

ARTICLE XII.

GERMAN NOTICES OF MR. ROWLAND G. HAZARD'S
VOLUME ON CAUSATION AND FREEDOM IN WILLING.¹

THIS volume of a well-known manufacturer in Rhode Island has been translated into the German language. It has been briefly, but favorably reviewed in the *Literarisches Centralblatt* for June 24, 1876; also in the *Illustrierte Deutsche Monatshefte* for January 1877, and in other German periodicals. The following notice is from the *Theolog. Jahresbericht*, Vol. x. No. 12. We cannot but regard it as an honor to our country that the speculations of what we call a "business-man" and "a man of affairs" should attract so much attention among European scholars. He is studied by theological students as if he were a professed theologian, and by philosophical inquirers as if his life had been consumed in the schools.

'The author is highly esteemed in North America as a writer upon metaphysics. The present work, translated into German, shows that this esteem is well deserved. For many years I have not seen any philosophical investigations more sterling and more profound than these. And the results, in several of the most important questions of human knowledge and human life, at which the author arrives, seem to me to deserve in the highest degree the attention of all thinking minds. His problem is the great question of freedom in willing, in its relation to the general laws of the universe. It is notorious that our philosophers, and still more the naturalists of our time, are most of them about to decide this question in a way most unfavorable, if not destructive, to freedom. The answer is either pantheistic, — i.e. "determinative," — and sacrifices human freedom to unknown fate; or it is atheistic, — i.e. "naturalistic," — and sacrifices it to the Moloch of matter. Hazard shows that this method does not, and cannot, solve the mysteries of life, that it creates unending difficulties, and that it is as little honorable to the culture of our age, in other respects so great, as it would be to abandon the system of Copernicus, and to return to that of Ptolemy or Tycho Brahe. For to suppose, as many do in our time, that human actions are not a product of man's intelligence and will, but only of the space and time in which man finds himself; to suppose that all the facts and phenomena of the world do not depend

¹ Two Letters on Causation and Freedom in Willing, addressed to John Stuart Mill; with an Appendix on the Existence of Matter, and our notions of Infinite Space. By Rowland G. Hazard. English edition, Boston: Lee and Shepard. 1869. German edition, New York: B. Westerman, and Co. 1875.

upon an intelligent, self-knowing, and free-acting God, but on a multiplicity of unconscious and un-free agencies in matter — this fact “shows a retrograde movement in ideas, carrying us farther back than the mythology of the Greeks, or the rude notions of our Indian tribes, and landing us substantially in fetichism. Though the time is past in which mere power was deemed the proper object of worship, still, if we believed that all the beneficent and aesthetic conditions of existence were caused by material phenomena and events, we could hardly fail, as rational and emotional beings, to adore them” (Eng. ed. pp. 61, 62; Germ. ed. p. 65).

‘The author shows it to be very difficult to pronounce more than bare suppositions on the originating cause of all things, or on the origin of the world. But one thing is certain: “All theories of causation, when traced to their foundation, must bring us to something which is already active, or that has in itself the ability to become so” (Eng. ed. p. 71; Germ. ed. p. 76). Can this be matter? Never! To understand its motion and action it would still be necessary to assume another force operating upon and preceding matter. Or might we believe that matter and mind have been co-existent from eternity? Once more, never! “We can only judge as to what was by what has since been. From secondary causes (or uniform modes of God’s action now observable) the geologist seeks to trace the history of the formation of the rocks of our globe, through the mutations of a time which it overtakes the imagination to compass; as the astronomer, with a mightier stretch of thought, reconstructs the universe, and unfolds the mysteries of creation in its various stages of development. And if for all this we rely upon mere observation for our facts, and trust that the forces which we now detect in such minute proportions in the laboratory were then magnificently active in the great laboratory of nature, that the principles which now apply to the formation of a soap-bubble then applied to the formation of suns and satellites, may we not have as rational and as philosophic faith that the only power which we now know that can begin change, and modify and direct the material forces in our own little sphere, was then also active throughout the realms of space — that intelligence, so limited in us, in a mightier form sought, designed, and executed the symmetrical arrangement which so harmonizes with our own sentiment of beauty and love of order, with our aspirations for the sublimely vast and our admiration of the minutely perfect” (Eng. ed. pp. 72, 73; Germ. ed. pp. 77, 78).

‘It is not matter; mind is the primary, the first cause in the system of the universe. And it is the power of mind, and by no means that of matter or physical substance, on which the individual facts and phenomena in the progress of the world depend. “That by observation we have found that certain events uniformly succeed certain other events is, then, a fact of great practical importance, enabling us to predict or conjecture, with more or less of certainty, the future course of events by which we are

liable to be affected. But it is thus important only for the reason that we have power in ourselves to act upon the future, and make it different from what, without our efforts, this uniformity in the flow of events indicates that it would be. If we had no such causal power, then this knowledge of the uniformity of the succession of certain consequents to certain antecedents would be of no practical importance, and inductive science would rank among those which merely furnish a play-ground for the intellect, or gratify an idle curiosity. It may be said that we only add our efforts to the other antecedents; but if we really do this, and thus change the subsequent events, or the order of them, we act as cause, modifying the effects of all causes extrinsic to us, though the relation of consequents to the antecedents, which embrace these efforts, is not less uniform than in other cases. Except in regard to instinctive actions, it is because of the uniformity in the effects of effort that we can know how to influence the future. This uniformity may arise from an occult connection, making it a necessity; but this does not affect the question of our freedom in making the effort" (Eng. ed. pp. 74, 75; Germ. ed. pp. 79, 80).

The above quotation gives the principal contents of the first letter (Eng. ed. pp. 8-80; Germ. ed. pp. 1-84). The second and larger letter (Eng. ed. pp. 81-254; Germ. ed. pp. 89-274) mainly treats the question advanced by Hartmann's latest philosophy — how to consider the action of the active subject, since it is influenced by such untold numbers of outward relations and events of all kinds. Can we, in the face of these latter, really speak of freedom in human willing and human action? Or is all that man speaks, thinks, and does perhaps only a necessary result of the space and time in which he finds himself? Is the world in general and particular ruled by something conscious or unconscious? (To use an illustration of my own, must the political eminence which the new German empire possesses since the year 1870 over other powers be considered a mere result of the position of certain political constellations that unconsciously favorably arranged themselves? Or must we regard it as the consciously intended fruit of its own knowing and willing, of its progress towards power and liberty?) As might be expected after the first letter, the author takes a firm stand on the ideal side, on the side of consciousness and freedom of mind as against matter. He does not over-rate the truth of such expressions as "motion and action of matter." But if what happens must needs be the result of effort in some potent agent, he says, and surely with justice: "We never think or speak of the effort of matter. All effort is of the mind, which has no other mode of exerting its power" (Eng. ed. p. 120; Germ. ed. p. 129). "An unconscious effort is in thought as absurd as an unfelt feeling" (Eng. ed. p. 129; Germ. ed. p. 139). Of unintelligent matter it must be said that it "must be moved by something not itself, and then cannot stop its motion or change its direction, but for these also requires to be acted

upon by something not itself. A combustible material does not stop or change its course to avoid a consuming fire. An intelligent being will of itself stop or change its action to avoid painful consequences. To the action of a being with a faculty of effort, wants demanding effort, and knowledge to apply its effort to the desired ends, no extrinsic or prior application of power or force is requisite; for all that is necessary is that it should perceive that there is an occasion — a reason — for putting forth its own inherent power" (Eng. ed. pp. 137, 138; Germ. ed. p. 149).

"It is urged by the advocates of necessity that the volitions are, and must be, in accordance with the disposition, inclination, desires, and habits; and, being thus necessitated, are not, and cannot be, free" (Eng. ed. p. 164; Germ. ed. p. 178). If this were true, we could not make criminals responsible for their offences; and society could do no more than to lock up criminals so long as there would be reason to expect criminal acts from them. In this connection, the author shows that we are logically reduced to the necessity of believing that the volition is conformed to the want and knowledge, not by any extrinsic power or force, but by the willing being himself; and such conforming being, in fact, the controlling or directing of his volition or effort, he in such volition or effort acts freely" (Eng. ed. p. 203; Germ. ed. p. 220). "The determination of a volition by the character is, in fact, the determination by the willing being" (Eng. ed. p. 210; Germ. ed. p. 227).

"The great question as to the relation between human freedom and the Divine government of the world receives the following answer from the author: "If there was any necessary incompatibility of Divine prescience with man's freedom in willing, he had, of these two alternatives, elected not to foreknow our volitions. . . . A Being of infinite wisdom does not require time to prepare in advance for what may arise, but can perceive at the instant what action is best; and if this preparation were necessary such a Being could anticipate every possible combination of conditions, and determine in advance what his action in each should be" (Eng. ed. p. 218; Germ. ed. p. 231). "God, even if he could foreknow the volitions of finite conative beings, may have chosen to limit his own knowledge, and not to foreknow them; and hence such volitions as they actually occur may become additions to his knowledge and the occasions of corresponding variations in his action. I have, however, also endeavored to show that all these variations may still be embraced in general rules of action in a more extended and complex uniformity, and that our efforts to ascertain the laws of nature, by which we are enabled to predict the recurrence of physical events, are only efforts to learn the uniform modes of God's action in reference to them. Even though there is a sphere in which his actions may be varied by that of other free agents, still there is a large material domain in which he may act as a sole First Cause,

and in which his action is not liable to be varied by increase of knowledge" (Eng. ed. pp. 220, 221; Germ. ed. p. 239). These are statements of philosophy in no respect inconsistent with the doctrines of Scripture. They find room for what the Scriptures tell us from the first page to the last — that the love of God wisely limits human freedom, but never in any wise destroys it. The Appendix (Eng. ed. pp. 255–281; Germ. ed. pp. 275–315) adds two interesting essays on the Existence of Matter, and our Notions of Infinite Space.' †

ARTICLE XIII.

NOTICES OF RECENT PUBLICATIONS.

A. GERMAN WORKS.

Böhmer's "History of the Development of the Scientific View of the World in Germany" (*Geschichte der Entwicklung der naturwissenschaftlichen Weltanschauung in Deutschland*), though of course not professedly polemical, is to a considerable extent so in reality. The author does not, indeed, take the idealistic or spiritualistic side in scientific questions; on the contrary, his sympathies seem in the main to be with the mechanical, sensualistic view of man's nature; but still he does not form the high estimate of the theories of Darwin to which such men as Hæckel and others incline. He allows the value of Darwin's investigations, but does not think his speculations altogether valid. It is an interesting contribution to the general subject.

Professor Karl Völker, in his "Popular Cosmogonic Lectures" (*Populäre Kosmogonische Vorträge*) favors a totally different view of the primeval development of our planet from that of the advocates of the theory of transmutation; namely, that which is based on the theory of ice ages, propounded by Schmidt. In this respect he is said to be akin to, if not a follower of, the celebrated botanist and palaeontologist, Professor Heer of Zürich.

Professor Hæckel of Jena, who almost out-Darwins Darwin in his popular lectures on the natural history of creation has met with some sharp criticism. In the course of these lectures he maintains that Goethe taught something like Darwinism; but Dr. Oscar Schmidt proves him to have confounded ideal transmutation, a metamorphosis of the animal and vegetable types, with the now popular doctrine of the descent of all living things from one or more original germs.

Between Hæckel and the celebrated traveller and ethnologist Dr. Bastian, who edits the valuable *Ethnologische Zeitschrift*, there have also been some hot skirmishes. Bastian says it is "childishness in the advocates of the