme moments of intense personal consciousness when the disguises of nature are consumed, and old habits are dissolved in fervent heat; then often the human heart is revealed, and in the light of the conviction with which the mind is filled we read the testimony of a human soul to itself. Or, if we come sometimes upon ourselves suddenly; catch our own minds, as it were, in undress; overhear the whisperings of our own thoughts, when our creeds are off their guard; we may find out ourselves, and be better able to divine what is in man.

The question, then, now before us, shapes itself, first, in this manner: In the hours when men are most themselves, is there manifest a sense of right, a motive of duty, which is unlike all other feelings, simple, and sepa-



rate from all other phenomena of consciousness? Or can the feeling which leads a man to put his life in jeopardy for the right, or to sacrifice his own happiness to duty—if arrested and analyzed at this very moment of its free self-revelation—be made to appear as a transformed social instinct, or the result of heaps of experience of utility?

It is an experience too common to be questioned, however moralists may endeavor to explain it, that conscience, as men are swayed by it without reasoning or theory concerning its authority, does act upon them, and through them, in a manner unlike that of all other known influences, and to the working out of results which no other known force of conduct could, or would produce. The moral sense, as it appears on such occasions to move men, neither is seen to flow out of, nor into self-interest; often it does not run parallel with the course of self-interest; sometimes it crosses and makes head against strongly-opposing currents of self-interest. It does not approach us with the manner of a merchant, but speaks as one having authority. It does not hold up before us a calculation of profit and loss, but a commandment. The moral sense never at such times, when we know it best, seems to be an acquired habit of balancing utilities, a quick method of computing interest, a



patent lightning-calculator.\* Good Bishop Butler could hardly have been thinking of his own advantage when, in his youth, he proposed to make truth the business of his life; nor could he have had an eye single to his own benefit when, in his prosperity, he said to his secretary: "I should be ashamed of myself if I could leave ten thousand pounds behind me." Most men do not stop to think of heaven or hell, when they stand up for the oppressed, or hold out a helping hand to the fallen; but they act at once and spontaneously from their feeling of what ought to be done. The sense of duty is often strongest, and human action most determined, when the consequences involve direct suffering, or troubles which are beyond computation. Thus, Paul was determined to push forward and to apprehend the things for which he felt himself to have been apprehended, though he knew not what might befall him; Athanasius stood for his conviction of truth against the world; Luther would go to Leipsic because he felt bound to go, though it should rain Duke Georges

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\* "Vice may be defined to be a miscalculation of chances, a mistake in estimating the value of pleasures and pains. It is false moral arithmetic."—BENTHAM. (See Lecky's "History of European Morals," vol. i., p. 13.) Virtue and vice, in this view, are *quantities* rather than *qualities*. Ethics becomes, thus, a science of moral weights and equations!

nine days; the pages of history are illumined with the names of those who defied death in obedience to what they deemed a higher law; and so have thousands and tens of thousands of men unknown to fame acted, regardless of consequences, out of their own pure sense of right; so every day people who may not have in them the stuff of martyrs, nevertheless put behind them their own comfort, and face unpleasant duties under the impulse of some disinterested motive.

It is a frequently noticeable fact that the moral feeling does not act as it might be expected to do, if it were only a social instinct. Often, on the contrary, as it wells up from its own pure spring in the heart, it fails altogether to follow the worn channels of social life; nay, it will leave even the natural courses of affection rather than fail to follow its own stronger law. Its word of authority has set households at variance, and many have not loved father or mother, wife or children, more than its ennobling service. The evident superiority of the moral sense not only to social instinct, but to friendship, and the strongest love, is a fact of conscience often revealed in its spontaneous action, of which the derivative theory has no intelligible explanation. Over against the analogies from bees and migratory birds, by means

of which Mr. Darwin seeks to render credible the origin of moral dissatisfaction and remorse, stand splendid examples of the sacrifice of social happiness to the requirements of the moral law; and Mr. Darwin does not mention that instance of the supremacy of a felt duty even over parental affection which has come down from a remote antiquity in the description of Abraham's offering of Isaac.\* The lines of this theory do not take in, within their narrow perspective, that scene of obedience from ancient pastoral life, or that later example of Roman virtue, the giving up by the judge of his own son to death.†

The natural or unconscious witness of the soul to its own moral worth appears, at times, quite ingenuously in the writings of the man in whom, of all recent authors, we should least expect to detect it, Mr. John Stuart Mill. In that protracted period of despondency which he described in the Autobiography, he stood in

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\* Mr. Spenser ("Psychology," vol. ii., p. 601) explains such instances of obedience to a supposed Divine command against the most persistent instinct by the effects of ghost stories told from generation to generation until they became a part of Abraham's nerve structure! Morality thus becomes a battle between the heart and the nerves, with the advantage (so far as heard from) decidedly on the side of the nerves.

† The equation does not hold good: "The social instinct including sympathy,"=the Hebrew consciousness of law, or Roman virtue. The value of the *known* quantities requires a higher valuation than this of the *x* in the moral equation.

the shadow of a higher Reality than he had dreamed of in his philosophy. In his admission that life must be shaped as though there was a higher law than happiness, "an ideal end,"\* we have the unconscious testimony of conscience to its own nobility. Nature, repressed by the father's stern hand, and held under the strict control of his own logic, in one passage of his writings breaks out into an impassioned assertion of the supreme authority of the moral ideal. In his examination of "Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy" † he utters a vehement protestation against the idea of a God whose will might make wrong right. Such a God, Mr. Mill indignantly declares, he never would worship. But why not? If two and two in other spheres may make five, why may not wrong make right? "No," says Mr. Mill, of a God whose government is not sanctioned by the highest human morality which we are capable of conceiving, "call this being by the names which express and affirm the highest human morality, I say in plain terms that I will not." But why not? "He shall not compel me to worship him," says Mr. Mill. But if to worship him would insure the greatest

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\* Autobiography, pp. 142, 143. In his "Essays on Religion," he argues from pure disinterestedness, and objects even to the Gospel that it holds out the promise of the reward of Heaven!

† Vol. i., p. 131. See Mivart, "Lessons from Nature," p. 104.



happiness, and to despise him the greatest misery, why should Mr. Mill not worship him? "No," he replies, "if such a being can sentence me to hell \* \* \* to hell I will go." But upon what conceivable principle of utility should Mr. Mill go to hell? How will it profit him? What conceivable good will come of it to others? Why should he not love his own happiness? Is utilitarianism also among the prophets that it would reject heaven rather than confound moral distinctions? Will the apostle of utilitarianism in his disinterested love of virtue rival St. Theresa in her wish to have a torch in her right hand and a vessel of water in her left, that with the one she might burn up the glories of heaven, and with the other extinguish the flames of hell, in order to serve God out of pure love? Mr. Mill surely strikes a responsive chord in our moral sentiments when he says, "I will call no being good who is not what I mean when I apply that epithet to my fellow creatures;" but the only reason we can give—and is not the same Mr. Mill's only reason?—is because it would not be in accordance with our sense of right to worship him; because we *do* feel the reality of moral distinctions, and no reasonings can make us wholly forgetful of our original perceptions of moral truth; and therefore a God whose will should confound right and wrong,



would be to us no worshipful being. So long as we have a moral feeling which is different from utility, or social instinct—which is an immediate sense of the right, we would never worship a God who would not do right.

Conscience, therefore, so far as we may judge from the first testimony of the soul to itself, is not a transformed sensation, or acquired taste, but a distinct, specific, and necessary feeling, inseparable from our very consciousness of existence. It speaks not as our lower instincts,—not as the scribes, but as one having authority.

The question as to the origin of the Moral Sense must be answered, secondly, from the evidence obtainable from the most developed forms of conscience. For the principle already mentioned that a scientific theory of any specific difference should account for it at its points of greatest divergence, as well as in its lowest terms, affords a decisive test of the sufficiency of any theories concerning the moral sense. A strictly scientific account of conscience must answer not only for the germinant, but also for the full-grown and perfect life. A complete explanation of man's moral nature must bring within its range of possibilities not only our musical, ape-like ancestors, or the mound builders of antiquity possessed

of the "half-art, half instinct of language;" \* but also civilized people, who build hospitals and churches, and who have so far advanced beyond considerations of present utility that the saying has passed into a proverb among them: Let justice be done though the heavens fall. More than this should be required of a moral system. Its foundations should be laid deep enough and strong enough to bear the weight of the whole perfected and finished Temple of religion. The theory must look forward and upward as well as backward and downward, and account not only for the supposed feelings of migratory birds and busy bees, but also for all conceivable human progress in virtue, for any imaginable angelic graces, and for the very perfection of Deity. The moral ideal which ever goes before men, a living power, must be kept steadily in the eye of any philosophy which will not condemn itself of loving darkness rather than light. If you tell me, therefore, that among savages you can see, or beyond history, in still lower beings having the form of men, you can imagine nothing but social instinct, including sympathy; I answer that among the highest races I can see, and beyond history at the other end of time I can imagine, virtue, unselfishness,

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\* "Descent of Man," vol. i., p. 101.

and love, refined from every touch of earthliness, and shining in their own pure light; and my philosophy of morals must be able not only to look down into the dust, but also up to the heavens!

The advocates of the derivative theory of conscience are not so much in the habit of looking up along the diverging lines between mere animal life and man's moral history, as they are occupied in looking down along the converging lines of life to their starting-points of least difference in the uniform, gelatinous egg. But as you cannot have true physics without astronomy, a correct view of the earth without a look, at least, at the stars, and some knowledge of the sun; neither can you have true morals without this upward glance, without some perception of the moral Ideal, that Divine perfection which is the light of all our seeing. Theology is moral astronomy, indispensable to any true knowledge of our earthly life.

How, then, does the matter stand when we reason from the highest and the best in human thought and life? Is the derivative theory equal to the facts? There is one example of the moral sense at its best, by which the genuineness of this theory may be easily tested. It is an example which sums up in its own perfectness the moral life of history. Jesus

Christ—by disciples who knew Him most intimately, and by His Church unto this day, owned and adored as the Lord from heaven—is revered by the common consent of the pure in heart as the most perfect man. He is man come fully to himself, the Head of the race. He is the human soul in its best moments, and most Divine life. He is the religious nature of man at its highest growth—love fully blossomed, and conscience perfectly ripe. There is a wonderful clearness and certainty in His moral judgments. In an age of intellectual drift and of universal fog, always around the little company of which He is the centre, there is clear, sunny certainty. In His own consciousness nothing seems to be confused, or blurred; but all His thoughts come to him as truths from the Father. Jesus Christ never was afraid, never hesitated, never doubted. His self-consciousness was to the troubled hearts of the disciples what a rare, cloudless day in June is to a day of April showers. “In Him,” says the disciple who knew him best, “was light.”

This one human mind, possessed of clear, sunny self-knowledge, it is noticeable, was less than all men who have ever thought or spoken the outcome of the life of his age. As no other, He lived His own life; thought His own thought; and finished His own work



among men. One might as reasonably assert that the rock of St. Helena was evolved out of the waves and a change in the weather, as imagine that the substantial and exalted faiths of Jesus and His disciples were but the products of the meeting currents and changing fortunes of the world, against which they stood up with their firm certainties. Modern science chooses as its guiding faith the law of continuity; by which is meant, in plain English, the fact that nature is of one piece—no thread is ever broken in her weaving, and every force works on without stop or jar. But the law of the continuity of mental and moral forces would be snapped, and history made a strange patchwork, if we were to suppose that the mind that was in Judaism ever produced the mind that was in Jesus. When I can see a rose growing in the desert, and forming its depths of pure color out of the grains of yellow sand; when I can see a wheat field ripening in the furrows of the salt waves; when I can believe that the villagers among the hills of New Hampshire with their wagons and pick-axes gathered the stones, and heaped up the massive peak of Mount Washington; then, but not till then, can I believe that the thoughts of the disciples invented the deeds and the glory of Jesus, the Christ;—whose beatitudes shed the fragrance of a new spirit



over the wastes of Pharisaism; whose fruitful life, in the midst of sin and raging passion, grew in grace and favor with God and man; the Christ, whose glorious majesty, still unequaled and inimitable, looks down upon our low estate, and proclaims itself to be the mighty work of God!

There seem to be three ultimates of our verifiable knowledge, three fixed facts of human experience, beyond which we cannot go; and these three are, on the one side, matter and force; and on the other, the character of Jesus Christ. Physics cannot carry us beyond the former; and moral history leaves us before the latter as its last, grandest, and enduring fact.

What, then, as judged by this ultimate moral fact of history, the character of Jesus, becomes of the theory that duty is only another name for the social instinct? What in the light of that pure moral consciousness which reveals what is in men (the true, that is, the original, underived light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world) becomes of the supposition that goodness is only another form of earthliness? Certainly the impression which that life, full of grace and truth, made upon the minds of those who beheld it, was the impression of a soul aglow with a Divine love, and self-moved along a path high as the

heavens from the earth above the selfish thoughts of disciples desirous of thrones! His was a life of faith, with all the kingdoms of the world insight! That the sense of duty, as it was regnant in the life of Jesus of Nazareth, was not a sense of something worthier and more divine than the social instincts of bees, and birds, and men; something more commanding than self-interest; something more august and more enduring than the record in the changing brain of experiences of the hurtful or the useful;—this, he would be indeed a bold theorist to assert in view of that life of obedience, and before the Cross! But to this test of the character of the perfect man the derivative theory of virtue must be brought, as all the deeper questions of modern thought, followed to their end, lead into the one great question of the ages, What think ye of Christ? “The Descent of Man” must answer also for “The Descent of the Son of Man.” Herbert Spencer must not only reason *us* out of our moral senses, but also hold up his “Psychology” as true to the consciousness of the perfect man. You are the resultant of the experiences, impressed upon the brain of a suffering and unsuccessful people, of the utility of virtue and the joy of religion—Herbert Spencer must say boldly to Jesus, or his “Psychology” breaks utterly down. Your sacrament of the broken body and the

blood which is shed, is but the symbol of that physical mystery of the ages which, working by a blind impulse, produced man, and made him love society, and choose happiness as his chief good—this, the denier of the divinity of man's moral nature must say unabashed to Him who gave His life a ransom for many, or else, in view of His Cross, trample his theory of morals into the dust from whence he got it. Either the social instinct and the experience of utility are ample to explain the wonderful moral consciousness of the Christ, or they are insufficient to account for the life of the least of his brethren. There is no escape from this dilemma. One after another the noblest characters, and at last Jesus himself, must be reduced to common clay, of this earth earthy; or the theory is ruined. But Jesus' question to her who understood not the beginning of his ministry, reveals the secret of his finished work: "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" Jesus' account of his own moral consciousness alone is equal to the fact of his life; his inward sense of oneness with the Father alone is sufficient to explain his outward ministry. The mind that was in Jesus is above any earthly origin. It bears the image of the heavenly.

Conscience, therefore, if judged by the revelation of its nature in the humanity of Him

to whom, by the general consent of the good and the voice of the ages, is given a name above every name, is an original and essential element of man's being, without descent or beginning of days,—like Melchisedek, priest of the Most High God.

The spirits that have been most like the Son of man, like him appear to bear the image not of the earthly, but of the heavenly. In their toils and sacrifices they followed duty as the very angel of God's presence; and the martyrs of the Church never dreamed that it was only a transformed social instinct which led them from their homes into dungeons and through the flames. Of all noble, disinterested, or heroic lives, Herbert Spencer's accumulation of experiences of utility is no more an explanation than the heap of sand thrown up as a breastwork upon which the soldier dies, is an explanation of the patriotism which inspired the daring charge!

The theory of the derivation of the moral sense from non-moral sources through the social instinct, including sympathy, is as yet only theory. Whatever supports may be found for this frail theory in physical analogies, whatever points of attachment may be provided for it in the general scheme of evolutionary philosophy; the actual process of growth from the non-moral to the moral has never



been discovered ; and to reason from the supposed possibility of the theory to the fact of it, would be like saying—I have lattice-work by my door upon which a honeysuckle may grow, therefore I have a honeysuckle. The theory of the evolutionists has in it a place prepared for the growth of the fruits of the Spirit from that which is sown to the flesh, as it has a place prepared for the production of living out of non-living matter—but does it find the fact where the theory is waiting for it? Naturalists generally admit that living matter has never yet been produced, to our knowledge, out of non-living matter ; and the case is no better for the theory with regard to the change of non-moral into moral consciousness. The objection urged by Herbert Spencer against the view of a special creation, changing only the words, may with equal, if not better logic be urged against his own view of the origin of the moral sense : “ No one ever saw a special creation ; no one ever found proof of an indirect kind that a special creation had taken place. It is significant, as Dr. Hooker remarks, that naturalists who suppose new species to be miraculously originated, habitually suppose the origination to occur in some region remote from human observation.” \* But neither ob-

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\* “ Principles of Biology,” vol. i., p. 336.



servation nor memory reveal the moral sense in the process of change from the social instinct. The transformation, if it took place at all, must have occurred in some nebulous condition of the human soul. Language has no record, even among its oldest fossil forms, of the transition. But language is the first transcript of the human soul, the witness, before philosophies were born, to that which is in man. Its testimony to the distinct and separate character of the moral sense is unequivocal. Moreover, the closest observation of those forms of human life most akin to the brute discloses no transitional forms between non-moral and moral life. In a volume justly regarded of the highest authority as a manual of ethnology, Prof. Oscar Peschel remarks: "To the question, whether in any part of the world a nation has ever been found utterly destitute of religious emotions and ideas, we will venture to give a decided negative."\* Even Mr. Tylor, † with his philosophic bias towards the opposite conclusion, is candid enough to write, with regard to the question whether any tribe has been found without religion: "Though the theoretical niche is ready and convenient, the actual statue to fill it is not forthcoming. The case is, in some de-

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\* "The Races of Men," p. 261.

† "Primitive Culture," vol. i., p. 418.

gree, similar to that of the tribes asserted to exist without language, or without the use of fire; nothing in the nature of things seems to forbid the possibility of such existence, but, as a matter of fact, the tribes are not found." The derivative, or monistic, theory puts the required passage from animal to moral and religious life beyond experience, before history, without the limits of scientific demonstration! Not even a tradition of this marvelous change has floated down into history!

At the farthest range of his microscope Haeckel still finds "monera" living and swarming among the inert atoms. Biology recently reduced life to its lowest terms in the cell. Now it has penetrated through the formed wall to the living centre of the cell. But the point where its inward glance stops is still life. One single cell-centre, one bit of that finely-granulated albumen, which is life's last material hiding-place, if it could but be made in the laboratory, would be a fact worth more to the radical school, at least, of the evolutionists than all the volumes which they have ever written in advocacy of their views; but that one bit of life has never been made. In like manner, at the farthest end of our most microscopic moral analysis, we still find these living moral facts. One instance of a conscience alive to right and wrong formed

out of non-moral matter; one instance of a real moral judgment coming to life out of purely animal instincts, would be worth more to Mr. Darwin than many pages of analogies; but that instance is yet to be discovered. The whole theory circles still in the air, without a solitary fact upon which to alight, and to stay undisturbed. Nor is this all. We have not taken into view as yet certain well-known classes of facts which give this theory no rest. Not only does it fail to find, in the whole compass of our knowledge, sufficient facts upon which to build its pretensions, but also there are facts of common experience which seem to be the natural enemies of any such theory. One of these is the fact of moral freedom. The derivative theory is pursued, wherever it gains lodgment, by the belief in moral freedom, which has prior possession of all men's hearts. Mr. Spencer has made his philosophy into an Ishmael, against whom is every man's hand, by his opinion that the absence of moral freedom is a gain.

Another fact directly antagonistic to this view is the substantial identity of the intellectual, moral, and physical nature of man through all varieties, and from the lowest to the highest races.\* Mr. Darwin admits how

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\* See Mivart, "Lessons from Nature," pp. 133-167 for proofs of this fact. Also Peschel, "The Races of Men," pp. 21-26.

closely the Fuegians on board the "Beagle" resembled Englishmen.

Another difficulty, right in the way of these theories, is the fact of moral reversion. The question is by no means settled what the intellectual and moral starting-point of prehistoric man was; and many facts indicative of moral retrogression are, to say the least, as Mr. Wallace puts the case, "Difficulties of Development as applied to man." \* Another fact which does not fit the theory is the circumstance that the approval of society should be the standard of right, if the moral sense were the outgrowth of the social instinct; but such is not the case. A morality held together by the restraints of social customs is hardly worthy of the name.† Every strong conscience is a daily judgment of society, and by its own law. Another stubborn fact against any theory which would reduce conscience to a physical impulse is the sense of sin. The feeling of dissatisfaction, which Mr. Darwin endeavors to account for by the supposition of a thwarted, but persistent instinct, is by no means the whole strength of the condemnation of the law; it is but a single thread of the dark woof of the history of sin.

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\* Address republished in *Popular Science Monthly*, Nov., 1876.

† "Social penalties may strike the very highest forms of virtue." Lecky, "Morals," vol. i., p. 62.



In his account of the sense of shame, Mr. Spencer hardly seems to go deeper than the blush on the face. This whole wrong side of human nature is passed over too lightly by the advocates of the natural make of our moral judgments. Sin must be carefully studied, also, in the processes by which man's consciousness of it is cleansed, and in the state of the renewed mind towards it, in order that its real significance may be understood. There are experiences, known to those of a broken and a contrite spirit, which are deeply significant of man's moral origin and end. The sense of guilt, darkening the heart, is the proof of conscience, the light which is in man; as the shadows in a room bear witness to the lamp from which they are thrown upon the wall.

In this brief review of the reasons why we must refuse to consider the moral sense of mankind as resolved, or rather dissolved, into any other elements, it will be noticed that no direct issue has been taken with Darwinism upon its own ground, and considered as a possible natural history of the world and man's origin. That evolution is at present the best working theory of natural science, we are not disposed, in the interests of the religious feeling, to question. What rôle the laws of natural and sexual selection have had to play in the



process of creation, is hardly a question of moral philosophy. But that evolution, as at present exalted by Herbert Spencer into an universal law and comprehensive philosophy, fails to satisfy many minds, at points where they are best fitted to judge, admits also of no question. Physics, chemistry, mental science, and ethics, each and all present facts hard to cover with this broad generalization, though we stretch it to the utmost. \* But this point it does not concern us now to argue. Still less have we occasion to dispute with naturalists over their own discoveries. It may be, as they say, our eyes are better organized to see the gaps in the development than the fine line which to them seems to thread upon one law all known facts. And those theologians who

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\* For a statement of some of these objections, see recent articles on Automatism and Evolution in the *Contemporary Review*, September, October, and December, 1876. We find it difficult to accept Prof. Huxley's dictum that evolution is demonstrated truth, when he himself, at the close of his last address in this country, avoids, by rhetorical dexterity, Sir Wm. Thompson's reasonings as to the probable age of the earth. (See lectures on "Advances in Physical Science," by Prof. Tait, p. 167.) In contrast with Prof. Huxley's claim, these words of Mr. Wallace seem to possess more of the modesty of true science. "However great may have been the intellectual triumphs of the nineteenth century, we can hardly think so highly of its achievements as to imagine that, in somewhat less than twenty years, we have passed from complete ignorance to almost perfect knowledge on two such vast and complex subjects as the origin of species and the antiquity of man." For a summary of difficulties see Ulrichi, "Gott und Mensch.," Bd. i., pp. 83-115.

may have learned in their own domain the evil of dogmatism, will be the last needlessly to expose themselves to that scientific intolerance which, claiming for itself an esoteric initiation into nature's mysteries, has only words of contempt for those who presume to question its oracles. We do not wish to be numbered among Mr. Huxley's "strangled snakes" around the cradle of knowledge,\* nor to be considered by the gentle and modest Dr. Büchner † "mental slaves," "yelping curs," "speculative idiots." We would rather try to accomplish Mr. Huxley's great feat of metaphysical jugglery, and regard ourselves as automaton's endowed with free will! But when a doctrine of evolution, whatever may be its claim as mere physics, becomes an all-devouring moral and metaphysical doctrine—is advanced, in short, as scientific theology, claiming lordship over conscience and the religious sentiment; then there are certain logical laws, certain natural principles, certain maxims of common sense, by which men who may not be scientific, but who are reasonable beings, will rigorously examine its claims. "To judge of the soundness of scientific data, and to reason from data assumed to be sound," Prof. Tyndall justly remarks, "are

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\* "Lay Sermons," p. 278.

† "Kraft und Stoff," Preface, p. 86, as quoted in *Cont. Rev.*

two totally different things." This derivative theory of man's moral nature, confessedly resting upon no experimental facts, but only upon general inferences, cannot, on the plea of scientific immunity from reasoners not used to the microscope, escape the grasp of a rigorous logic. One of the laws of sound reasoning, by which it is to be weighed, is the adequacy of the forces to the results produced. Another is the similarity of the cause to the effect, or the law, so ably expounded by Mr. Mill, that the sum of the antecedents in causation must be equal to the consequent. The logical equation is all wrong, if there is more on the side of the effects than on the side of the causes; and if known quantities are not sufficient, logic requires the writing upon the causal side of the equation an unknown  $x$ . Whatever comes out of one end of the process of evolution must have entered into it from some point from without. You cannot account for a piece of rich silk appearing at one end of a pneumatic tube, by showing the invoice of a white cotton fabric put in at the other end. The matter would not be helped by supposing that the tube reached across a continent, instead of under the avenue of a city. If intelligence and conscience come out at one end of the evolution, they must have gone into it at the other end; the change of

color and substance is not explained simply by supposing the evolution to have run through millions of years instead of through a few centuries.

Or, if it be said, the change of color and substance is due to "the incident forces," to which the matter which has become mind has been subjected, the difficulty is only pushed a step farther back. For either in the nature of the species, or in the "incident forces," must reside the causes of everything which appears in the developed form. Somewhere, then, in the process, mind and morals must have entered as causes, for they exist now and here as effects. The only logical escape is to reduce all diversities to one ultimate kind of matter, as Haeckel, in the face of appearances, has the boldness to do. Mr. Spencer, also, admits that if there had been a first organism it could not have derived its tendencies and aptitudes from inheritance, but he says that "evolution negatives the supposition of a first organism." \* There exists, then, in the universe, only multiformity, but no distinctions of kind; and evolution, as thus conceived, involves the metaphysical contradiction of an infinite recession in time. There is, therefore, no way of escape which does not end in vacuity

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\* Appendix to "Biology," vol. i.



from the proposition that whatever exists now as actual and separate fact, must have existed before as distinct and determinate possibility. Whatever is realized in the fruit, must have been potentially in the germ. The law of continuity holds in metaphysics, as well as in physics. Prof. Tyndall's apt figure of the curve,\* "the elements of which may be determined in a world of observation and experiment, which may be prolonged, therefore, into an antecedent world," holds equally in moral philosophy, and is a fine statement of an old argument for belief in the Intelligence before us, and after us; whose ways from the beginning we cannot follow, but whose design is visible, running through our present experience, and whom we know in part.

These laws of sound reasoning and true scientific imagination, naturalists should not fail to respect when they become moral philosophers. Here is a moral nature, known and read of all men, differentiated by certain fixed and persistent peculiarities, but, on "general grounds" of scientific theory, said to have grown out of instincts that do not show any of its specific characters; to have been evolved from matter which, so far as we have any certain knowledge of it, contains not the remotest possi-

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\* "Scientific Use of the Imagination."



bility of it. Where is the identity of the process, if it grew from any root but its own? What becomes of the law of continuity, if gases in a fiery planet, indefinite cycles of ages ago, gases in kind like those with which we are familiar, have become, in these latter days, thought, aspiration, penitence, love, prayer?

It is not here necessarily denied that this whole universe grew, and is growing. It is only affirmed that the seeds sown in chaos must have been sufficient for the harvest reaped by time's sickle. The growth of this whole material system of things is in kind no more inconceivable than the growth of an oak from an acorn. For aught we know, the one process may be a miniature of the other. All the ramifications of this vast system of worlds, and the constellations clustered on high, may be to the germs of the universe as the boughs, and fruit, and myriad leaves of a tree are to the seed once hidden in the ground. Indeed, the inspired book of Genesis is ages before our modern science in the discovery that the Divine law of creation was to let everything bring forth after its kind. But there is this limitation to growth, which Genesis recognizes, though our science is prone to ignore it. Let everything bring forth *after its kind*. Let the cause be equal to the effect; let the effect contain no more than can be found in its causes. We can conceive of

evolution in no other way; the homogeneous becomes the heterogeneous, but only under this limitation, that what stands forth evolved in the heterogeneous lies involved in the homogeneous. But certain moral facts are clearly evolved, therefore they were involved in the first principles of things. If the present universe has a moral structure, as well as physical, there must have been working from the beginning, and throughout its course, a moral molecular force. While naturalists are still undecided how many distinct physical elements must be granted in order to account for existing chemical combinations—and Mr. Spencer \* bases his generalizations upon the mere supposition that they can reduce them to one—surely among the sixty-three, or more, demanded by physics, we may be allowed to claim another element for the construction of mind, spirit, and conscience, since these three differ in kind immeasurably more from material quantities than oxygen differs from hydrogen, or carbon from gold. Unless, therefore, it can be shown that in the fully developed moral consciousness of the race the moral sense, and the resulting moral judgments, can be logically derived from other motives; can be resolved by accurate analysis into other feelings and ideas—and

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\* "Principles of Psychology," vol. i., p. 155.

this Mr. Darwin does not in his chapter attempt to do, and, as we have just shown, this can be done only by a confusion of the facts of consciousness—it will avail nothing to put its origin back in some unknown past, and to suppose that in some condition antecedent to experience this miraculous conversion of one substance into another substance took place. At whatever time in the world's formation, at whatever stage of human growth, conscience emerges, it appears as conscience; and its peculiarity as conscience must be referred to some moral tendency originally existing in, and forming an integral part of the very germs, or primal forms of life. Somewhere in the descent of man, as at several obvious points in the arguments of the materialists, there must have slipped into the process of evolution the "promise and the potency" of a higher life, which, ever clearing itself of earthliness, in the fulness of time is made perfect in the Son of Man.

As this universe exists at present in two kinds, so we are like the Roman priests in their pride, if we will allow it to be administered only in one kind. Matter and spirit, nature and conscience, together form the true sacrament of the Creator's institution, and to deny either is to profane His bequest.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE PERCEPTIONS IN THE RELIGIOUS FEELING.

WE are now prepared for a step in advance. The religious feeling, like the feeling of existence, is a primary source of experience to be derived from nothing before itself. But does the religious feeling involve a religious perception? All sensation seems to involve perception. From the feeling of existence is evolved the knowledge of existence, though, perhaps, a considerable period of infancy may be required for the new feeling of existence to take form in the definite consciousness of a personal soul. Thus, also, our bodily sensations give rise to the perceptions of objective phenomena; and these sense-perceptions are the starting-points of all science. But does the religious feeling, likewise, yield immediately a religious perception? Is it in the same manner a source of knowledge?

The process by which the mind arrives at knowledge, generally speaking, may be said



to run through the following stages:—first, sensation; second, perception; third, the defining the sense-perception by means of other perceptions, or the forming the idea of a thing; fourth, the combination of ideas in a judgment; and, finally, the verification of ideas so formed either by various combinations of them (deductive reasoning), or by returning to their sources, and starting from renewed observation of phenomena (inductive reasoning).

Is theology a knowledge of God to be gained and verified by similar processes, and on the same principles, by which we arrive at our other knowledges? I maintain that the religious feeling involves perception, and is, therefore, the valid source of theology. More than this, I maintain that the ideas gained primarily through the feeling of absolute dependence are the conditions of all ordered, or scientific knowledge.\* Had man not been organized first for God, he would not have been organized for knowledge of the creation.

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\* Nitsch ("System der Christ. Lehre," p. 25) maintains: "The feeling (Das Gefühl) has reason and is reason, and the felt consciousness of God produces out of itself ground-perceptions . . . by virtue of which before all scientific mediation it can rule and condition the whole domain of conceptions." Similarly Ulrici ("Gott und Mensch.," I., 2d. Th., p. 242) urges that the religious feeling is the necessary condition of all knowledge without which we could not rise above the level of the brute. See, also, Lotze, "Mikrokosmos," Bd. 3, p. 549.



Science, to a person without religious endowment, would be impossible, as it is to the brute. The religious power I hold to be the "primum mobile" of human thought. Without the God-consciousness, self-consciousness can never be fully realized. Man rises above the animal, and becomes human, only through his power of spiritual perception. Man can form the idea of himself as man only in and through the sense of his relationship to the Father of all spirits. So far from religion being opposed to science, science cannot exist at all among beings incapable of religion.

That these are not mere assertions, we are confident a fair comparison of the processes of religious and scientific knowledge will make clear. The manner of the mind's procedure is similar in both kinds of knowledge; the principles upon which it becomes certain of its conclusions are identical; and faith in the one process requires faith also in the other. Scientific and religious knowledge stand or fall together, with the trustworthiness of our mental faculties. We cannot with logical consistency be toward the one half of our consciousness infidels, and toward the other half believers.

If we subject our two kinds of knowledge to the comparison just indicated, we shall observe that the perception given through the

religious feeling exists, at first, in an undefined and general form, precisely as the first perception of existence is a vague feeling of life. In the religious consciousness the general law, enunciated by Sir Wm. Hamilton,\* holds true, that sensation and perception, though each involves the other, exist in inverse ratio. Sensation and perception, in general, seem to hold very much the same relation to each other, as that found to exist between heat and light; the difference between which is only one of degree, or in the length or quickness of the vibrations. In the religious consciousness, feeling and thought, zeal and knowledge, are similarly related—the emotion giving rise to a clear perception of truth, or the truth passing again into a glow of heat. Each may not at the same moment be at its greatest intensity. The one is nature's relief of the other.

The earliest recognizable transition, or advance, from the feeling of absolute dependence toward perception is found in the mental phenomena of wonder, fear, awe. Through these half-felt, half-thought states of consciousness the idea of a Divine reality begins to be shadowed forth in the mind. They are the soul's feelings of the "not ourselves upon

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\* "Lectures on Metaphysics," p. 336. See Spencer, "Psychology," vol. i., pp. 246-251.

which we are dependent" in the process of change into the distinct conception of an Almighty God. They are neither simple feeling, nor pure thought, but a commingling of both—the soul's first sense perception, as it were, of the Infinite One. These two, wonder and fear, are among our earliest recollections of life, as they are universal human experiences. Our childhood was a daily wonder. We played in the fields, and wondered what made the grasses grow. We looked out at the flying snow-flakes, and wondered where the winds found them. We looked at the twinkling stars, and wondered what they were. And with the years the wonder has not passed from earth or sky. Time itself is but an hour's wonder between two eternities. Things around us grown most common seem at times possessed of strange secrets, which we cannot spell. Our little circle of knowledge is as a mere island surrounded, wherever we turn, by an unknown sea. Every path of thought leads soon to the boundless wonder, in the midst of which we dwell; our most familiar knowledge in the light of which we walk, is only as a day between two nights; out of darkness it comes, and in darkness it ends. Wordsworth's ode, "Intimations of Immortality," stirs the soul, like a trumpet-call, because it awakens this wondering memory and first sense

of truth which we are toiling all our lives to find :

“ —Those obstinate questionings  
Of sense and outward things,  
Fallings from us, vanishings,  
Blank misgivings of a creature  
Moving about in worlds not realized,  
High instincts, before which our mortal nature  
Did tremble like a guilty thing surprised.”

The sense of wonder may have become to us, at certain hours, a sense of painful craving for certainty ;—of our first faiths only the power to doubt may, at times, seem left. Doubts, which fell lightly upon the joyousness of youth, as the shadows of morning lie upon the sunshine among the trees, have since lengthened and deepened, perhaps, into a felt and painful darkness, a mystery enveloping all things, making us feel lost even in familiar paths, and causing well-known objects to look weird and strange. What does it all mean? What are we here for? Who are we? Who cares for us? Is it all a vast and brazen hollowness? Is there beneath appearances a heart of things, real as our own only infinitely more human, true, changeless, full of goodness—perfect love?

With the vague wonder steals over us, also, the nameless dread. Our hearts tremble at themselves. There is a dread which seems to be the reflex of our own consciousness of spirit-



ual being. It is not fear of anything known. It is not dread of any physical suffering. It is not a shrinking of heart from any seen or fancied peril. This sense of fear surprises us in our quietest hours; often it comes over us, like the shadow of another world, when we are far from men, walking in the sunny meadows, looking up into the deep blue eye of the sky, or as we stand upon some cliff, self-forgetful,—the ocean before us, overcoming thought with the feeling of something measureless and infinite! This dim sense of reality more than our minds can conceive; this surprise of soul at its own mysterious being; this shrinking of spirit from passing vision of God too bright for it, is by no means an unusual experience, nor is it confined to those of naturally poetic temperament, or quick sensibility. There are few; if any, who have never felt their hearts tremble from the passing by of a Higher Presence, whose ways they know not of. And even that stout-hearted positivist, Prof. Tyndall, confesses to moments of moral questionings and weakness; and, as he stood upon the crumbling summit of the Matterhorn, seems to have been deeply awed by thoughts which came to him not through generalizations of his science, but from that human heart by which we live, which in him, as in Wordsworth, and in us all, oft wakes thoughts that lie too deep for tears.



If now we seek to arrest, for a moment, in our understandings these evanescent feelings, they betray—do they not?—the first motions, at least, of the forming idea of God, the undefined revelation of the Infinite One. As these emotions have found utterance in poetry, as they have entered into literature, as they color our thoughts and brighten our lives, they are seen to be dawnings upon us of Divinity. They are “Intimations of Immortality,” suggestions of something Divine! From them the thought of God seems always to be coming to us. As they vanish, they leave us thinking of Him. We seem to ourselves as strangers and pilgrims here. We feel alone in an alien world;—the soul wandering in orphanage of spirit, it knows not whither; trembling with the half-conscious sense of its own higher birthright, but finding nowhere in nature recognition of its Divine childhood, or gleam of light from its home. Amid these rude powers of nature, which caress us only at last to destroy us, we feel ourselves to be castaways; and, though we succeed in propitiating for a season the powers of this world, into whose hands we have fallen, and win a little enjoyment from the hard servitude of nature, we do not forget wholly the soul’s wondering reminiscence of its Father’s house; we do not lose wholly from our hopes and fears the longing for a heavenly home.

The stepping forth into consciousness of some idea of God from the feeling of absolute dependence through these feeling-perceptions of the supreme Reality, is not, let it be noticed, simply your experience, or my experience; is not a merely individual process of belief; but it is a general, or distinctively human phenomenon. For this feeling-perception of supersensible things is the originating cause of all mythologies, as it has been the persistent force of religious faith. Mr. Maurice,\* from an analysis of the actual products of belief in the Homeric times, has reached the conclusion that a sense of human relationship, particularly the relation of father and son, was at the source of the Greek religion. Prof. Ulrici † maintains that the more recent investigations show that "the manifold nature-religions (so called), from Shamanism and Fetichism, up to the most developed mythological systems, in *the last ground* do not rest, as has commonly been supposed, upon an immediate deification of objects, or powers of nature, but have gone forth from a perception of the Divine in general, though perfectly dim and undefined, a Power and nature working behind appear-

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\* "Social Morality," pp. 91-101.

† "Gott und der Mensch.," 1, 2, p. 427. Herbert Spencer, in his "Sociology," presents facts really confirmative of this view, as he endeavors to reduce all religious sentiments to ancestor-worship.

ances." Reason has had everything to do in giving form and shape to the conception of Divinity; but, as matter of fact and history, it has no more created in the human mind the idea of God than it has created the belief that we are sons and have fathers. We exist in relationship to the Father. We come to ourselves in this Divine kinship. It is the truth of life into which we are born, and as the eye does not make the light in which it sees, neither does Reason make the Truth in which it begins to distinguish realities.

In the process of the evolution of ideas of the Godhead from the human sense of dependence, these first recognizable forms of feeling-perception, wonder and fear, are familiar historical facts. The early religious consciousness of man, the childhood of religions can by no other words be so truly described. Our Aryan ancestors were wonderers, then worshippers. It is a fact so well known, as to render any citation of proof a work of supererogation, that objects most wondered at, and most dreaded, are regarded as objects of worship among savages. But if the growth of religious ideas be arrested in their first stages of formation—if the latent perceptions of the surrounding Divinity involved in these feelings are not unfolded into clear ideas, and through a process of thought a higher worship reached

—then of necessity the religious faith of a people will be but as a germ of truth infolded in superstitions. Early religious ideas may be false or grotesque, as the perceptions of a little child would convey a foolish conception of the world; but, as the absurdities of the child's notions of things form no argument against the validity of perception, so the idolatries of undeveloped religions are no evidence against the trustworthiness of the sense of Divinity.

But does the evolution of the religious consciousness necessarily stop with these vague results? Beyond a superstitious worship, springing from these sentiments, the religious growth of some tribes seems hardly to have advanced. With others the fear of God has been the beginning of wisdom. Some modern thinkers would bring all science and all revelation, the whole progressive manifestation of God to man, back to these first sentiments of religion. We can have, they hold, no more definite conceptions of the Inscrutable Power. God, after all the searchings of the centuries, if haply he may be found, is still the Unknown and Unknowable Power, whose influence the savage fears in everything that causes him pain, whose inconceivable presence the philosopher \*

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\* The prototype of Herbert Spencer has been discovered in an ancient Mexican king who worshipped an Unknown God under the name of Cause of Causes. (Peschel, "Races," p. 247.) Perhaps a circle is now the best definition of progress.



supposes to be beneath all natural forces and laws—the dread Power to whom it is useless to pray, and before whom it is our highest wisdom ignorantly to worship.

But must the formation of religious conceptions from our general sense of God stop with these abstractions? Does it, as matter of fact, as it actually works in human consciousness, as it is carried on through human history, stop with this barren and useless conception of Deity—an idea of God which makes Him *less*, not more, than humanity? The impulses of the religious feeling are not and cannot be checked in these first intimations of the Infinite. The contact of the soul with the Reality in which it lives awakens it to something better and more satisfying than these dreams of Divinity. The touch of the finger of God arouses all its powers. The felt presence and nearness of God incites the soul to ideas, and reasonings, and efforts of thought, which lift it to a far higher conception of Him than its first dim sense of Deity; though they leave the mind, when most full of light, still wondering and worshipping before the glory that passes knowledge. Let us observe carefully this further evolution of the knowledge of God from the first feeling-perception of the presence of his Spirit.

It is a profoundly suggestive remark of



Nitsch,\* that "the religious consciousness perfects and justifies itself, when, in the immediate life of the spirit, the contents of the original feeling of God (Gottesgefühl) objectifies itself in a *constant* manner." His meaning may be made obvious by reference to our perceptions of external things. Every time we look at any given object, as a star, the same image regularly repeats itself in the eye. Whenever we feel resistance to our sense of touch, as when we lay our hand upon a table, the same conception of an external object is formed in the mind. The process from our sensations to our perceptions of things takes place *in a constant manner*. If it should fail to do so, we should distrust, at once, our senses. This regular action between sensation and perception is broken in our dreams, when pressure on a particular nerve, for instance, may call forth a succession of incongruous mental images. But we should have no valid knowledge of an external world, were not the relations between our sensations and our ideas of things generally uniform and constant. So it is with regard to spiritual vision, or our belief in supersensible things. If the ideas which arise in the mind from its sense of dependence are capricious—now one thing, now another; if the re-

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\* "System der Christ.-Lehre," p. 25.

religious feeling does not awaken invariably in thought the same ideas—then it may be all hallucination, a dream of the soul to which no reality corresponds. But if, on the other hand, the process from feeling to ideas is a constant one; if the religious consciousness in ourselves, and in others, always produces certain necessary ideas; then, as in the parallel case of sense-perception, such uniformity is evidence that we are not deceived in our belief in the Divine reality without us. Our argument must stop short, therefore, convicted of delusion, unless certain ideas can be shown to be the uniform results, in thought, from our feeling of absolute dependence. But these constant products of the religious sense are at hand. They are known as the intuitions.

Our next step, therefore, must be to trace the relation, so far as we may, between the religious feeling and its intuitions. That the intuitions are constant ideas, in all minds the same, is unquestionable. All men think from these fixed starting-points. They are the axioms of common sense, as well as the first principles of science. One of these fixed points of light in our mental firmament is the idea of cause. What, then, is the relation between the idea of cause and the religious feeling? We feel ourselves to be dependent beings, and we at

once think of ourselves as caused beings. We become aware of ourselves as limited or finite, and immediately perceive ourselves to have been made. The sense of dependence, that is to say, immediately and uniformly, is converted in thought into the idea of cause and effect. There is no intermediate process, or course of reflection, between the feeling of dependence and the idea of cause. The latter is the mental translation of the former, spontaneous and necessary, as is the translation of sensation into the perception of an external world. The idea of cause, coming forth directly from the feeling of dependence, becomes at once a law of thought, and it conditions all subsequent experience. We call it a first truth—that is, one which all the other truths hold in reverence as older than they, the first-born of them all.

By their opinion concerning the law of causality, philosophers, generally speaking, are divided into two great schools—the experimental and the intuitive.\* It would be digressing too far from our present object to follow one after another the reasonings of the former into the difficulties upon which they have been driven by their opponents. They explain the law of causation by explaining it away. It is not easy to see how the law of causality,

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\* Hamilton, "Metaphysics," p. 540, gives these two general divisions, and eight subdivisions of views concerning causality.

which conditions all experience, can itself be the product of experience. The experience which, it is alleged, leads to the general conclusion that every effect has a cause, presupposes the existence in the mind of the idea of cause and effect, as every process of reasoning implies the previous existence in the mind of the idea to be demonstrated. The succession of events in time \* may suggest, though not necessarily, the idea of a causal relation to a mind already possessed of the conception of power, or cause. But mere juxtaposition in time or space is not of itself a causal relation. The fact that the letter A invariably precedes B in the alphabet does not lead the child to imagine that A is the cause of B; neither does the circumstance that in the order of nature one event uniformly precedes another, originate the judgment that every event must have a cause.

For these reasons, and others, which go to show the specific difference between the idea of cause and any generalization from experience, the intuitional philosophy generally commands the assent of minds to whom dis-

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\* Succession in time and the causal relation are regarded as the same by uncivilized nations of *weak intellectual* power (See Peschel, "Races," p. 246). Is it then the last word of *intelligence* to reduce causation to association? "Time," Lotze well says, "is no more an element of causality than space is of motion; it is the form of its appearance."



tinctions of ideas are real distinctions, which are no more to be confounded in mental science than the elemental proportions are to be in chemical science. The intuitional school accepts the law of causality, as a fact, in its integrity; but usually attempts to render no account of its origin. That is true which can be distinctly seen. Intuitions are our first clear ideas; they are the last truths defined on the horizon of our mental vision; and to look beyond them, the Intuitionists would say, is to gaze into haze and vacuity.

Some psychological account of the origin of intuitive ideas seems, however, to be necessary to a rational confidence in them, especially as the tendency of thought in our days is to inquire into the genealogy of every existing thing. To say that intuitions are intuitions, our first fixed and clear ideas, is to utter a general truth of consciousness, but not the whole truth concerning them. For not only may certain first truths be recognized, but also the manner of their appearance may be observed. These points of light, in our consciousness, may be fixed, and also the direction may be determined in which they emerged from the surrounding mystery. The intuitional philosophy has hardly completed its task until it has attempted, at least, to divine from whence, and how, these first truths come out

into clear knowledge. Writers who advocate the philosophy of common sense and clear-thinking, need often to take higher ground, in order to maintain their own strong position. They need to go farther back, to hold their own vantage-ground. The connection between the first perceptions and the original feeling of the soul cannot be ignored by one who wishes to secure the intuitions in his philosophy.

The account, briefly given above, of the origin of the idea of cause, is an endeavor to follow out the intuitional philosophy in a direction which has hardly, as yet, been pursued to the end; and it is justified by the following considerations.

In this view, certain intuitions, like that of causation, do account for themselves to the reason. They exist first in the feeling of self as conditioned, or dependent; they appear next as perceptions of limited or caused being, in accordance with which, therefore, all experience must run, and with which all experience is found to agree. That the idea of cause actually has its origin in this feeling, is indicated by several mental phenomena. Thus, all men have the sense of causality, but not all have a definite idea of it as a law of thought. It is present with the child as an instinctive feeling long before it is clear in the mind as a distinct conception. The associations to which Mr.

Mill and his followers refer for the origin of our intuitions, may have much to do in bringing out the idea of cause and effect from the child's vague sense of it; and perhaps the chief service of the associational philosophy consists in the light thrown by it, not upon the sources of necessary ideas, but upon the manner in which they are evolved from our experience. The *feeling* from which the conception springs is universal and primary—the *idea* is general and secondary. All people have the feeling, some people more vividly than others have the conception of the law that every event must have a cause. The feeling is human, running back beyond the child's first question—who made me, who made God?—but the idea is philosophical, and is learned at school. The idea, also, may grow dim, as in the fears of the superstitious; or it may be the light of all one's seeing, as in the scientist's faith in the invariable order of nature; but the feeling is a constant element of experience, like the feeling of existence. No one ever mistrusts his feeling of self as dependent or made; but Mr. Mill can play fast and loose with all our intuitive ideas.

The same reasoning applies, also, to several other intuitions, as that of the unconditioned, the infinite, the eternal. All these words shadow forth conceptions, more or less vague,

growing immediately out of the religious feeling. In feeling and undefined perception these truths exist for us, rather than in thought or formed ideas. Here lies the way out of the limits of the finite between which we are shut in by Hamilton and Mansel. Realities may be felt, which can be thought only in part: as we may be shut in among the hills, yet perceive a sky which is not bounded by our vision, so may we be under the impression of the Infinite, which we cannot bring down within the compass of the understanding. The most daring flights in philosophic speculation, it is true, have been taken in consequence of the mind's impulse to reach after, and to grasp truths like these, which are felt and perceived, but which the finite understanding cannot embrace and hold fast in its conceptions. But we may feel realities too great for thought. We may have some perception of our own mental horizon, though only what comes within that horizon line lies in the domain of the understanding, can be traversed, measured, and known. But the one exists to us as much as the other—the unmeasured, the unconditioned which forms our soul's horizon—the Infinite, in which we feel that we exist; and the little world of being, easily measured, which we know to be ourselves. This feeling of the Unconditioned, or the Infinite, is implied in



our sense of ourselves and the world as finite and caused existences. For the very thought of effects, conditions, limits, implies the feeling—at least the vague perception, of something which is not an effect, or limited, or conditioned. Our whole reasoning rests upon this primal distinction, in our own feeling of existence, of the finite from the Infinite.

In the manner already indicated, the necessity also of these first truths is most easily conceived. Such intuitions are necessary because they are given in the immediate feelings of the spirit; exactly as our perceptions are necessary because they come to us in and through our immediate sensations. The necessity which characterizes the intuition results from the direct relation between the idea and the feeling from which it comes. Thus, we cannot think otherwise than under the law of causality, because we cannot feel ourselves to be other than dependent beings. The intuitive ideas are direct reflections in thought of the feelings, the mind's immediate perceptions of what it feels exists; and therefore they are necessary truths: because the feeling is always the same, the idea involved in it is unchangeable—the stream cannot rise above the fountain.

Our intuitive belief in substance, or the reality of things, affords a fair illustration of the relation between our first feelings and our first

ideas. The assurance that we have to do with realities, not merely with phenomena, is certainly one of the earliest, latest, most persistent of our human faiths. But it is the direct mental outcome of our feeling of existence. Before the reasoning by which Descartes demonstrates personal existence, "I think, therefore I am," is the sense of existence; and the belief in existence is not a logical, but a natural outgrowth of the feeling; a process, not of logic, but of life; a conclusion, therefore, which carries in it the certainty of nature. It is immediate knowledge—that is, knowledge coming, without any intervening logical processes, directly to the mind through its sense-perception of its own real being. And if the mind that thinks is real, then there is reality in the world; all appearances are the modes of existence of realities. Our feeling of real personal existence renders scepticism only an amusement of the philosophers—a play of thought at hide-and-seek with the world. The very doubt is put on by a being who knows that he is, and hence perceives himself to be a doubter. We cannot rid ourselves of the feeling that we are realities, having to do, therefore, with realities. Practically, this universe never was to man a hollow sphere. The "I" stands in the centre of every man's world as a felt reality, and therefore the world of which he is the centre is not a shadow.

No man, except when thinking about it, can be an idealist; every man in his living is a realist. After this manner, then, through certain intuitions, or first faiths, the feeling of ourselves as dependent existences manifests itself in a uniform manner, as invariable as the order of nature.

If, then, the sense of absolute dependence involves perception—and intuitions, like that of cause, of the unconditioned, and the infinite, are the immediate perceptions growing out of it—it follows that our knowledge gained through these ideas is real knowledge. Through our spiritual feelings we touch the reality of things. Through them the Father of Spirits, who is nigh unto every one of us, is made known to our spirits. We *feel* after him, to use the happy phrase of the Apostle to the Gentiles, if haply we may *find* him; as the world, through the eye, is brought into the mind, so the Unseen Spirit, through the sense of dependence, is revealed to the spirit that is in man. Both revelations, that of the seen and of the unseen, are inadequate; but each in its measure is real. We have a truthful, though inadequate knowledge of the realities lying in close contact with both sides of our two-fold life, the earthly and the heavenly. We cannot, indeed, comprehend the infinite; neither can we the finite. Only Omniscience can encircle omniscience. Our

knowledge is but in part, whatever the subject may be—an atom, or God. But the limitations of knowledge do not invalidate its reality, whatever the subject known—light, or the Father of Lights. A single ray let in through a dark chamber is enough to teach the nature of light. The eye need not take in the universal sunshine to learn truly what light is in its nature, and everywhere. Shall more be required of theology than of science? May we not know, in like manner, what God is, though we know but in part? May we not learn the nature of Infinite Love from a single beam in the darkness? Science and theology in these respects have equal claims as real knowledge; and our theology rests on a basis of spiritual sensation, or feeling, as valid as the bodily sensations upon which science builds its conclusions. The supersensible world, the unseen and eternal, is near, and by its corresponding feeling of the soul borne in upon our thoughts; as the material world, the things which are seen and transient are impressed through their corresponding organs upon the mind. In the one case, as in the other, we are affected by something without us; for, as already shown, we do not ourselves produce the state of consciousness in which we find ourselves existing. We may enhance it, or diminish it; we may call it to mind, or banish it from thought;



this limited power we have over it, and this limited power only; for it is not our own feeling, but our feeling of another and greater presence. As we did not at first create it, we cannot destroy it. It is inseparable from our existence. It is not, therefore, a mere subjective feeling, or affection of ourselves by ourselves. We are moved from without and from above. It is the finger of God; for we feel the touch of something not ourselves, nor our friends, nor anything that is seen. We think of it, try to conceive what it is like; we must find a word for it, though it be nameless, and we speak to one another, and say: Our Creator, our God, our Father in Heaven.

In the view just advanced of the development of the concept of God from our religious feeling, we have not yet referred to the moral consciousness. The question meets us, therefore, whether the sense of moral obligation, in like manner, springs from the immediate impression upon the soul of moral reality, and whether, then, we are brought by it into contact with a being who is the Good, the Perfect One—God?

This is not, it must be admitted, the view generally taken even by those who honor conscience as the image of God in the soul. It is said the moral sense is a feeling of obligation to a law. It involves the perception, accord-

ingly, of right as a law of life. This law, which is apprehended through the moral sense, has been defined in a great variety of ways. It is thought, by different moralists, to consist in the fitness of things, or our personal worth, or the highest reason, or the love of being in general, or disinterested benevolence; or the idea of right is regarded as an ultimate idea—right because it is right. But moral theories, such as these, are so many amplifications of the moral idea, and so, each in its measure, all are true; but none of them are explanations of the idea of duty, which is incapable of analysis into anything simpler than itself. In view of these many, oft-repeated, yet always fruitless attempts to define the nature of virtue, it would be a hopeless task to propound any new theory of it. But we are somewhat indebted to the researches of the physicists for the opening of an inquiry in which progress may be made in one direction, at least, by moral philosophy. Their endeavors to trace the genealogy of existing things are teaching us to employ similar methods in morals and theology, and to search out the origin of our beliefs, or the manner of their appearance, in consciousness. From repeated failures, then, to analyze the simple idea of duty into anything simpler, we turn more hopefully to search for the pure spring of the moral motive in the human heart.

Whence does this fountain of life well up within us? How does the idea of duty come into our minds? Evidently the conscience cannot spring from the idea of law, for it leads to the conception of a law of right; and the same idea cannot be both parent and child of itself. The feeling of obligation cannot be the feeling produced by any process of moral reflection, for all moral ideas refer to the feeling of obligation for their own authority. We have shown, moreover, that the moral sense cannot be derived from any non-moral source, as the experience of utility or the social instinct. From what, then, does it come? From what does our sense of an external world come but from the reality of the world which we feel exists? From what can the moral sense come but from the reality of moral being impressing its goodness upon the soul? In us is the moral feeling; without us, goodness—God. The one is the ever-present cause of the other; no explanation is simpler,—is any more true to the facts of consciousness, or more profound? Moral truth, moral perfection—existing, not as an abstraction of thought, but in the reality of a perfect nature, the very being and essence of God, is at the source of our feeling that we are moral beings and ought to do right. The Scripture hints at the origin of our whole moral consciousness when it says: We loved him

because he first loved us. Or, if we adopt the most approved reading, We love, because he first loved us. Our moral consciousness is the reflection of His. Our power to love is a ray from the Love which was before us. Our human hearts are His likeness. In short, because God is before us as a Moral Reality—Love, therefore we are moral beings—we love. We feel and judge ourselves to be not a law to ourselves, but under obligation to something without ourselves—something impressing itself as right and good upon us; and that something is not the reflection of our own thoughts; it is before reason, and remains the same in spite of all attempts to reason it away; it is real, the reality of goodness; it is God making Himself felt by beings made in his image. He is love: his very nature is the good, in expressing which his will is holy, just and true. In him Kant's idea of the autonomy of the will is no dream, for he is a law unto himself. As all existence runs back into a Divine will, as all truths rest ultimately upon a Divine reason, so moral distinctions have their immutability in a Divine nature, in which there is light, and no darkness at all. He is love, and his will is the self-expression of his moral being; law and grace the manifestation of his glory.\*

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\* Hegel's profound dictum, What is reasonable is real, and what is real is reasonable (*Encyclopädie*, § 6), needs to be supple-



The moral sense, therefore, in accordance with the preceding reasoning, I regard as primarily the feeling of our relationship to the One perfect Being. The moral sense is our immediate feeling of the One who is good—that is God. Conscience, as a sense of the right, is the direct impression of the Father's perfectness upon the heart. Conscience, as a law of duty, is the *perception* of the right given in our immediate *feeling* of the God in whom we have our being. The moral law fully developed is: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect." Against this assertion that the moral nature of God, directly impressing itself as the law of our being upon the soul, is the cause why we are morally affected, or feel ourselves to be moral beings, it may possibly be suggested, as an objection, that our first distinct moral idea is the conception of an end to be pursued by us, of something which we must be or become, and not the idea of God. But, if we admit this to be the case, this conception of a moral end, our moral ideal, involves implicitly the idea of One who has impressed that end upon us and who is

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mented on the moral side to be a whole truth. What is moral is real, and what is real is moral. The reasonable and the moral are, that is to say, our last, highest conception of real being. Is not this the truth underlying much of Prof. Dörner's best writing?

our perfect Ideal. I do not necessarily hold, in what has been said above, that the moral feeling yields at once the clear, fully formed conception of God, but that the feeling itself is an immediate affection of the soul by the moral Reality above us, a sense of self as a moral being, which comes in, and through, our direct relationship to the Perfect One, and which could originate in no other way; that this moral feeling involves therefore some perception, however vague, of the Godhead; and that, consequently, in the developed moral consciousness of man, among its worked-out ideas, there must be found, as there always is found, the conception of God, either as Law-giver, Judge, or Ideal of our own being.\*

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\* Prof. Ulrich, whose discussions of the problems of natural theology have hardly received, as yet, the attention which their general reasonableness deserves, presents views of the moral feeling in substantial, though not entire, agreement with the above. "It is clear," he says ("Gott und der Mensch," 1, 2, p. 448), "that the moral feeling stands in original unity with the religious, and is of one and the same origin." Again (Ibid., p. 450), "the religious and the moral feeling, the subjective grounds of religion and morality, are indeed not absolutely identical, but both belong together as immediately and inseparably as the metaphysical and the ethical being (Wesenheit) of God. He holds, further, that both these feelings involve perception; the former immediately, but the latter mediately (implicitly) in the perception of the determination of man's own end through God (pp. 422, 449). Our only difference, here, would be that the latter feeling-perception is really as immediate a sense of the divine, as is the former; for, from both, the idea of God springs up without the aid of inferences drawn from other sources of knowledge; as Ulrich himself insists that the idea of God is involved implicitly in

A few considerations may serve to bring out this view more distinctly into the light of that consciousness of good and evil in which all moral reasonings must be searched and tried. It is supported by the analogy of our perception of right or wrong character in our fellow-men. We speak as though good and evil were not abstractions, but real qualities in men. The moral quality is, in our common judgment, the essence of the man. We do not say, he has goodness, as he has brains, or sense, but he *is* good. Moral qualities, that is, are not the mere properties or accidents of a man, but they are of his very substance, and personality, the very spirit of a man; and we perceive them in our friends to be the qualities by which they are what they are. In like manner, the ultimate moral perception is an intuition of the real nature or essential being of God. We then abstract the quality from the substance, and form the notion of law, righteousness, and the several moral attributes. These attributes, however, are but the mind's attempted definition of the real moral being, which is one and indivisible, the Divine nature, whose worthiest name is—Love.

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the moral feeling-perception, and is not mediated by reasonings from nature. Why, then, should we hesitate to say that the moral feeling is the immediate sense of our relationship to the Good, *i. e.*, God?

This origin of the moral idea will be found, also, to be in harmony with all subsequent moral experience; and from it not a part only, but the whole moral consciousness, with all its distinctive effects, may be seen to proceed. It is, therefore, a rational account of conscience. First in order is the real goodness, God; then, the feeling of that goodness in beings organized for a moral consciousness and a moral history; then, the idea of the good, the conception of law, and a Lawgiver, more or less crude, or clarified, according to the general intellectual development of men; and then, the reasoning upon and by means of these ideas, or ethics, and theology. This is the order of nature as we experience it; this is the order of history, so far as we can trace it, in which the moral consciousness of man has been developed. And when we consider the persistence and power of the moral sense in human consciousness, when we survey the successive works of the moral idea in history—the revolutions it has wrought; the obstacles it has swept before it; the advances it has made; its mighty movements, shaking thrones, overturning kingdoms, working beneath the will of nations, and beyond the foresight of man;—if, in short, we measure the power by the consequences, the cause by the effect, only one explanation of the moral motive force is suffi-



cient for the work done; it is the power of God manifesting itself in the hearts of men, and revealing itself as the Divine order of human history. In the individual soul the Moral Reality, at the source of all its moral feelings, is the constant cause of its moral life; it is the stream, never failing, which keeps in motion the moral powers of the soul; and these, without its influence ever flowing by, could never produce the good works which are wrought on the earth. Our moral faculties would be but as wheels without the moving power, were it not for the influence of the Holy Spirit. God, as the moral motive power, is necessary to a sufficient explanation of the moral life of a soul. And what is written in small characters in the individual life is written largely in history. God is the only rational explanation of its moral order. God as the moral motive power of human history is necessary to a sufficient explanation of its beginning, progress, and destiny.

This conclusion is not a mere deduction from observed facts. We do not simply infer from the motion that there must have been a cause; rather *in* the motion, which we feel, we also *have* the working of the motive force. The power *in* the result is a fact of present experience. God *in* the moral life and history of the world is a present and ever-living

power. In and through our moral experience we actually have working in us that which is good, the influence of the Spirit of God; as the plant, in its growth, has the sun. The light is in the color of the leaf, the warmth in the ripeness of the fruit. Were blossoms or fruit to become conscious, they would have, at least, some feeling of the dwelling in them of the sunshine. We who are self-conscious do feel the presence of the good above us in the growth of the good within us. We feel it more and more, the better men and women we become. As the fruit is not only of the earth, but also of the sky,—both soil and sunshine transformed in it and made a new creation; so are we not only of the earth, earthy, but also of heaven, heavenly; in our best, ripest, sweetest selves treasuring up influences from above.

## CHAPTER V.

OBJECTIONS. VERIFICATION. CONCLUSION.

BEFORE proceeding directly to the verification of the conclusion now reached, we must clear the subject of certain misconceptions to which it is exposed, and free our reasoning of objections which consequently may be brought against it.

The objection lies upon the surface of our reasoning—but only upon the surface—that the feelings which we have regarded as the originating impulses of all our thinking are themselves the results, also, of thinking. It is undeniably true that knowledge ends, as well as begins, in feeling. From feeling through ideas to feeling, is the common course of our intellectual life. You feel the beauty of a landscape, or a picture; you discover the features which produced that feeling, and you come away with an enhanced sense of the beautiful. Feeling is both before and after knowledge, and all knowledge serves to enrich feeling. So it is of our sense of goodness and of God. The knowledge of God ends in senti-

ments more exalted than the feelings from which it springs. The last effort of thought, the highest possible state of mind, is worship.

But from our power to purify and to enrich our moral and religious feelings through a thoughtful, worshipful life, it does not follow that they are simply, or entirely, the results of our thoughts; on the other hand we only cultivate what already exists to be improved; we put to life's exchangers the talents already given us as our personal capital. This objection would lie against our reasoning, therefore, only in so far as it could be shown that any feeling regarded as original has been obviously derived from other elements of experience.

Again, it may be alleged that the mind possesses no special sense for goodness, or for God, as it is fitted out, through the body, with special senses for apprehending external things. But, in the view above taken, conscience is not regarded as a special sense, but as that general feeling of an eternal right, or goodness, which, like the feeling of existence, comes to us, not through a particular faculty, but in and through our very being what we are. The endeavor of Bishop Butler to map out man's nature into certain original faculties, or native principles of conduct, of which conscience is one, and the supreme one, may be a true description of man, as good Bishop Butler



observed him in the eighteenth century; but no map of our faculties does justice either to the real unity of our spiritual nature, or to the historical development of our powers. The view here outlined escapes, however, the objection which Mr. Arnold has urged against Bishop Butler's famous "Sermons on Human Nature.\*" "The effort to live," which Mr. Arnold regards as our first instinct, the first awakening sense and struggle for human existence, contains the feelings out of which both morality and religion shall surely grow. We do not conjure into existence, for the purposes of our argument, a spiritual faculty. By the spirit we mean ourselves, or the side of ourselves turned towards Divine things; ourselves in our higher life; ourselves in our capacity to receive influences that do not come from the things that are seen; ourselves under the impression of, and moved by, supersensible powers. The whole man, in the entirety of his being, is the organ of spiritual, as he is, also, of earthly feelings and experiences. We stand facing two worlds,—often vibrating and trembling between the attractions of two worlds,—the seen and the unseen. More than this, we are in two kingdoms at the same time. The sky is not merely above us, Prof. Tyndall informs

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\* Articles in *Contemporary Review*, Feb., March, 1876.

us, but we are also *in* the sky; so the kingdom of heaven is not merely above us, but we are in it, and swayed by its influences, at the same time that we walk the earth and feel its gravitation. Man is himself, as the fathers used to say, organized for God. The religious feeling is the general sense of God, and his righteousness, which we have because we are organized for it, and by birthright are of the kingdom of heaven.

The validity of this feeling-perception of the larger reality in which we have our being, is not touched by any difficulty, which we may find, in conceiving the mode of the Divine action upon us of which we become conscious. Again we must remember the warning of science to make sparing use of the word impossible. It is said that this earth, a mere point in space, receives into its fertile soil influences from the whole expanse of the heavens, that into these mortal bodies is taken up not merely the dust of the earth, but the dust of which the stars are made; so that an arm of flesh, in its bone, and tissues, and blood, may possess, organized for our use, particles of matter that have drifted earthward from all outlying space;—but while our science thus asserts our kinship through our very bodies with distant worlds and the whole created universe, nevertheless, shall we deny in the

same breath the relationship of our spirits to all spirits and to the Father of all? Shall we say, in our little faith, that while the far-off star can send its messengers of light to the eye, or this earth feel to its centre attractions from remotest space, He who is the spirit of the whole alone is a distant presence, incommunicable, having no influence over us, without way of approach to a human soul? All comparisons of Divine with natural things are unworthy, and but in part; I cannot, however, help thinking that what the invisible ether pervading all space, and taking up into itself and carrying on, by its own invisible vibrations, the influences of all worlds, is to the stars—their medium of mutual attractions and light,—such is the Spirit of the Infinite God to his moral creation; the invisible Omnipresence who receives and perpetuates all spiritual motions and attractions in his own ceaseless activity; through whom the thought, centuries ago, of illumined prophet becomes to-day light in my soul; by whom the prayers sent forth, pulsating and aglow from parental hearts, are taken quickly up, and suffered to descend in life-giving influence upon some far-off boy; the Divine medium of communication for all times, and between saints on earth and the multitude of the Heavenly hosts;—even that one and the self-same Spirit from whose presence,

though we dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, we cannot escape; and who, from his fulness of all grace, divideth to every man severally as He will.

But better than any analogies from the occult working of natural forces, are the hints to be derived from personal influence as to the possible modes of the affection of the soul by God. Personal sympathies and antipathies indicate certainly very subtle modes of action of mind upon mind. The senses are the bearers of this magnetism from person to person, but they are only the means of conveyance, not the magnetism; the wires, not the electric current. And sometimes it seems as if the influence was almost independent of the wires, leaping directly from mind to mind, from heart to heart. There are experiences not fully explained by our science, during which the senses seem to be asleep, or passive, while mind reads mind. While in view of these more mysterious intercommunications of thought, as well as in view of the more familiar instances of personal magnetism, and of the vague sense of personal presence—as when we look up to catch another's eye upon us, or turn to find some one approaching us—we are hardly justified in asserting that the physical means of relationship, the bands of sense, are ever broken or dispensed with; they certainly



at times do seem to be very fine and obscure, too delicate for detection—mere films, or gossamer threads, as it were, scarce visible even when we search for them in the strongest light which experience can throw upon them : so that, it may be said, the soul by virtue of its own unseen essence seems to strive after immediate personal communion, and in relation to other embodied souls seems, at times, almost capable of breaking loose from the coarse bonds of sense, and seeing other souls, as it were, face to face. Such experiences, not unfamiliar, though never perfectly understood, suggest, at least, the conception of possible modes of relationship between the Spirit of God, and the spirit which is in man ; an influence of the Divine over the human too immediate to be caught and subjected to any chemical analysis ; the felt *magnetism* of the Unseen Presence over the human heart. All at least that can be required, at this point of our reasoning, is to show that the supposed action of the God without upon the godlike within us, is not unthinkable, or inconceivable. There may be then, we say, between Him and ourselves, an influence hardly dependent upon eye or ear, a direct impression of His being upon ours ; and this impression is actually received by us, and recognized, in a sense of wonder, of awe, of humility, yet of

strange elevation of soul above all outward things—the feeling of immortal being, and kinship with the Eternal!

But, even if it be urged that, as we are now constituted, there must be always in personal influence some thread of sensible communication, and that we have, accordingly, no warrant in experience for supposing a direct inward action of the Spirit of God upon our spirits—and it would be a bold generalization to shut out such possibilities of spiritual influence—but granting this premise, it remains still perfectly conceivable that, through God's manifold works, material avenues for the coming and going of Divine influences to the soul may have been prepared from the creation of the world; and, in this case, we should still have, not merely our own conclusions, or reasonings toward God from his works, but through these we should receive directly the inflowing influence of the Creator upon his creatures;—his works may be not merely dead memorials of his activity, proofs to the reason that once there has been a God, but also living means of God's present self-revelations, the channels, as it were, of the incoming of God's presence and power to human hearts. Do we not recall many a landscape which has suggested more than the beauty pictured in the eye? Have we not more than once looked

upon phases of nature so full, to the mind's insight, of a Divine thought, that at the moment we should hardly have been surprised, if we had seen visions of the Highest? Have we not, among the mountains, had new meanings of the old word, worship, borne in upon us? Of whom have we found ourselves thinking, when we felt the spirit of the place? Nature is wonderfully suggestive of God. Our best poetry witnesses to our sense of a Divine revelation through nature. But imagination Ruskin rightly defines as the power of seeing things as they are. Poetry is not the conjurer of idle-shapes, but the diviner of the secrets of nature, and the human soul. Any philosophy of either which has no ear for the poetry of the ages—the poetry, that is, not of yesterday, or of to-day, but of all time—is in danger of missing both the hidden wisdom of the creation, and the secrets of the human heart. I should not dare to assert, as the truth of things, any generalizations within which no place should be provided for the lessons of the poets.

But the objection is at hand, that all men do not betray a poet's sensitiveness to the soul of nature. But this view of the origin of our religious ideas at once admits of, and accounts for, the greatest diversities in the religious consciousness of men. This objection, which

might prove fatal to the supposition of a specific religious faculty, does not even touch the theory that man is organized for a higher life than that which appears, and is capable of receiving impressions of Divine realities which may be developed, repeated, and intensified, or neglected, disobeyed, and seemingly lost from all his thoughts. In addition to what has already been remarked upon the fact that races without formed religious ideas may possibly be discovered, but that no tribe incapable of religious quickening and growth has been found, it is here only necessary to call attention to a few observations which turn this objection rather into an evidence in favor of our reasoning. Thus it is noticeable that the development of the religious nature corresponds with the general forwardness and intellectual growth of different tribes and individuals. In savage tribes the religious consciousness is usually found to be quite in harmony with its surroundings.\* But in the struggle of ideas for existence, the purer idea of God survives. The religious consciousness is not outgrown, but persists; and the fact that it survives, shows that it is fit to survive. Supersti-

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\*Peschel, "Races," p., 261. Lubbock ("Origin of Civilization," p. 115) says races, in a similar stage of mental development, however distinct their origin may be, and however distant the regions they inhabit, have very similar religious conceptions.



tions decay, but religion survives. Every tribe emerging from barbarism, appears in history with its altars, and its gods. The saying of Plutarch is strictly true—You cannot find a *city* without a temple. Possibly travellers may find some nomadic tribe without fire, without houses, and without its God. But no one thinks of finding a city, a civilized people, without temples, and religious faiths. To-day the most cultivated nations are not the most irreligious. The rapid succession of religious controversies in modern history betrays the persistent and growing power with which religion impresses its truths upon the advancing intelligence of the world. Theology becomes less and less important, the lower down in the scale of civilization one descends. The religious question is pre-eminently the question of the most educated people in the most advanced times. Every book about religion, whether it be a book of questioning, or of faith, witnesses to the hold which supernal powers actually have upon man's thought. Every thoughtful mind instinctively falls to discuss the problems of theology.

We observe, again, among men, great differences in the distinctness and power of their religious beliefs, even though they may confess the same faith. This fact, also, is in favorable consistency with the view here advanced.

There seem to be differences of sensitiveness to the unseen, in the constitutional temperament of men, just as there are differences of sensibility to colors and forms. Some persons are more naturally religious than others. There are organizations naturally selected to be prophets and priests of the Holy Ghost. Perhaps by influences working down through a long line of inheritance, they are prepared to feel the inspiration of the Spirit of God. They are ready, when a voice from above calls, to answer: "Here am I." Perhaps there may be more meaning than commentators know in the book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Through the law of inheritance, working toward finer spiritual endowments, there has been kept, in not a few choice lives, the covenant from the fathers to the children's children.

There are manifest, also, among us great differences in the natural power to bring out in thought what comes to us through the religious sense. The power of insight, or divination, and the ability to form theological conceptions, are two distinct powers not always in direct ratio to each other. Some men are by nature dogmatists. Feelings crystallize in them at once into clear-cut ideas. They can hold no opinion long in solution. They are impatient of the indefinite. They can hardly wait

for their faiths slowly to settle themselves. Others are by nature mystics, feeling more than they can express, and seeing farther than their understanding can follow with its measuring-line. The one class are the system-builders, the dogmatic carpenters of truth; and their service is to build the creeds of the church,—faith's dwelling-places, which, however, every generation may need to build over again, as it needs to remodel its houses. The others are faith's prophets—the men who have visions unutterable, the men who write faith's scriptures.

The vividness and certainty of faith, moreover, is directly related to the purity and earnestness of the whole life. Nothing is more certain than the tendency of wrong doing to deaden the sensitiveness of the heart to truth. A single impatient thought, one angry feeling, may jostle and throw, as it were, out of focus the powers of spiritual perception, more delicate by far as they are than the exquisitely adjusted lenses of the eye, and more sensitive to injury than the quick nerve of sight. Sin is a moral cataract. There are those who having eyes sees not. The pure in heart shall see God. Any impurity is as a cloud between the soul and God. A gust of passion ruffles the soul, and breaks up the reflection of those supernal glories which mirror themselves, as stars in the calm lake, in the

pure in heart. We may by a contentious spirit put ourselves farther from God than we can by all our studies draw near to Him. Not miles, but sins measure the soul's distance from God; and not pilgrimages, but penitent prayers, bring it near the kingdom of Heaven. This too familiar power of sin, therefore, to dull the feeling of Divine things, and to obscure religious knowledge, is a sufficient answer to any objections to our reasoning to be drawn from the apparent absence in many of anything like a religious nature. For even when that nature suffers no violence from immoral conduct, it can be greatly impaired by neglect, or rendered rudimentary by persistent and inherited disuse. Absorbing exercise in other pursuits may leave the mind empty of religious convictions, and well nigh impotent to gain them. A specialist may sink his shaft so deeply into a particular mine of investigation as to be able at last to look up and see above him hardly a bit of the broad sky. Specialists in science, like miners, discover, indeed, much precious ore; but they need frequently to leave their shafts, and to dwell in the light of common day, to see things in general as men should look upon them. The eye kept daily at the microscope may be in danger of losing something of nature's larger meanings. How quickly, and



how surely, any power, and especially, therefore, our finest and best powers, may be rendered impotent through abuse, or even by disuse, is one of the truisms of education. The power of man to feel the touch of the finger of God, is no exception to the general law of culture. Final inability to believe in anything worth believing may sometimes be predicted from the observed habits and lives of men naturally capable of better things. The stimulus of some extraordinary religious excitement sometimes recalls in such the religious faculties to life, as paralyzed nerves have been known to quiver under powerful galvanic currents. Atheists under strong excitement of danger, or of great duties, have become believers; but it does seem possible, nevertheless, for the religious nature of man to become in this world, under the most powerful motives of a moral life known to us, an incurable paralytic. Our souls have fearful power of moral suicide. But no number of cases of partial or complete religious paralysis can prove that man is by nature a religious imbecile. One living man would be enough to prove that life is a possibility, a whole cemetery of dead bones to the contrary. Jesus Christ is enough to prove that man can live by the word of God, though the whole world lies dead in sin.

The view here developed, it should be distinctly noticed, is not exposed to the objections which are to be urged against the theory of innate ideas. God is not revealed to the soul by the bringing out of an idea of Him stamped upon its very make, as though the mind were a parchment, written all over by the finger of the Creator, and needing only the light of experience in which to disclose its meanings. Every mechanical conception of human nature is disappearing from modern thought. If Darwinism shall accomplish nothing else, it has banished the idea of a supernatural mechanics from the minds of those who are searching the problems of life. Our mental and theological science is discarding to-day any carpenter-theory of creation, providence, education, or regeneration. The best, divinest things are never made; they grow. It is one chief argument in favor of this view of man's religious nature, that it is most clearly expressed in these dynamical modes of thought which have superseded, or are fast superseding, mechanical modes of explaining men and things. For, the idea of God, and indeed all religious conceptions, we hold to be the resultants of certain persistent forces at work from the beginning, as we see them operative now, and which we can best name by the Scriptural phrases, the Spirit of God, and the spirit which

is in man. Faith in God and supersensible realities is first a natural and necessary development of these religious powers, and then logically a result of thinking. Before all reasoning, faith exists in the impulse and direction of the spirit to search along all paths for the footsteps of its Master and Lord.

One thought more must be added before our reasoning will be a completed circle. Can the deliverances of the religious feeling be verified? Men and women have been led into the wildest vagaries by following mere feeling as though it were a revelation from heaven. There are common-sense principles of conduct, and rational tests of truth; and they who ignore them, experience proves by grievous examples, are dangerous visionaries. How then will the ideas which you claim are derived immediately, and in a uniform way, from the religious feeling, stand the examination of the court of common-sense? How will these ideas comport themselves under the rational tests of the genuine and true?

At this point the distinction between the grounds of belief and the tests of belief should be clearly seen. Thus, a witness testifies, and is cross-examined. The ground of belief in him is not the process of cross-examination, nor the laws of evidence by which his testimony is searched, but the steadfastness of the witness himself under the lawyer's fire. Ultimately

the witness is his own evidence. The logical tests of truth, in other words, only exclude possibilities of falsehood; truth is its own evidence. You see an object, and apply all the means known to you to try the correctness of your perception. You look at it again and again, from different points, and in different lights. You finally believe that your perception is correct, because you see what you do see, and you can find no reason for accusing the eye of deception. It is not the reasoning, but the seeing, which is the source of your knowledge, and the ultimate reason of your certainty.

This distinction between sources of belief and of the assurance of belief, on the one hand, and the tests of belief, or means of bringing out into clear consciousness the certainty of belief, on the other hand, is a distinction most important to religious science; obvious as it is, it has been too often overlooked. Some writers, ignoring the ultimate ground of certainty in faith, lay upon the mere tests of truth a weight of conviction which they are unable to bear. This neglect of the sources of belief, and the habit of throwing the whole burden of faith upon the proofs of it, has been in our theology a prolific source of scepticism. God does not exist first at the end of our arguments. He is in the very impulse and energy



of the soul which leads us to think of Him, and to gather evidence of his existence. He is to the human soul, as to the whole creation, the First and the Last,—the Omega, because he is the Alpha, of all our living and thinking. The means of verifying the idea of God can no more produce that idea than the chemist's acids can create the element in his crucible to be analyzed. The good woman who, after listening to a labored discourse in proof of the existence of God, told the preacher that she believed in a God notwithstanding, was after all a better philosopher than the learned divine; for her faith was a vital experience of God. It is time our theology were done with attempts to prove the existence of a God to be discovered by our processes of reasoning, as astronomers calculate the place where a distant planet must be found. The Biblical theology is, "God is nigh unto every man." "That which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead." The inner manifestation, then, is the source of faith, and the things which are made, are the tests of faith, by which what may be known of God is to be made clear in thought and verified.

Given, then, the source of faith in the immediate feeling of God, the logical understanding has next its work to perform; and the religious faith is complete only after it has passed through, unscathed, the processes of reasoning. One cannot by any possibility bring out of the logical mill food for the life of man unless the grain has first been put into the hopper. Hence it is that so many arguments, put together as though they could produce religious faith, are admirably constructed systems, every wheel and connecting belt in the right place, but, without the raw material of faith elsewhere gathered, they grind to no purpose. But the logical powers do have an indispensable service to perform in sifting and preparing for life's uses the materials of faith; and not to subject our faith to the most approved processes of the reason, would be, in theology, like going back from the perfected methods of civilization to the rude means by which savages separate the chaff from the wheat, or sift the kernel from the hull of the corn.

How, then, it remains for us to inquire, before our view of the religious consciousness is complete, do the tests which may be applied by the understanding affect the genuineness of the religious feeling, and the validity of the beliefs growing out of it? Can any reasoning eradicate this upspringing religious faith from

human nature, or even for any length of time arrest its growth? Can reason dig beneath it, and uproot it? Does it remain indestructible under the strongest tests of our logic? Then it is self-proved. Then it is its own evidence. Then, reason, failing to conquer it, must submit to its authority.

The burden of proof is hereby thrown upon the case against the religious consciousness. If the reason cannot disprove it, it remains, like our consciousness of existence, like our sense of the external world, a rational faith. It must be shown that the religious feeling produces ideas which violate the laws of thought; that it contains self-contradictory elements, and is self-destructive; or else it must be accepted as a genuine source of knowledge. God must be proved not to exist; the concept of God must be shown to be an impossibility, a suicidal idea; or we must believe in the testimony of the soul to his eternal power and God-head. But to bring this weight of proof against the other-world sense no philosophy worthy the name would venture to do. The very most that scepticism can make good is, that the Divine is beyond our mental reach, and incomprehensible; that religious ideas carried out to their last consequence lead to bewilderment, and end in confusion. But so ideas of the most familiar things leave us in mystery

and contradictions, if we follow them as far as thought can pursue them. Thus, the conception of the atoms of matter, and of force, upon which our positive science rests, involves thought in hopeless perplexities. Such difficulties, however, serve to show that we have reached the limits of our mental power of apprehension, not that our ideas are all null and void. The fact that we can form a growing, but never an adequate conception of God, proves simply our own finiteness; it by no means disproves the evidence of our souls that He is near us, though beyond our largest thought.

But more than this should be said. The tests of faith not only, negatively, exclude what is erroneous or merely phantasmal in our original feeling; but also, positively, they bring its contents out into the clear light. The faith of the soul in its God, in the focus of many converging lines of reasoning, is seen to be a genuine faith. It would carry us beyond our purpose to enumerate the various reasonings which find in this central faith of the soul in God their meeting point and reconciliation. One of the oldest arguments for the existence of a supreme Intelligence—that from design—seemed for a season, it is true, to be deserted, if not closed, by followers of Darwin, who found new ways of interpreting the evidences of



adaptation in the creation. But there are not wanting signs that their diverging course is already turning back into the old direction, toward the same meeting point of all paths of thought in the conclusion that there is a Creator and Lord of all. So far from evolution being necessarily atheistic, if we may judge from what Prof. Gray\* has already accomplished in his graceful reasonings, the theologian of another generation will be in a better condition to construct the argument from design, out of materials to be gathered from the increasing store of biological knowledge, than Paley was in his day; and the argument will be the more cogent, and conclusive, when it shall have been freed from the last vestiges of mechanical contrivance.

This view of a growing universe not yet finished, which is a conception that may be called the special contribution of modern science to theology, relieves, not a little, the difficulties in the argument from design. The seeming wastefulness of nature, for example, hardly seems consistent with a prudent design. The sun itself is a gigantic spendthrift. Solar resources enough are wasted in the vacant depths between the stars, to set up in house-keeping thousands of worlds like ours. Nat-

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\* "Darwiniana."

ure seems also to have been immensely wasteful of time. Millions of ages have been suffered to run their course before history began. A whole stream flows on to turn at last a single wheel. And all through life, from the least things up to the greatest, this seeming prodigality of Providence runs. Moreover, the cross-purposes of nature, the architectural disproportions and mal-adjustments of things, the lines that cannot be made to meet, the unequal distribution of the weights, the constructions for which there seems as yet to be no reason in nature's workmanship, all offer perplexing questions to the believer in one wise design. "I cannot believe that the good God of whom you tell me, made the world," said a Brahmin to the missionary, "because why are there left so many great rocks in the sea, upon which the ships go to pieces?" The larger part of our difficulties with Providence resolve themselves into the Hindoo's trouble with the rocks in the sea. The ocean is useful to float the ships, but in it are terrible rocks. The general surface and flow of things is admitted to be beneficent, but there are some bad reefs. Now these difficulties, and difficulties like these, in the argument from design, which have never been answered completely to the satisfaction of hesitating minds, by the proofs drawn from Paley's theory of a manufactured creation, are

greatly relieved, at least, upon the hypothesis of creation by evolution. There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth. The seeming waste is for the more perfect growth. We must be slow to judge unfinished architecture. The creation is begun,—He buildeth, saith the prophet, his stories in the heavens,—but the creation, in its higher forms and purposes, is not yet finished. The present visible system of things is but temporary; it is spending its energies for the production of another more advanced order of things, and the sunbeams which seem lost in the ether, as well as other forces which appear now to run to waste, may have functions to fulfil of which we know nothing, and they are doubtless conserved in that “Unseen Universe” which, according to one of the latest prophecies of our science, is to take the place of the heavens and the earth which are passing away. And upon the supposition of evolution, the very imperfections and obstacles to be struggled against in the environment of life have their uses. Even the rocks may have their place in a design which looks toward the training of alert, brave men. Difficulties seemingly unaccountable, if we look at the world simply as a perfectly manufactured article, may be the right things rightly left in a world intended for the training of a race of moral athletes. Is it not worth all the trials, all the farewells,

all the losses of time, to learn how to *love* for eternity? to gain a heart capable of loving forever?

The idea of God first given in the feeling of dependence, is found to be the simplest explanation of all our thinking. Itself underived from reasoning, it is the harmony of all our reasonings. This light thrown into our darkened understandings from above, itself a dazzling mystery, enables us to see plainly all things within our experience. Therefore is it real light and no dream.

While therefore in the preceding pages we have sought for the origin of religion, and the manner of its coming forth in our consciousness, we find in conclusion that the faith which is thus born of the Father of Spirits within us, so far from being proved false in life, is the only true interpreter of life to us; it is a faith which sums up in itself a vast number of experiences, and which is, therefore, stronger than any one argument for it, because it is both the beginning of all reasoning, and also the end of many reasonings. It is, so to speak, the resultant of life, the direction toward God and heaven, along which the human reason, under the varied influences impelling it, finally and persistently moves.

A few words need to be added to indicate the relation of the position now gained toward



further theological inquiries. It follows from the results before us that progress in theology may be made in purifying and enlarging the conception of God. For the feeling of God's being and nature is never fully taken up into any one conception of Him, and the religious feeling acts and reacts upon us in a twofold manner, both leading us constantly to think of God, and causing us to become soon dissatisfied with our best thoughts of Him. Theology, therefore, must be a progressive science; it can become stationary only as the original feeling of God is deadened. There has been in history a vast growth of man's ideas of God, or theology. The roots of a living faith are hidden in the depths of human nature; but the fruits may improve with the years, and are made more perfect by cultivation. This idea theology will reject as unripe; that, as corrupted: this conclusion it will regard as but a first fruit; that, as the ripeness of its best growth.

Animism, for example, the mere belief in spirits, is one of its earliest and crudest forms. Polytheism is a more advanced, but imperfect product; monotheism, a higher fruit of the life of faith in the world. And our ideas of God have grown much within the century, and they still are ripening. Our theology is gaining a more thoroughly ethical conception of God,

and the creeds of the church, essentially the same as in the first centuries, are taking on a better color from the clearer moral light in which faith sees God. The view here unfolded of the origin of religious knowledge leads toward this more purely moral conception of God. For as we come to know God first through our personal consciousness, so it follows naturally that we should increase in the knowledge of Him through those affections and relationships which go to make up our real personal life. Our thoughts toward God are thus led along analogies, and lines of inference, which carry us far above and beyond the merely governmental views which have largely obtained in theology. Jesus began to preach the kingdom of God. By that phrase of hallowed associations he might best express at first to his disciples his doctrine of the eternal life. But in his last discourses, when his disciples were better able to understand his meaning, he chooses the words of intimate personal relationship to express what God is to his own. No one of the Christian doctrines can receive its fullest and final expression in the language of covenant and altar. The most personal affections and relationships are the truest types for speech concerning God. Our familiar, earthward duties are the clearest reflections of our Heavenward obligations, and religion is

morality toward God. Especially from the better apprehension of what love is in its threefoldness—the love which gives, or benevolence; the love which puts itself in another's place, or vicarious sympathy; and the love which affirms its own worth, the worthiness of its own gift, or righteousness—are our conceptions of God to be enhanced, and the great doctrines of our creed to be restated. And it is a confirmatory evidence of the justness of the main line of thought, here pursued, that in passing by it from natural theology we enter, at once, this better way of charity through the heart of revealed theology.

Again, this view of the organic fitness of man for the influence of God carries us out of one of the old controversies of theological schools. For the human will and Divine grace have been too much regarded as distinct and separate in their very nature—the human soul as completely endowed in its own individuality; and then the problem of faith has been to understand how the two can ever be united, as grace and freedom are made one in conversion and the new life. But it is the conclusion of this reasoning that man is born for God, and comes fully to himself only as he is conscious of himself as a personal being in relationship to God. God and the soul are distinct, yet the soul is not a sphere of being complete without God;

as the sun and the earth, are separate—the sun above the earth, and glorious, yet also in the earth, which feels it to its very centre, and which is the earth only as it exists in the sunshine.

The relation of the view here taken to the scientific aspect of nature may be dismissed with a single word. We recognize the orderly process and evolution of nature, and also the higher moral and spiritual order of which nature is the constant type and prophecy. We would neither dishonor God by putting his sovereignty in his will, nor profane nature by regarding it as the Creator's plaything. Religion and science are opposed only when each becomes one-sided and mechanical. The prophet in his vision saw wheels, and also the spirit of life within the wheels; and the vision was one. There are wheels, strong, noiseless wheels of natural order, and there is a spirit of life within the wheels; whithersoever it goes, they go—the wellordered wheels fulfilling their law only as they are moved by the spirit, nature remaining nature only as it is God's.

If this conception of man's godlike nature and Divine environment (to express the higher in the phrase of the lower science) be true and tenable, then we are capable, also, of receiving special revelations; the inspiration of the prophet is not an anomaly, but in accordance with



the nature of man, though implying a special impression of the Divine thought and will; and the mystery of the incarnation is the completion of that perfect impartation of itself by the love of God to the creature, which was prepared from the foundation of the world. The union of the Divine with the human, though transcending thought, is thus seen to have been prophesied by man's being, and to be made necessary by the very love which is God; so that the person of the Christ is the fulfilment of all that we know best of both God and man. Given a God who is Spirit and who is Love, and man who is a spirit and for Love—and the Christ becomes only a question of time.

These lines of thought, however, which seem to be among the lines of progress in theology, for our generation, at least, begin where our present discussion should come to an end. We conclude with the faith that man, though born of the dust, is the son of God; and that, though living on the earth, he has also a life hidden from sense amid things unseen and eternal. Those things that we love with the purest and most perfect love are invisible. The soul, itself an unseen presence, opens its affections most fully towards unseen realities—to the beauty of the spiritual life, to the character in the face of a friend, to Him whom having not

seen we love ! The hearth of our abiding friendships and immortal joys is in the unseen world. There we have our real life—the life of love, in its very nature not perishable, but eternal ! It is said that the last King of Prussia was one day playing with some little children, and he asked them to what realm of nature various things belonged. He showed them a precious stone, and they said, to the mineral kingdom ; a rose, and they said, to the vegetable ; a leopard's skin, and they said, to the animal. “ And to what kingdom do I belong ? ” he asked, pointing to himself. “ To the kingdom of heaven ! ” said one sweet little voice in prompt reply. The child was right ; we belong by birthright to the kingdom of heaven.

THE END.



[A companion volume to Conybeare and Howson's St. Paul.]

# The Life and Writings of Saint John.

BY THE

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