

able in that blood, but it was wrung from a heart to which all merely *sentimental* affection was as alien as it is to the vengeance of eternal fire. He only can appreciate and understand that love of principle, that love of self-immolation, who sympathizes thoroughly with that regard for the holiness and justice of God, united with compassion for lost souls, that led the Redeemer to undertake the full expiation of human guilt.

Whoever is granted this clear crystalline vision of the atonement, will die in peace, and pass through all the unknown transport and terror of the day of doom with serenity and joy. It ought to be the toil and study of the believer to render his conceptions of the work of Christ more vivid, simple, and vital. For whatever may be the extent of his religious knowledge in other directions; whatever may be the worth of his religious experience in other phases; there is no knowledge and no experience that will stand him in such stead, in those moments that try the soul, as the experience of the pure sense of guilt quenched by the pure blood of Christ.

ARTICLE III.

BRECKINRIDGE'S THEOLOGY.¹

THE portion of this work now before the public consists of two octavo volumes, of 524 and 697 pages respectively;

¹ 1. *The Knowledge of God, Objectively considered.* Being the First Part of Theology considered as a Science of Positive Truth, both Inductive and Deductive. By Robert J. Breckinridge, D. D., LL. D., Professor of Theology in the Seminary at Dansville (Danville?), Ky. *Non, sine luce.* New York: Robert Carter and Brothers, 530 Broadway. 1858.

2. *The Knowledge of God, Subjectively considered.* Being the Second Part of Theology considered as a Science of Positive Truth, both Inductive and Deductive, etc., etc.

to which, we are told, a third may be added. The author has long been a leading presbyter in his denomination, and, somewhat more than twenty years ago, bore a prominent part in the schism which rent the Presbyterian church in twain. Dr. Breckinridge commenced his public career as a lawyer; and was at one time honored, we have been informed, with a military title. He certainly brought into the church something of the atmosphere of the forum and the camp; and it was owing, in no small measure, to the remarkable *tone* which he gave to the controversy, that the rupture just referred to, was successfully driven through. For the past six years, he has occupied the chair of theology in a western Seminary; and in these volumes presents himself before the world as a candidate for the honors of a theological teacher.

Dr. Breckinridge opens his book with stating, that he had "thought it would have been of great advantage to mankind, if it had happened that each century of the past had left to us in a distinct form, its systematic view of divine truth, according to the general attainments of that age, and the general faith of the earnest Christians thereof." But this has not been done; and "what we have really received from the past," "appears to me [the author] to leave theology as a pure science of positive truth, in the disordered condition of many inferior sciences, and more really than they, needing to be restated in a form as far as possible general, but at the same time simple, natural, and complete." Thinking that the spirit of Orthodox Christianity, at the present day, "is not unsuitable to such an attempt," and that "the type of Christian life" in the Old School Presbyterian church "affords some advantages towards its execution," Dr. Breckinridge is further encouraged in his undertaking by the belief, that "such an endeavor *springing from the midst of that immense reaction toward the divine life in man, which signalized that church in this age,*¹ retrieving its destiny and modifying the Christianity of our times, might not be without its

¹ It is due to the author, to say, that the italics in the quotations from his work are generally, if not always, our own.

use — if it could survive ;” and he supposes, to quote his own words again, “there are special reasons why, holding the views I do, occupying the position I hold, and led by Providence as I have been, my brethren who have exacted this service at my hands might be excused,” etc.

It will be acknowledged that the aim of our author is high ; and that the task which he proposed to himself was one that men of very considerable theological erudition and ability might have been reluctant publicly to undertake. Many would have preferred, that the deed should have been its own herald ; and that the “age” should have discovered, for itself, that its “systematic view of divine truth,” in “distinct form,” had been embodied in a volume, and “left” to the ages that come after. But it was, at least, a high ambition, to fuse in one bright and perfect combination the ripest and last products of Christian Theology, up to A. D. 1858, and plant it a landmark and memorial to all time. His readers will, perhaps, be willing to allow, that the type of Christian life in the author's denomination — inasmuch as it is substantially the same that prevails in other kindred households of the Lord — affords “some advantages” toward the execution of such a plan. When, however, he proceeds to claim, as we understand him to do, that there may possibly be some *peculiar* advantage, in the springing of this endeavor from the bosom of the *Presbyterian exscinding movement of 1837*, — in which the author was so prominent, and which he now views as “immense,” — and that there are special reasons why *he*, of all men, with his “history,” should be the man to make it, a large class, at least, of his readers, will have to be pardoned, if unable altogether to repress a sense of amusement.

That a grand work on Scientific Theology, bringing it up square with the last results of more than eighteen centuries of Christian life and study, was to be *expected* to spring, with peculiar advantages, from a movement so purely in the interest of a single denomination, so narrow in its theories and in its sympathies, so violent and so unscrupulous ; and that the man in whom these traits found their natural

and strongest expression should, for these reasons be thought, even by himself, the one elect person, whose call it was, thus to gather the light of the centuries into his bosom, and pass it on colorless to the future—to organize in one pure, consistent statement the “disordered” thought of orthodox Christendom, and do for the nineteenth century what few or none of the centuries of the past had been so fortunate as to have done for them; that this man should not only entertain, in private, such an idea of this “reaction,” and of himself, but should suggest it to the world, as a modest excuse for the grandeur of his plan—all this together constitutes, in our apprehension, an example of hallucination that has few parallels of the kind.

Dr. Breckinridge's first volume treats of the “knowledge of God, objectively considered;” embracing not merely a discussion of the Divine being and attributes—as might be inferred from the phraseology of the title—but also treating, in full, of man, and of the Mediator, a “God-man,” presenting, in short, “the whole sum and result of Exegetic and Didactic Theology,” “as pure systematic truth unto salvation.” The two volumes, we are informed, each takes in the whole system—the first stating it in scientific method, as truth; the second, in scientific method, as truth, “actually saving man.” The former method, Dr. B. calls objective; the latter, subjective. A third volume is to treat of The knowledge of God *relatively* considered, giving the “confutation of all untruth, militating against the salvation of man; by which somewhat comprehensive phrase we are to understand, in brief, “Polemic Theology.” Some of the merits of this new system, which our author explains and defends at considerable length, can hardly fail to become apparent in the course of our investigation. We are advertised that ornaments of style are discarded, and that the “writer is not aware that a single sentence foreign to the absolute purpose of the treatise has been allowed a place in this volume.” The student of its pages must therefore be satisfied with a method strictly scientific and exact—the pure truth as *truth*.

The volume before us deserves brief notice; and that which we give would be much briefer than it is, but for the fear that the truth would hardly be credited, or indeed comprehended, without some illustrations in detail.

The Table of Contents gives us the first insight into the peculiar excellences of the new system adopted by this Master. His first book treats of *man*; the second, of the Mediator or *God-man*; the third, of God; the fourth, of the *sources of knowledge*; and the fifth gives the *sum and result*. It will be apparent, at a glance, that this order has characteristics of originality. The reader, probably, if venturing upon the preparation of a treatise upon The knowledge of God, scientifically considered, would *commence* with an investigation of the "sources of this knowledge." He might next unfold what he had obtained from these sources; and would tell us all that he knew concerning *God*. It would not be strange, if he were next to set forth God's *work* in the creation, and what followed; and so we should come to *man* and his fall, and be taught concerning the relation in which he once stood, and the other relation in which he now stands toward God, whose being and character had been before explained. Thus he would be led, thirdly, to show us God and man united, in the person of the *God-man*, together with the work of this Mediator and the redemption of the race. He might naturally end with the "sum and results." We must confess to a degree of prejudice, in favor of some such system as this; but our author has managed differently. He begins his treatise upon "God" with a book upon "man;" and examines into his "sources of knowledge" after he has got through with the whole — giving, however, his "results" in conclusion, as well as, let it be said, elsewhere throughout all the work. We are constrained to believe, that the position of his last chapter does not agree with the law of arrangement followed in the other four; and we venture to suggest that if, in future editions, he would make a slight change, his system would gain in self-consistency. We recommend the following order, viz.: Book First, The Sum and Result; Book Second, Man; Book Third, Man and

God; Book Fourth, God; Book Fifth, the Sources of Knowledge. We fancy there is a beauty in this arrangement which is somewhat marred in the one adopted. And yet it must be conceded that if in this, the inversion of the natural order is the more complete, in the author's own, for this very reason, the confusion is the more perfect. So that on the whole, it is not possible for us to decide. We submit the matter.

But Dr. Breckinridge is equally and similarly original in the *details* of his plan. Take, for example, the chapters of his "First Book." The title of this book would indicate that it treated exclusively of "man;" and as the Divine Being has not yet been so much as named, — since this is the *first* book, — the reader naturally expects, here, only such an unfolding of man's character and state, as does not necessarily presuppose the knowledge of God; and that this portion of a work so strictly scientific, will adhere closely to the one theme. What is his surprise at finding, not only the knowledge of God, but also of the scriptures, taken for granted — the first three chapters setting forth the whole relation of sinful man to his Maker, the "covenant of works," the Mediator, and the redemption; the fourth chapter treating of the Divine interposition for his salvation; the fifth, instituting an *a priori* argument concerning "the *being of God*, and the manner thereof;" and the sixth turning back to treat of man and his immortality. Thus we have the whole position of man in reference to God, including the scheme of redemption, unfolded, before anything has been told us of God; after that, we hear of God's interposition in redemption; finally, we hear of God himself, and his being is proved, in the most elaborate argument, upon the theme, that the whole work contains; and then, last of all, we are taught that man is not a clod, but is immortal.

Here, again, it will be observed, the inversion is left incomplete; so that the principle of *order* in this book is the same with that which we have seen to govern the world as a whole. Our author's aim, in the invention of this new scientific method, would seem to have been, to make his sys-

tem omnipresent, so as to have it "all, everywhere." In this, he has succeeded as well as could be expected, in view of that law of all finite existence, which forbids any two superficial objects to occupy the same space at the same time.

The Third Book, which treats of "God," further exemplifies the same rare faculty for the analysis and organization of thought. The Divine attributes are here classified into, first, the Primary attributes; second, the Essential; third, the Natural; fourth, the Moral; fifth, the Consummate. The *primary* attributes are stated, in the "argument," to be "Infinity, Eternity, Immutability, Self-existence." The *essential* attributes are "Infinite Understanding, Infinite Will, Infinite Power." The *natural* attributes "have direct relevancy to the distinction between the True and the False. He names them (p. 285 seq.), "Wisdom" and "Knowledge." The *moral* attributes "have direct relevancy to the distinction between good and evil." They are enumerated (p. 291) as Infinite Rectitude or Holiness, Justice, Goodness, Grace, Love, Mercy, and Long-suffering. The *consummate* attributes "are such as transcend the conception upon which each previous class rests, and embrace the perfection of many Infinite Perfections." They are (p. 310) Life, Majesty, Omnipresence, All-sufficiency, Oneness, and Blessedness.

According to this system of classification, which the reader will find elaborated and discussed in the seventeenth chapter, the primary attributes of God are not essential; nor the essential, primary; while neither the natural nor the moral attributes are either essential or primary; infinite understanding has no "direct reference to the distinction between the true and the false;" infinite power is not primary; eternity is not essential; life and omnipresence are neither primary, essential, or natural. And *this* is the system of an author who esteems himself called of Providence to heal the "disordered condition" of theology as "a positive science," and to put into "distinct" form, for the benefit of coming generations, "the whole knowledge of God unto salvation," "according to the attainments" of this nineteenth century, so that "all confusion should be escaped, that all dislocation

of truth should be avoided, that clear statements should become convincing proofs!"

But the confusion which we have seen to characterize this work as a whole, and some of its main divisions and classifications, is not confined to them. It is found everywhere—in books, chapters, paragraphs, phrases, words, and even in the punctuation, which is uniformly inelegant and inaccurate, and not seldom misrepresents the author's obvious meaning. Dr. Breckinridge thinks (p. 87) that the proper point for discussing "the whole question of Scripture Evidences," is where, having finished the book upon "man," and shown his lost estate in Adam, and the plan of salvation through a divine Mediator, he has also just concluded his narrative of the life of Christ, of the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, with remarks upon the office and ministry of the apostles and Christ's second coming. He forbears to introduce the topic there, lest he "break the continuity" of the subject upon which he has entered. Before this, however (p. 38), he had come upon the question of a Divine Revelation—generally supposed to have something to do with "Scripture Evidences"—when, in his book upon "man," he was treating of "God's interposition." At that time, he deliberately adjourned the whole matter over to Polemic Theology, where, we suppose, it may eventually turn up; since, in the present work—whose "main object is," merely "to present, in a perfectly distinct and connected manner, and to demonstrate as positively certain, the *sum and system* of divine knowledge unto salvation"—we do not find it. In this chapter on the Divine interposition, is also introduced a statement of the mode of the Divine being, and an enumeration of the attributes upon the scheme first given.

The author carries the same traits into his *definitions*. The reader will be interested in noting the points in that which he gives of "the true and the false," on the 6th page.

There is doubtless," says Dr. B., "an eternal and inefaceable distinction in *things*, which we express by saying some of them are true and some of them are false." Of this, however, he is not sure; for, in the next sentence, he adds:

“ At any rate, such a distinction, let it be founded as it may, exists for us.” “ It is upon the *steadfastness* of this distinction that all the *certainly* of our knowledge depends ; as it is upon our *capacity to perceive* the distinction itself wherever it exists, that our *ability to increase* in knowledge rests.” Possibly, the above statements will be clearer if reduced to distinct propositions, thus :

- a. There is an ineffaceable distinction in *things* ; so that,
- b. Some of the “ things ” are true, and some are false.
- c. This distinction is steadfast ; and therefore,
- d. Our knowledge is certain.
- e. We can perceive this distinction ; and, therefore,
- f. Our knowledge can increase.

From all which, it follows, that without a capacity for perceiving the distinction between things true and false, we might still possess a *certain amount* of knowledge, only this could not be increased.

We cannot avoid inviting attention to “ another distinction ” which, to adopt our author's statement, is so important, that without it, “ the very ideas of duty, of virtue, and of *happiness*, become incomprehensible ; nor is it possible to conceive how we could exist afterwards, except as idiots or as demons.” “ We express this distinction,” says Dr. B., “ by saying, that in the nature of things some of them are good and some of them are bad ; and we express the feeling in us corresponding to them respectively, by saying we *approve* the good and condemn the bad.”

From this statement we learn, 1st, that there is a fundamental distinction upon which the ideas of duty, virtue, and *happiness* rest ; which distinction, 2dly, is expressed in the words “ good ” and “ bad ; ” and our feeling of it, 3dly, by saying we “ approve ” the one, and “ condemn ” the other ; and 4thly, if we had not this sense of this distinction, we could exist “ only ” as idiots or demons ; ” who therefore, by necessity, are not possessed of the sense in question. This sense of “ good ” and “ bad,” our author informs us, is the foundation of “ the fitness of all our relations to God ; ” and among these relations we suppose him to include that of

moral obligation. Whatsoever being, therefore, approves anything that seems to him to be in its nature good, or disapproves anything that seems to him in its nature bad, is *not* an idiot or demon; but *is*, in contradistinction, a being capable of "duty, virtue, and happiness." No idiots "approve" of pleasant fruits; no demons "condemn" penal fires. — In view of the progress made in such definitions, is it too much to hope that the day may come when, in books of theology at least, *oysters* — by virtue of some gentle "approval" that they feel, as the tide returns over them loaded with soft consolations — may yet become good Christians — without being eaten?

We had noted other passages; but these may suffice. It is hardly possible to open the book without meeting with illustrations of its fatal inaccuracy and confusion. Other examples will occur in our presentation of a matter which is even more serious than this. We come now to Dr. Breckinridge's *indebtedness to Stapp* for materials which he has not duly acknowledged.

The "Few Preliminary Words," with which Dr. Breckinridge prefaces his volume, are turgid with the consciousness of a grand theme and a vast achievement. Yet the author stoops to concede, in general phrase, the "immense advantages" that he has derived from the labors of others. "The fruits of such attainments" as he has painfully made, "will manifest themselves to the learned." He disclaims any "proper originality touching the subject matter," and *acknowledges*, that "the details which have been wrought out by learned, godly, and able men in all ages, of many creeds, and in many tongues, have been freely wrought into the staple of this work, when they suited the place and the purpose, and turned precisely to the [my] thought." He claims originality only in "the conception, the *method*, the digestion, the presentation, the order, the spirit, the impression of the whole."

The above is the most definite and particular acknowledgment of obligation which we have been able to discover in the work. It is no more than *would have been understood*

if it had not been expressed; since no writer on theology, at the present day, presumes to create the science anew, either in its system or its details. The church has not studied so long in vain. But this acknowledgment by no means implies, much less does it say, that Dr. Breckinridge has taken complete paragraphs, whole pages, and the substance of entire sections, from another author! — which we now proceed to prove; premising, however, that while we find scanty indication of the “all ages,” “many creeds,” and “many tongues,” from which the erudite doctor claims to have drawn, we do find traces that his attainments from a single work in the Latin tongue were “painfully made,” as will be “manifest to the learned,”—and to those of little learning, also—upon brief inspection. We freely concede, that Dr. Breckinridge has acknowledged a broader indebtedness than he seems to owe; the misfortune is, that his acknowledgment is not so particular as it should have been; and that the jewels which he borrowed, he has often so bruised in his mis-setting, as greatly to diminish their beauty and their value. Stapfer was a nice workman; and it was not safe, to assail the compact and strong-built order of his delicately-finished and dovetailed sentences with the hammer and tongs of a crude logic; and to reset the shining fragments in its raw paste. The reader will see, before we finish with Dr. Breckinridge, that he has worked a rich mine with poor results. The facts are as follows:

The eighteenth and nineteenth chapters of Dr. Breckinridge's work are mainly taken from the “*Institutiones Theologicæ Polemicæ* of Joh. Fred. Stapfer,” Vol. I.; and are substantially identical with CHAP. iii. SEC. 1 (the first part), SEC. 2, SEC. 3, and SEC. 4. We have also noticed a number of passages in the twenty-first chapter of the former work, making about two pages and a half, which ought to have been credited to the latter. But, to be more particular: in the eighteenth chapter of Dr. B.'s work, paragraphs 1, 2, 3, and the first part of 4, in SEC. i., find their equivalent in Stapf., PROP. 271—277; in SEC. ii., paragraph 1, commencing with the words “and the highest idea,” 2, and 3; in SEC. iii., para-

graphs 1—6 inclusive, are distinctly from Stapf., PROP. 297—320. In the nineteenth chapter of Dr. B.'s work, SEC. i., paragraphs 1—9 inclusive are from Stapf., PROP. 321—370; SEC. ii., paragraphs 2, 3 (the substance of it), 4, 5, 6, are from Stapf., PROP. 371—420. That is to say, these two chapters embrace the first part of Stapfer's SEC. i., and his SEC. ii., iii., and iv., *consecutively*, including nearly their whole substance, much of it appropriated in the form of a direct and moderately accurate translation; while other parts are a loose, but evident, paraphrase; and others still, we are unable more appropriately to describe, than as a *reductio ad absurdum*, the materials of this reduction, which is mechanical and not chemical, being derived from the same mine. The larger portion is an inaccurate translation, wherein the admirable method and clearness of Stapfer are almost wholly lost, and his niceties of logical phrase are "painfully" translated. Some passages in our author's twenty-fifth chapter, pp. 347 and 348, will hereafter be noticed.

But justice, alike to Dr. Breckinridge and to ourselves, demands that some examples be given in proof of the foregoing assertions. We take, therefore, the opening paragraphs of his eighteenth chapter, and present them, side by side, with the corresponding paragraphs in Stapfer. They afford, in our opinion, a favorable illustration of the merits of his translation.

BRECKINRIDGE, CHAP. XVIII.

STAPFER, SEC. I.

I.—1. The simplest idea we can form of God is, that he is a self-existent Being, distinct from us and from the universe, who contains in himself a sufficient ground and reason for the existence of ourselves and the universe. Stated in other words: that God is a Being absolutely necessary and independent, in whom and upon whom all things are contingent and dependent.

PROP. 271. Per Deum intelligimus ens a se, a mente nostra et hoc universo diversum, in quo continetur ratio sufficiens existentiae hujus mundi et animarum nostrarum, sive quod est absolute necessarium et independens, a quo autem omnia reliqua dependent.

PROP. 272. Priusquam existentiam

2. As it is impossible for anything to be, and not to be ; it follows that a sufficient reason exists, and can be given, why any particular thing is, rather than is not ; and why it is in a particular mode, rather than some other. This sufficient reason being discovered and stated, nothing more can be required concerning the fact or mode of the existence of that thing.

ejus demonstramus, principia quaedam generalia sunt premittenda.

PROP. 273. Impossibile est idem simul esse et non esse. Quod Principium indemonstrabile est.

PROP. 274. Omnium rerum datur ratio sufficiens ; unde cognoscitur, cur aliquid potius sit, quam non sit ; cur sit, hoc quam alio modo, et qua posita nihil amplius ad rei existentiam explicandam requiritur.

The third paragraph, and the first part of the fourth, are translated, in similar style, from Stapfer's PROP. 275, 276, and 277. Stapfer (and of course Brekinridge) proceeds to affirm that the theory of an "infinite series" does not furnish the "ratio sufficiens" sought for ; and, therefore, that whosoever wishes to assign such a reason, and demonstrate the Divine existence, must prove the existence of an "Ens a se et absolute necessarium" upon which the universe depends. Having thus laid down the "general principles" spoken of in PROP. 272, Stapfer proceeds with the steps of his proof, which advance, in regular mathematical succession, to the conclusion — the whole argument standing in beautiful unity with the introduction ; the substance of which has just been given. Dr. Brekinridge *omits this argument*, after using the introduction to it, and substitutes *four* of his own, neither one of which needs the introduction which he has copied, or stands in any obvious relation with it, save that of local contiguity. The first of these is as follows : He who denies the existence of God affirms one or all of the three following propositions : 1. There is no *essence* whatever. 2. There is no *self-existent essence*. 3. There is "no *life* in which it might be." None of the terms here used have been distinctly defined by our author ; and we are left to our own conjectures concerning his meaning. It seems likely that by "self-existent essence" he means an eternal and spiritual, as distinguished from a merely material entity. But what does he understand by "life" — "life *in* which" the essence may inhere ?

It is generally supposed that life is a quality, or state, belonging to essence, rather than a substance of which the latter is an attribute. Then again, do not both the atheist and the pantheist hold to an essence, that this essence has life, that it is eternal, and, *in a certain sense*, spiritual and self-existent, viz. in the sense that it is not crudely material, nor dependent upon anything else for its being or its action? Further, what is the obvious connection between this argument (?) and the Introduction abstracted from Stapfer?

The second argument is this: That which we conceive of as having life of itself, must exist, if existence is possible. But this is the conception of God. Therefore, God must exist, unless existence is impossible.

Dr. B. has not told us what he means by "having life of itself." Will an eternal physical essence, sole, and therefore independent of all other essences, thus "having its life" in and of itself alone, answer his conception? If so, he has only proved, at the very best, the truth of pantheism.

But *why* must something that has life in itself, really exist, when we "conceive" of it? What has our empty conception to do with *reality*? Will it hold, as a general proposition, that whatever we conceive, must exist, unless existence is impossible?

The third argument proceeds thus: To say that an attribute is "contained in the conception of a thing," is to say that it is inseparable from that thing. But this is true of *necessary existence*, as an attribute of God. Therefore this *is* an attribute of God; that is, he necessarily exists.

This presupposes either, that the existence of God has before been proved (in order that his necessary existence may follow, as a conclusion), or, that the conception of a thing renders certain its real existence.

The fourth argument proceeds as follows: Ability to exist is an ability. Inability to exist is a debility. "But if all existences are finite, and not one that is infinite does or can exist; it follows, that every finite "has more ability" (i. e. is more powerful) than any infinite existence; which is utterly absurd. Wherefore, there is either no existence; or, there is an infinite existence.

Apply the same kind of argument to other objects, thus : Ability to exist is an ability. Inability to exist is a debility. Yonder fly exists ; therefore is able to exist. All the horses that do not exist, are not able to exist. Therefore, yonder fly has more ability than all non-existent horses ; which is *true*, not absurd. Thus again : All the race of megatheria are unable, etc. Hence a fly is stronger than all the megatheria. True, again ; but as inept as before.

On the next page (269) our author resumes his translation from Stapfer, as follows :

BRECKINRIDGE, CHAP. XVIII.

STAPFER, SEC. II.

II. — 1. The highest idea we can have of him [Jehovah] or of our being, is *that* which we call his nature, his essence. In this essence is the foundation of whatever does or can exist in the being.

2. Now whatever has its sufficient reason solely in the essence, and proceeds from it only, we call an attribute of that being. The fundamental conception of God, therefore, is of his essence, from which everything that appertains to him flows. But the simplest idea of God, as has been shown, is that he hath a being necessary, and of himself. Whence it immediately follows that the essence or nature of his being consists in this, that it is absolutely necessary and self-existent.

PROP. 297. Primum quod de re cognoscitur, et unde ratio reliquorum, quae ei insunt, vel inesse possunt, red- dicitur, dicitur Entis Essentia. Quic- quid autem rationem sufficientem in sola essentia habet et ex ejus essentia sequitur, dicitur attributum.

PROP. 298. Primum ergo quod de Deo cognoscitur, et ex quo reliqua sequuntur, quae Deo competunt, est ipsius Essentia.

PROP. 299. Primum autem quod de Deo cognoscitur, juxta demonstra- ta, est quod sit Ens absolute ne- cessarium, reliqua autem omnia, quae Deo competunt, inde fluere et rationem sufficientem, in hac abso- luta existentiae necessitate habere, videbimus in sequentibus ; unde se- quitur Essentiam Dei in hoc consis- tere, quod sit Ens absolute necessarium.

For the benefit of those who may be unfamiliar with Latin, we give Stapfer's argument in English. He reasons as follows : PROP. 297. What is recognized as *fundamental* in any being, and which supplies the sufficient reason of all

else that it includes or involves, is called its *essence*. But whatsoever finds its sufficient reason in the essence only, and is deducible therefrom, is called an *attribute*.

PROP. 298. What is "recognized as fundamental" in *God*, therefore, and from which all else that centres in him is deducible, is *his* "essence."

PROP. 299. But that which "is recognized as fundamental in *God*, as was just shown, is that he is an *absolutely necessary* being; . . . whence it follows that the *essence of God consists in this*, that he is an absolutely necessary being.

Can any statement be more orderly or more beautifully luminous than this? But in Breckinridge, what confusion! The "highest idea," he tells us, that we can have of *God*, "or of our being," is "his nature, his essence." But Stapfer was not treating of the "highest" idea, but of the first, the fundamental, conception; and of the fundamental conception of any *thing*, or object of thought — the conception of *God* belonging in the next proposition (which Dr. B. also translates), and that of "our being" appearing nowhere in this part of the argument. Moreover, what Stapfer affirms is, that this "primum" (not altissimum) is the *essence* of the being contemplated; a word that by no means finds a suitable synonym in "nature," which often includes, according to present usage, both essence and attributes. Stapfer is, in this proposition, *defining* "essence," and *distinguishing* it from attribute. Dr. Breckinridge goes out of his way to mix them up, and adds to the confusion by talking about "our being." The reader having found such confusion in the first proposition of this series, will not be surprised to discover that the series itself is not preserved, in logical integrity. Dr. Breckinridge divides Stapfer's PROP. 297 in the middle, annexing the latter half to PROP. 298 and PROP. 299, fusing the whole into a single paragraph, thereby *confusing* the general order, as well as the particular phrases, of the original statement. The result is, that his second paragraph begins with the proposition, that "whatever has its sufficient reason solely in the essence" is an attribute. "Therefore," proceeds Dr. B., "the fundamental conception of *God* is of

his essence." But how does this follow from the foregoing definition of "attribute?" And what does he mean by "fundamental conception?" This is a new phrase. He had before spoken of "highest idea;" he afterwards speaks of "simplest idea;" and one who is so fortunate as to have the original at hand, will discover, that these three phrases are all translations of the same. What intelligent meaning had Dr. B. in these changes? Stapfer says, What is fundamental in anything is "essence;" what is fundamental in *God*, therefore, is *his* essence. But our author says [—] can the reader tell what he does say? How it was possible for a person of ordinary good sense, *with the Latin before him*, to make such a muddle of so lucid and simple an argument as Stapfer's, passes our comprehension. It must have been an "attainment" "painfully made."

Another illustration of our author's unparalleled acumen appears on the 270th page; where, having demonstrated, out of Stapfer, from the simplicity of the Divine essence, that it is "incorporeal," he next demonstrates, out of Breckinridge, but by precisely the *same argument*, that it is *also* "immaterial." In similar style, he proves (p. 269, bottom) that the Divine existence "is also necessary; which very proposition is the *definition* with which he commenced the chapter, and on which his (or, rather, Stapfer's) whole argument depends.

We have now gone over with somewhat less than the first three pages of the author's eighteenth chapter, without by any means doing justice to their manifold absurdities; but the substance of all this and of the following chapter is taken, consecutively, from Stapfer, with portions of the twenty-first and some paragraphs in the twenty-fifth; how much more, we do not know. It is obvious, therefore, that to do full justice upon Dr. Breckinridge, would require a small volume. The scholar who is curious to pursue the subject further, will find abundant amusement in the pompous blunders and infelicities of statement, with which all this portion of the work is filled. We have room for but a single illustration more. We give the original and the translation.

BRECKINRIDGE, CHAP. XXV. I. 3.

STAPFER, SEC. V.

(BOTTOM OF P. 347.)

If the determination of the will of God is from eternity, his decree is also from eternity. If the will of God is perfectly free and perfectly immutable, so is his decree. If the will of God is not a simple and pure cause, destitute of intelligence and a sufficient reason, neither is his decree. If God can and does will things inscrutable to us, so can he and will he decree them.

PROP. 425. Deus omnia ab æterno voluit (PROP. 374), ideo etiam Deus omnia decrevit ab æterno.

PROP. 427. Voluntas Dei est liberissima (PROP. 418): Ergo, etiam Decreta sunt liberrima.

PROP. 428. Voluntas Dei non est casus purus (PROP. 419): Hinc etiam Decretum divinum non est casus purus.

PROP. 429. Voluntas Dei est immutabilis (PROP. 400): Ergo, et Decretum est immutabile.

PROP. 430. Deus aliquid velle potest, cujus rationes nobis sunt incognitæ (PROP. 410), hinc etiam Deus decernere potest, quæ, cur decernat, homo intelligere nequit.

PROP. 431. Imperscrutabile est, cujus rationes nobis non penitus sunt perspectæ; Decreti divini, etc.

It will be observed that Dr. B.'s first sentence is from Stapfer, PROP. 425. (The preceding sentence is from Stapfer, PROP. 422 and PROP. 424.) The next sentence is obviously Stapfer's, PROP. 427 and PROP. 429; and the third, a most remarkable version of PROP. 428; the remainder being from PROP. 430 and PROP. 431.

We commend this passage to the particular attention of scholars as a psychological curiosity. When first meeting with the argument, that "if the will of God is not a simple and pure cause, destitute of intelligence and a sufficient reason, neither is his decree," the reader naturally rubs his eyes to see if his vision be clear, and if he be really awake. The next supposition is, that there must be a typographical error. Failing with this hypothesis, he imagines that, after all, there may possibly be a recondite meaning, which, through an unskilful nicety of expression on the part of the writer, or some unusual slowness of his own perception, had escaped him. But all theories, at last, fail; and the irrepressible

question bursts from his lips : How could the translator make such a mistake ? Ignorance of the meaning of the word "casus" might, indeed, lead to a mistranslation of that one word ; but how came he to insert the words "destitute of intelligence and a sufficient reason," which do not appear in the paragraph that he was copying, and which so ludicrously confound the sense ? The matter is readily explained. Stapfer lays down the premise : "The will of God is not mere chance ;" and refers, for authority, to a previous paragraph, viz. PROP. 419. Turning to this, we read : *Casus purus est actualitas destituta ratione sufficiente ; Deus autem agit propter rationem sufficientem* (PROP. 371) : Ergo, Actus voluntatis divinae non est casus purus. (" Mere chance, is an actuality that is destitute of a sufficient reason (of its existence). But God acts in view of a good and sufficient reason, as was proved in PROP. 371. Hence, the act of the Divine will is not mere chance.")

It seems therefore that our learned author, *feeling* that the proposition, "the will of God is not a simple and pure cause," was somewhat obscure ; and honestly desirous of handing down to future ages the particular "systematic view of divine truth," now prevalent, "according to the general attainments of the age ;" and finding under his hand an authoritative definition of this dark sentence — inserted it ; and still feeling (for it is impossible to suppose that he saw, here) that the words "destitute of a sufficient reason," left a slight penumbra around the sense, sought to dispel this by adding a synonym of his own, — as the reader will remember he has elsewhere done, — making it read : "destitute of *intelligence and* a sufficient reason." From this it would seem that Dr. B. understood by "ratio sufficiens," sufficient mind, intellect, "intelligence." And yet it seems impossible that, throughout this argument, whenever Stapfer was speaking of the sufficient ground, cause, "reason," of the existence of a thing, Dr. Breckinridge supposed that he was referring to the sufficient *intelligence* of that thing ! And yet, again, if Dr. B. *ever had* a clear and definite comprehension of the meaning of this phrase, how was it possible for him to have

mistaken it, in an instance so clear as this? The only answer that we are able to give to this inquiry, and it is an answer amply borne out by the facts, is, that all through these chapters, Dr. Breckinridge's mind was in an exceedingly confused state; that he often failed of a full and clear comprehension of his author's meaning; and that the present example is illustrative of this fact. But "he must, at least, have supposed that he had a meaning in what he wrote." Doubtless; and the ingenious reader may be able to hit upon more than one theory of explanation; but it is hardly necessary to discuss the matter further here.

The attention of the public was directed to this indebtedness of Dr. Breckinridge, not long after the appearance of his first volume, by a Presbyterian pastor in North Carolina. The audacious spirit in which the statements and proofs of his co-presbyter were then met, and the cold assumption with which the subject is treated in the "Preliminary Remarks" prefixed to the second volume, are calculated to awaken a sense of shame in men of Christian or of scholarly honor. The truth is, that if there is any meaning in the word, Dr. Breckinridge has *plagiarized*; and he might as well assume to deny the sun out of the heavens, as, by denial, to blot out so obvious a fact. There may be explanations which, if known by the public, would strip the fact of much of its present bad meaning. We hope there are. But *the fact* stands. And Dr. Breckinridge can claim no peculiar charity of his brethren while in his present attitude. It were well if a more Christian spirit might come to rule in his counsels.

With the second volume we must be very brief. We are thankful to say that it is neither so poor nor so bad as the first; but yet it has faults enough; as the reader who has followed attentively our account of the first, must see is a necessity of the case.

His introduction gives a sketch of the progress of theological science, arranged so as to show the precise point occupied by the present work. At the end of the *seventh* cen-

ture, Dr. Breckinridge thinks that the doctrine of the church was fully settled; and the "science of theology ought immediately to have risen and . . . to have pressed steadily and rapidly to its perfect state." Instead of this, we have a "period of eight centuries, during which scholasticism is the most conspicuous manifestation of thought." The schoolmen "added almost nothing to theology," "whether as to its conception, the method of its proper treatment, or its practical development." Then came the Reformation; and "the scientific treatment of Divine truth followed" this movement more closely than it did the first planting of Christianity. But "that the Reformed theology did not adequately avail itself of its great position, nothing can prove more clearly than that, after three centuries, the first attempt — that of Calvin — retains its supremacy. Augustine, even with his strange conception of the papal church, finds no name to match him — till Calvin. And Calvin's great work, which I had no small share in restoring to general circulation, — though it is arbitrary in its method, and though abstract, practical, and controversial theology, truth objective, subjective, and relative, are mingled confusedly throughout it, — has no rival amidst the hundreds which have followed it." ¹ Our author proceeds to account for this failure of the Reformed theology, from the "imperfect conceptions" which have hitherto prevailed — first, as to what theological science *is*; secondly, as to the "method responsive to the true conception" of it; added to which was "necessarily" a failure of "adequate breadth of spiritual insight into the Divine proportion of that truth, which was itself the very substance of the whole science of theology." The author adds: "Whoever is willing to survey, with candor, the whole field of scientific theology, abstract, practical, and controversial — Latin, Lutheran, and Reformed — since the Reformation was firmly established and its first fruits gathered, will see small cause to be satisfied that the critical, speculative, or philo-

¹ Poor Stapfer! Not so much as a word of mention! And Turretin, where is he? Nobody but Calvin, and "I." Has Dr. Breckinridge made a new translation of the Institutes? or edited an old translation? or — has he advised some Church Board to make a reprint?

sophical methods of the ages which have succeeded that great period, are to be preferred to the arbitrary and artificial method they would supplant, or perhaps even to the best specimens of the scholastic spirit which the Reformation overthrew." "Is there, then," exclaims Dr. Breckinridge, "no natural method, whereby theology . . . may develop itself as a science of positive truth. It is a science; it must have a best method; this, all theologians have hitherto failed to observe; while, on the other hand, what *I* maintain is, that if there be a science, it must have a method responsive to its nature." All this, with wearisome prolixity and feeble, needless proof, is demonstrated and illustrated; and after long labor, we finally arrive at the grand result, to wit: "Truth is capable of being considered systematically and absolutely, simply as truth reduced into a scientific form. Thus understood, but not otherwise, *any* system of truth is afterwards capable of being considered in all the possible effects and influences of that system of truth." Again, this system, "considered in both aspects, is capable of being precisely distinguished from all serious error." This is the canon, not for theology alone, but also for all science. "When so stated and understood," observes Dr. B., "*every* pure science is placed in the *only* position in which its own perfect development is possible."

"It took seven centuries for theologians to settle, in scientific form, the great elements of their science." . . . "It took the theologians eight centuries more to obtain the grand position of the Reformers." . . . "I have pointed out both the failure and the causes of it, of the scientific progress of the Reformed theology beyond the position won for it in the sixteenth century." This failure, he repeats, is to be attributed to a want of a proper conception of the true method (which the present work follows); and he again reiterates the opinion, near the foot of the page.

It is a matter of some interest, if Dr. Breckinridge have indeed invented a new *organon*, applicable to "any system of truth," whereby both the errors and the short comings of the Fathers may be avoided, that we clearly understand

what it is. — The titles of the two volumes before us would lead us to suppose that the “positive science” of theology was divided by Dr. Breckinridge into three parts; for the first volume is “the first part of theology considered as a science of positive truth;” and the second volume is the “second part of” the same. From the titles, therefore, we gather, that the three volumes are *all* to be devoted to the exhibition of the truth as truth in positive and strict scientific form. Turning, however, to the 11th page of the Preliminary Remarks, prefixed to vol. 1st, this impression is corrected. We there learn that it is in the first volume only that theology is treated as “mere knowledge;” which volume, we read again on the 14th page, “contains a distinct outline of the whole knowledge of God, attainable by man, unto salvation, objectively considered,” “a science of positive truth.” The same affirmation is frequently repeated. The reader now thinks, we presume, that he understands it: the whole *science* of theology is in the first volume, under the head of “objective;” the *whole* of the truth being there given, in its pure form, as *truth*, *all* the great topics being there treated with methodical exactness; while, in the author’s words (p. 11), the “intimate and transforming *effects* upon man,” of this truth, are given in the second volume. What is the intelligent reader’s embarrassment, however, when he finds that he must look to the second volume for the discussion of such subjects as “The Covenant of Grace,” “Regeneration,” “Justification,” “Sanctification,” “Faith,” “Repentance,” “The New Obedience,” “The Infallible Rule of Faith and Duty,” “The Fundamental Idea and Elemental Principles of the Church of God,” including the whole doctrine of the Church, together with the Ordinances, the Sacraments, Church Government, and Final Rewards and Punishments! Do none of these topics belong to the truth *as truth*, “objectively considered?” Have we the *whole* knowledge unto salvation, “attainable by man,” without a knowledge of these things? Is “the truth” all apart, separate from these subjects, and have we, in them, merely its “effects?” So says Dr. Breckinridge. First (vol. ii., p.

13), "the mere truth;" next, "the effects of truth;" lastly, the two former "confronted with untruth." And yet he also tells us (vol. i., p. 12) that the objective and subjective treatises "each takes in the whole sum and result of exegetic and didactic theology, once as pure, systematic truth unto salvation, and once as pure, systematic truth actually saving man." What, then, *are* we to understand? We are told, in the titles, that these volumes are severally *parts* of a "positive science." Next, we learn that the whole science, as such, is condensed into the first volume. But anon we are pointedly instructed that the whole truth, in pure, systematic form, is in both volumes: in the one as "mere truth;" in the other, as "truth actually saving" us. On first inspection, it is obvious that whole *regions* properly belonging to the domain of scientific theology are omitted from each. A more minute examination reveals the fact that, in both, subjects the most diverse are mixed up, in brief, unsatisfactory statements and discussions; while, continually, matters of great interest are overlooked or slighted. And this is an example of the new "*system*," which neither Augustine nor Calvin could discover; and for lack of which the Reformed theology has been floundering in hopeless blindness and incompetency since Luther's day; so that even "Calvin's great work" failed to be appreciated, and had passed out of "general circulation," until "I" restored it. This is the *new* system, that is to lay once more, and forever, the foundations of theology, whereon it may be expected immediately to rise and "pass, steadily and rapidly, to its perfect state." This is the New School to which the Old School, in its "immense reaction," has at last laboriously arrived. Augustine may still occupy the leisure of scholars curious of the past; Calvin may be read, not without profit, by such as can tolerate his "arbitrary and artificial method;" but these, with all the ancient masters of thought, are not needed longer; Turretin has been driven from his refuge in the peaceful shades of Princeton; the Nineteenth Century has spoken, and all the rest hide their diminished heads. "*Objective*," "*Subjective*," "*Relative!*"

Words worthy of being written, in letters of gold, blazoned over portals of universities, inscribed over every tutor's chair! For these are the *NOVUM ORGANUM* now, in this favored century, after the fruitless toil of ages, after Augustine and Calvin, discovered and invented at "Dansville," in the State of Kentucky, by Robert J. Breckinridge.

It would be a tiresome and a useless task, to pass the opinions of such a writer in review. His doctrines are, in general, those of the "standards." That is enough. He shows a tolerable *practical* knowledge of theological truth, and of the modes of presenting it current in his own denomination; a knowledge sufficient for the purposes of the pulpit, in a community not deeply agitated with religious questions, or earnest to distinguish, and sift, and search out, with thoroughness. His style, in some passages, exhibits very considerable practical force and raciness, but is ordinarily repetitious and wordy; and is sometimes almost ludicrous in its verbose solemnity of pious phrase. We should judge this second volume to be largely made up from sermons, sufficiently scientific for a good practical effect upon a sensible audience; but ill fitted to be the basis of a formal theological treatise. The work is of no value to the scholar, and but poorly suited to the wants of the unlearned. Beside the great masters in theology, the author is a child babbling confusedly. He uses phrases which contain whole theories and the pith of controversy between opposing schools, as innocently and with as little apparent consciousness that any one could think of raising a question upon them, as if he were merely bidding you—Good morning; and is continually leaving behind him difficulties unsolved, without so much as a hint that any solution is needed. Topics that you have passed come up again; ideas, familiar from childhood, are repeated and re-repeated; so that, reading in this book is like swimming in eel-grass; what you had fondly supposed was left behind, still pursues and clings to you, till, in mortal fear of your life, you hastily quit those waters forever. We quote, in conclusion, a portion of one of the sonorous sentences of Dr. Breckinridge, already given in a different connec-

tion — with addenda. “Whoever is willing to survey, with candor, the whole field of scientific theology, abstract, practical, and controversial, Latin, Lutheran, and Reformed, since the Reformation was firmly established and its first fruits gathered [we beseech the reader not to suppose that the writer of this Article claims for himself this learned achievement], will see small cause to be satisfied that the Critical, Speculative, or Philosophical methods” of the Nineteenth Century — as presented in the present work — “according to the general attainments of the age” — “are to be preferred to the arbitrary and artificial methods they would supplant,” which were pursued by the worthies of past ages, the founders of schools and the framers of the Church’s creeds, “or perhaps even” to that of Stapfer himself. These two volumes on theology are a misfortune to their author, and calculated to bring discredit upon the scholarship of the country. Such enormous pretension we have never before seen conjoined with so humiliating a performance.

And now, if there be any in whose bosoms the passions of past conflicts survive, and who still cherish unkindly remembrance of what seemed to them abuse and violence, we conjure them to bury such thoughts, in peace, forever. Dr. Breckinridge has written a book — this book. It is enough.

ARTICLE IV.

INDIA—THE BHAGVAT GEETA.

BY REV. B. F. HOSFORD, HAVERHILL, MASS.

It has been our good fortune to read one of the very few copies of a translation of the Bhagvat Geeta found in the country; and to realize, in reading it, all we had been led to anticipate from the fine tantalizing extracts we had, from