

ARTICLE IV.

PROOFS OF DIVINE EXISTENCE. ✓

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IN a late theological publication, account is given of the prevalent drift of opinion just now in Germany, as to the validity of previously accepted proofs of the Divine Existence. This prevalent current of thought, part of the reaction of Ritschlianism from the dogmatic and positive in theology,—good, in certain respects, as is the case with all reactions,—has also its extreme; and the question may be asked, whether such is not the result in this particular instance? The subject is so important that its discussion will not be out of place. The language of the article in question is singularly loose and indefinite in its use of terms; as also in its confusion of the two questions of the Divine Existence and the Divine Perfection. If there be the same confusion of thought and of expression in the writers spoken of, there need be no surprise at the result of their speculations.

“Efforts,” it says, “are constantly made to find some mathematical, scientific, or philosophical demonstration that God exists.” What is here meant by demonstration? Properly speaking, this word has reference to only one of three thus mentioned, the mathematical. It is only here that demonstration is possible; and mathematics cannot demonstrate a fact. Science or induction, in parts of its material and processes, deals not with demonstration, but in the probable. Philosophy, as in the region of first principles, self-evident or assumed to be so, cannot, in its very

nature, demonstrate them, especially the Principle of All-sufficient Reason, without which philosophy is not rationally possible. Truths, facts like that of the Divine existence, if proved as facts, must be by scientific or probable, not demonstrative evidence. Through such evidence, facts may be known, rationally certified, and made evident. The certitude, in the mind, from such evidence, the knowledge in such case, is as real, as rationally valid, as that from a mathematical process. Certainty, a state of mind, rational certitude, does not depend upon strict demonstration. The fact, thus proved and known, as it is not the result of demonstration, in one direction, so it is not that of faith, in another. Between these, there is an intermediate. Distinct, on the one side, from demonstration, and on the other from faith, there is rational, scientific, historical proof, and the certainty following. Such scientific proof and certainty, moreover, are not confined to the domain of physics. They belong, alike, to the psychological, the moral, the historical, and the theological.

And here we find the confusion of which we have already spoken. Wundt, one of the German theologians quoted, says, "We cannot prove a God. Rational, moral, and religious notions impel us to the idea of God, so there is valid ground for faith in him." Here the word "proof," covering all kinds, but just here meaning demonstration, is set over against rational, moral, and religious notions, proof probable. How in the absence of proof or evidence a rational, moral, or religious notion can impel to an idea, so as to afford ground for faith, in a fact without proof, is not explained. If rational or any other notions impel to an idea, the demand of reason, as of intelligent faith, is, How have we evidence, or proof, that this notion has its corresponding reality? Can it be verified? If so, it is the proper ground of faith. If not, the faith in it is credulity. While faith is distinguished from knowledge, it does not

imply the absence of knowledge. The man in the Gospel "saw and believed." His actual knowledge of facts visible to observation led to faith in the proper inferences from such knowledge. Those who saw and did not believe had the same proof; and their want of faith was in the moral and rational failure to give that proof its proper consideration.

So again, as illustrative of the same indefiniteness of expression, Kant is quoted as saying, "It is necessary to have the conviction of God, but not necessary to demonstrate the fact." Facts, as already insisted upon, are not demonstrable; are only established upon proof admitting of degrees. Is not demonstration here used, as by Wundt, as the synonym of proof? If so, what is the ground of this valid conviction of a fact, without proof? Is it rational or irrational? Perhaps a nice distinction will be attempted here between positively irrational and negatively irrational. Whether it helps, is another question. Is conviction without proof, with a rational being, a valid one? If not, the faith grounded in it, as in the case preceding, is only credulity. Those exercising such faith cannot give answer to those asking a reason for the hope that is in them, and the faith upon which it is founded.

"It is admitted," is another of these statements, "it is admitted that God is an object of faith, not of absolute knowledge." Absolute knowledge is unrelated knowledge. As no finite being can have such knowledge in reference to any object, so no such being can have such knowledge as to God. And this statement, in appearance of such immeasurable profundity, if not nonsense, is a mere truism. The real issue in this matter is not that of absolute knowledge, but of real, positive knowledge, knowledge resting upon sufficient rational evidence. Faith which is thus contrasted with absolute knowledge is trust or confidence, not in arguments proving the existence of God, not in the

knowledge of God supposing him known, but in God himself,—in his Person and character. Faith without knowledge or proof of the object of reliance and trust is faith in what? Men, it is to be said, have erected altars to an unknown God. The sort of faith which they had in him, was of no practical value.

“But there is room,” we are further told, “in Christianity for an agnosticism which denies that God is an object of science, strictly so-called, but which does not deny that he may be an object of faith.” Science is science, whether strictly so-called or not. Some people would say that physics, chemistry, biology, etc., are sciences strictly so-called, that psychology, ethics, theology are loosely so-called; in other words, are not sciences at all. When a theologian says this, he really says that the term theology is a misnomer, and that he, the theologian, is a humbug. Real science is truth certified, systematized, and unified. In all its fields, and in all its processes, as we have seen, it has its degrees of evidence, is not demonstrative, but satisfactorily provable. How God, or any other being, can be an object of faith is the difficulty with all these forms of so-called agnosticism. Can such Christianity say, with the Apostle, “I know him whom I have believed”? If it be urged that children and ignorant people have faith, the reply is, undoubtedly they do have it. But it is preceded, even in these, by some knowledge of God as the object of faith; upon evidence, rational grounds, the highest which, in their capacity, can be placed before them. “He that cometh” in such act of faith to God, “must believe that he is,” that he exists. How? By an evolution of the idea, without reason or evidence; and then by an act of the will believing in it? Is it not rather as he manifests himself, or is manifested in nature, in his word, or in the experience and through the testimony of others? As thus, to some degree, an object of knowledge, he can become one

of trust, of faith, of confidence. The needed degree of that knowledge will be different, in different cases. But in none will it be demonstration; in all, the faith resting upon it may be thoroughly rational.

But we are told again, "philosophy can show the necessity of faith; but it cannot transfer faith into knowledge." Perhaps not. But if philosophy proves the necessity of faith, in so doing, it also proves the necessity of some kind of truth or knowledge of it, in which such faith, if that of a rational being, must be grounded. That material, if not provided for in philosophy, is so elsewhere.

Again, "we must postulate God, as the basis of order, and the highest good. For reason, for conscience, and for all that is good in human association, the world without God is unmeaning." "Christian knowledge of God is based in Christian faith in him. Faith would lose its validity, if knowledge could be substituted in its place." Of course it would, or rather it would cease to be faith. But what the necessity, either of conflict or substitution? They both have their divinely established place and function; and in that Divine order one precedes the other. When a man says, "*Credo ut intelligam*," he means, "I accept facts, that I may understand them." But he must know them, as facts, thus to understand them. The apostles held up Christ to the faith of men. And they endeavored to call that faith into existence and exercise, by exhibiting, to their knowledge, the facts of his personal character and works. Demonstration does not exclude faith. Newton's demonstration of Divine power and presence, in every particle of matter, did not interfere with his faith, either in the Divine personality or his perfection. So again visible evidence, and knowledge derived therefrom, have no such destructive power. Our Lord's disciples and followers, as we have seen, had such knowledge and evidence. Their faith was called forth and confirmed by it. On the other

hand, others, with the same knowledge and evidence, went no further, did not attain to faith. Knowledge, demonstration, proof if you choose to call it, of the existence and claims of a person, and faith in that person, are very different things. But if the latter, it must, to some degree, be preceded by the former.

The peculiarity of this whole style of thought and discussion, which we are examining, is: faith is treated as a weak form of knowing; a conviction, not justified upon sufficiency of evidence or information, but meritorious, in its voluntary reception and action upon certain great truths, irrespective of their proper evidence. If those truths do not in themselves, or in their evidence, afford rational ground for such faith, it can only be called credulity.

While, therefore, heartily agreeing with one of these statements, "A firm faith in a personal God is the fundamental need of the day," it must be added, This want will never be met by any faith which cannot say, "I know him whom I believe." I know him in the manifestations he has made of himself in his world, and in his word, to my rational and moral nature; in the revelations of that word, to my spiritual nature; in the experimental tests of such faith, afforded in his promises and dealings.

But the point, thus far, at issue, is often transferred, in this discussion, to another, and yet treated as if it were the same: not, whether we can know the fact of the Divine existence, but whether we can comprehend the Divine perfection. And the inference implied, if not the latter, not the former. "The attributes we ascribe to God," it is said, "are beyond the reach of our full comprehension. Our sphere is the relative, the limited, while we speak of God as the Absolute, the Infinite. In the Bible such attempts are recognized as futile."

The reply to this is twofold. First, we may, and do, take rational cognizance of ideas and facts which are be-

yond our comprehension. As has been said, while we may not comprehend, we do apprehend them. We speak of the Eternal and the Infinite. Do we mean temporal and finite; or do we mean a positive of which they are negatives? We do not fully comprehend them. But so too it is with many other things of which we speak, and have knowledge. Do we fully comprehend anything? "*Omnia exeunt in mysterium,*" *in incognitum*. Who fully comprehends an atom or a molecule? Who fully comprehends himself, the facts of his own being, or that of those around him? Does he not therefore know them; know them beyond the possibility of doubt or questioning?

So again, when it is said, "that in the Bible all efforts to comprehend God, in the infinitude of his perfection, are treated as futile," it is also to be said, that men are told to know him, and to reduce their knowledge to practice. While the question is asked in one place, "Who by searching can find out God to perfection?" the precept is urged, in another, "Acquaint thyself with God, and be at peace with him; thereby good shall come unto thee." There is no inconsistency in these passages. The first, while it implies a limitation to the capacity of the human searcher to know fully the object of his search, at the same time implies the existence, to some degree, of that capacity. The second indicates the obligation to use and exercise that capacity in a proper manner. So, too, when the Apostle says, "The world by wisdom knew not God," he says, that "when they knew God they glorified him not as God." As showing, moreover, how they knew him, he says, in the same connection, "The invisible things of him are clearly seen, being understood in the things that are made," i.e., in the works of creation. There is the same contrast in these two passages of the New Testament, as in those quoted from the Old Testament. One of them affirms human incapacity to discern and to sound all the depths of

the Divine counsels; the other, the capacity, and consequent obligation, to recognize and know the Author of those counsels.

The two things are ever to be kept apart. To treat them as identical is itself confusion, and can be productive only of its increase. The question of the proof, or evidences, of the Divine existence has to do with only one of these passages; those which affirm that God, as existent, can be known; that he ought to be known; that men, not thus knowing, are morally delinquent. To whom do "the heavens declare the glory of God"? To whom does the firmament manifest his handiwork? To angels and archangels? Yes; but also to men. And men are morally and spiritually criminal in not seeing them; in not recognizing and honoring the Divine Author from whom they proceed.

In some form or other, therefore, it is to be said; and whether by proof or not, this fact, as a fact, not only of faith but of professed knowledge, is widely accepted; and this, too, by every variety of capacity and cultivation. Whatever the prevalent view and opinion of German theologians, just now, as to this fact, and the validity of its proofs, there was a different one twenty years ago. It is not hazardous to say, that there will be still another twenty years hence. It is very often said, indeed, depreciatively, that men receive this truth, not upon rational evidence or because they have verified it themselves, but traditionally, and in faith, from the parent, or teacher, or current opinion. Doubtless it is often thus received. But is it thus necessarily held? Does its reception in that way at all interfere with their own subsequent verification of such truth, and by strictly scientific processes? It is traditional, and first known to the pupil in that way, that the squares of the two sides are equal to that of the hypotenuse. Is the validity of his subsequent demonstration at all affected by his previous traditional acceptance? So, also, as to

facts of history. The manner in which one first comes to the knowledge of a truth, and the evidence upon which he finally verifies, accepts, and rests upon it, need to be carefully distinguished. Specially is such distinction to be kept in view, in these proofs of the Divine existence.

We thus come to the issue of these proofs or evidences. The fact itself, as one of human belief and conviction, of open acceptance, is undeniable. Men, in some way or other, rationally or irrationally, logically or illogically, know of it everywhere; affirm their conviction of it; and, to a greater or less degree, regulate their lives by it. Such conviction, moreover, is not the inheritance of a special class or condition. It is common, alike, to the civilized and savage, the cultivated and uncultivated, the highest and lowest forms of intellectual capacity and acquisition. There are, indeed, numberless diversities, as to certain things connected with this accepted fact of the Divine existence; as to his unity, his perfections, his manifestations to human knowledge and apprehension. "How comes it to pass," says a theological writer, speaking of one of these facts, the Divine unity, "that so many nations, even of those possessed of the highest culture, should, with their clear and comprehensible view of the Divine existence, have been so obstinately polytheistic? Much indeed of this polytheism was pantheistic; and some of it consistently would have been monotheism. But, however as to these points, this truth of the Divine Existence was and is accepted." Was and is that acceptance rational? Did the faith, grounded in it, have a sufficient reason? Is it capable of satisfactory proof, of rational verification?

Of course, as already intimated, there are two distinct issues in this matter. How do we actually get this idea; how do we rationally verify it? As to the first, is it by communication or by rational intuition? If the former,

we may go back to a primitive communication, from a Divine source or in some other way. This, to the first generation, would have been a necessity. If not thus, by communication, is it by rational process, and intuition? This intuitive capacity, it is to be noted, demands for its exercise something as an occasion. As, for instance, we cognize the world objective, to ourselves subjective, and there comes the intuition of being. As, again, we find our bodies extended surface and with dimensions, there comes the further intuition of space. As, again, we know ourselves, in these successive experiences, there comes, through these, those of duration and personal identity. Is there any occasion in which an intuition of God is thus presented? How far do the facts of cause and effect, of responsibility, of dependence, become occasions to the emergence of this idea? Dependence, it is said, looks for, and in him finds its object. Accountability implies some being to whom it has regard; as effects, in their very nature, find a cause. That the ultimate inference, in these cases, is rationally legitimate, we may not hesitate to affirm. That these facts of human nature itself, as an effect as accountable, as dependent, do by rational necessity imply a Cause adequate, and independent, may be safely asserted.

But what may possibly be done rationally, by human capacity, and what is done actually, are very different things. The conviction and feeling of dependence, as those of accountability and imperfection, have probably been the occasion of the intuition of God. More frequently they have verified, and quickened into practical activity, the truth of God, already known, and in a different way. There is, we may say, an aptness in human nature for this truth; a capacity for its reception, so that it is, prior to proof, accepted and acted upon. Men, if left to themselves, might find God. Some, perhaps, would actually do so; and be rationally justified in so doing. As a matter of

fact, however, they usually receive this truth by communication from others. Human nature thus finds God, prior to argumentative proof of his existence and perfection. Those proofs have, at the same time, their place and value. They sustain the conclusion reached, and this whether by intuition or communication.

Most strikingly suggestive are the dictates of Scripture as to this subject. Its assertion is, that such conviction of God is not only rationally and morally justifiable, but that the want of it involves moral delinquency. It is "the fool," not the idiot and simpleton, but the perverse and wicked fool, who says "in his heart," "his wish," "there is no God." The Nineteenth Psalm, as to manifestations of God in the natural world, and the revelation of him in his perfect law, and the declarations of the first and second chapters of Romans, are too clear upon this point to admit of doubt or questioning. Men are everywhere contemplated as knowing God, at least in his existence; as capable of such knowledge; as morally and spiritually delinquent and criminal, if not deepening and confirming such knowledge, by acting upon it, and thus making it the knowledge of personal experience.

Looking, then, upon some of these proofs that have been offered, we first encounter that which has been most questioned, and in regard to which the greatest difficulties have been made,—the ontological or metaphysical, usually designated as the *a priori* argument. From its very nature, it is an argument for the few, rather than for the many; requires habits of thought to which few are accustomed. This of course does not interfere with the fact of its validity. As in the higher, and even indeed in the ordinary, mathematics, the many, *ex necessitate*, accept and act rationally upon the conclusions of the few. The simple question is, are the processes rational? can the result be rationally validated? Is there in the fact of perfect being,

the cause of all other beings as effects, that which proves its actuality?

One form of this argument, known as the Anselmic, derives its conclusion, of actual being, from the fact that this idea is one not only of rational conception to finite capacity, but that in this idea, validating itself as rational, is necessarily included the particular, or attribute of existence. I can think, satisfy myself, of the rationality of this idea of Perfect Being. In that idea is included the fact of actual existence. To think a being dependent, or non-existent, is to think him imperfect. Perfect Being non-existent at any time is unthinkable, is a contradiction in terms. Does this fact of necessary thought, included in this conception, justify the affirmation of the corresponding reality, or Perfect Being actually existing? Upon the principles of the philosophy of Realism, that valid conceptions have their corresponding reality, somewhere and somehow, the reply would be in the affirmative. The necessity of the particular actual, in the general idea, would of course go to sustain such conclusion.

But, apart from this philosophy of realism, there are difficulties. The idea of a thing in many cases cannot be accepted as proof of its actual existence. Is there that, in this idea of Perfect Being, that carries with it this conclusion? What is there in it which constrains to its acceptance as a reality? Here we are led to note its peculiarity already mentioned, its necessity. That necessity is not, that, as a matter of fact, all men, everywhere, necessarily think, or come to a distinct conception of it. Hundreds, thousands, the great majority of the human race, never do anything of the kind. But with those that do, wherever and whenever and by whomsoever thought, this necessity of thought is included in it. As already noted, to think Perfect Being, intelligently and consistently, is to think actually Existing Being. Perfect Being non-existent is

unthinkable,—as unthinkable, as much a contradiction in terms, as a round triangle, or intersecting parallels. Atheism and agnosticism do not accept this idea; the former subtracting the fact of actual existence, the latter the capacity of self-manifestation. The same is to be said of all materialistic conceptions of the author of nature. The Being, the God, of such systems, is imperfect. He may, therefore, in this fact, be non-existent. But not so with Perfect Being.

As a matter of fact, moreover, when such idea is accepted, it is never as a mere idea, but, as a truth, that of such a Being existing and working. This is not, as urged by some, an abstraction. It is not through perception. It is not an innate idea. It is rather the operation of an innate or connate rational capacity, the cognition, under certain conditions, by that capacity, of its proper object. Independent alike of abstraction and perception, the idea, under these its proper conditions, is intuitively known, validates itself, as a rational conception. Kant objected, to this argument, that thinking a triangle did not involve an actually existing one. Not one of iron, or brass, or wood, it may be replied. But one as a mathematical reality. Think three straight lines, of equal length, touching at their points, and a triangle is the necessary result. So here in Perfect Being, consciously or unconsciously, is included the particular of actual existence.

But there is another necessity of human thought, in which this same idea of Perfect Being finds its validity. We cannot consistently think on certain subjects, or in certain directions, without affirming or implying it. All finite and limited thought, for its existence and explanation, goes back to that which is infinite and unlimited; a Perfect Mind or Being, of thought and of action. Just as in thinking and knowing space, we cognize the idea or fact of its infinitude, just as in that of succession, we get

that of endless duration; so in that of the finite thinking being, we recognize its implication, the thinking Mind or Being Infinite. So too with the ideas of the right and the good. With their intuition is that of their perfection; and this, not as a matter of choice to the thinker, but a necessity of his rational, thinking capacity. That which the mind thinks, and cannot avoid thinking, must be accepted as objectively true. Otherwise all knowledge is unattainable, whether in physics or metaphysics. Necessary conviction is conviction in its highest possible form, the ground of rational thinking, of all rational action.

Unconsciously this idea goes with us, and is implied in all rational processes. Such idea, it may be, is first given by tradition, or otherwise. Thus given, in various modes is sought its rational verification. The language of the Patriarch describes the two stages of human experience in this matter: "I have heard of thee," traditionally and in other ways from others, "by the hearing of the ear." But now, "mine eye," the eye of my spiritual and moral being, in the light of these truths of thy necessary existence, "seeth thee," gives me assurance of the existence and perfection.

Thus far, the proof ontological, or *a priori*. How as to that more frequently urged, and more within the sphere of popular apprehension, the *a posteriori*,—that from effects to causes? These latter, in the history of human speculation, stood first, were urged by Socrates and Aristotle, long before the *a priori* had been exhibited, or even thought of. Their value, too, as standing by themselves, can be easily estimated and understood.

Take that, first of all, from contingency, change, movement, succession; dependence, in these, one upon the other, manifestly going on in the world around us. "All things," is the language of atheistic unbelief, alike in the sphere of irreligious blasphemy and in that of scientific

and philosophical speculation, "all things continue as they were from the beginning." Then there was a beginning; whether by creation or by material evolution, so far as this argument is concerned, we do not stop to dispute. There was change, movement, succession. In numberless forms and varieties they have continued, and are continuing. All such change, movement, beginning, has explanation, its only satisfactory explanation, in some sufficient cause, in some originating efficient. The only such originating efficient known to us, or conceivable, and that in general experience, is a will, that of personality. The opening words of Genesis meet this necessity of human thought: "In the beginning God." If no God, rationally no beginning. Nothing here need be urged, as to the character of these changes, their extent, the indications in them of wide-reaching intelligence, wisdom, or benevolence. So far as concerns the argument at this point, no such indications may be found; all may be inextricably complicated. But still, in their existence and changes, they demand an originating efficient, such as is only to be found in personality, their adequate cause.

The world is thus full of energies and forces, of various kinds, or rather forms of substances, material, physical, vital, muscular, nervous, intellectual, moral, and spiritual. Even in its minutest elements, the atomic and molecular, there is movement, action, and interaction. But no one of them has that in itself that accounts for its first movement, or for its capacity of continuance. Those elements, as are all their various forms and modifications, in the previous ages of our globe, the changes that are, and have been, and are to be, demand a cause in the past, as in the present, and the anticipated future, for their beginning and continuance. None of them, in themselves or in their collocations with the others, constitute anything of this originative character.

Let the inquirer start where he may, with gravity, affin-

ity, vitality, muscular energy, or nerve or brain force, he has something back of them all for which he must give account, and of which none of them can be the final explanation. Supposing him to rise above these, to mind, to intelligent and rational personality, but only such as he knows it, mind beginning to be, limited and transitory, and he is still without the object of his search. In other words, we have events, changes, the beginnings of existence and of movement, of which there is no account, no reasonable explanation, except in the prior existence and action of uncaused intelligent personality. The question as to the infinitude of that Being as to duration, unbeginning as the necessary ground of all beginnings, is of course implied. Whether, as to immensity, this can only be asserted, as commensurate with the extent and variety of the phenomena, of which it is the ground and explanation. For all practical purposes, it is infinitude and immensity to our capacity of comprehension. But, as to this, for the present, we postpone specific examination.

But, in these events and changes, beginnings and continuances, there is something more,—certain features and characteristics, pointing to the same conclusion, and heightening its significance. These numberless phenomena, of change and movement, are not isolated and disconnected. They constitute a cosmos, an orderly arrangement and connection: orderly, not only in their relations to each other in space, but in time. Amidst numberless diversities, there are controlling unities; these indicating a central unity, all continuing from moment to moment in a series of uniformities, comprehended under others, of wider extent and operation. All this implies control, supervision, arrangement,—multiplies the evidence of intelligence, in the originating and controlling agency. Mere change and changes, as we have seen, necessitate a power originative. The extent, in duration and space, of such changes, their

number and myriadfold variety, as further seen, necessitates intelligence and power, a commensurate originative agency; and this irrespective of the character of such changes, whether orderly or not, whether intelligible or not, in their connections. Such extent and variety of material, even as a chaos, would demand its adequate ground and explanation.

Contemplated, however, in the additional aspect of Cosmos, of orderly arrangement and connection; of laws and controlling forces, of unifying principles and operations, as manifestly a system, and as related to a wider system, lying outside of and beyond our globe, the evidence of intelligence and power is increased. There is manifested an extent of resources, a capacity of dealing with them, beyond our capacity of comprehension; and yet, within our range of undoubted apprehension. I look at a piece of complicated human mechanism, many parts of which, in their exact relation to others, as to the whole structure, I do not understand. At the same time, I recognize, without difficulty or doubt, the object of that machine as a whole, can see that it is effectively working, to its attainment. We may know only in part. But that implies a whole, and that so far we know it. In that part, as thus known, are involved certain rational presuppositions, an originating efficient,—a personality.

But there are stages beyond this. Thus far we have found the facts of beginnings, of change, movements in numberless forms, extending through long periods of existence. Further, in and with them, are the facts of orderly arrangement, controlling principles, unifying agencies, an agency in which alone they find such unity. We pass now to another indication, that of specific purpose, manifest intent and design, to the attainment, through these changes and movements, of a certain object or objects. The Cosmos itself implies the intent and purpose of its origin and

existence. "A fortuitous Cosmos," to use the language of a scientist, "is to most persons utterly inconceivable; yet there is no other alternative than a designed Cosmos. To accomplish anything by process, or by an instrument, argues greater not less power, than to do it directly; and even if we knew to-day all the causes of variation, and understood more thoroughly than we do the method of evolution, we should only carry the sequence of causes a step further back, and get no nearer to the Infinite or Original Cause." But there, in this general result, the evidence of purpose might terminate.

We, therefore, beyond this general object, look for others of a more special character. And, in all directions, they make themselves manifest. Whether intended or not, the Cosmos is not only an arrangement, but an orderly arrangement, to the attainment, in its parts, of certain manifest purposes. The organic world, for instance, did not precede, in order of existence, the inorganic. The animal, again, did not precede the vegetable. The higher animal life did not precede the lower. Why not? Was it all just so, and without a reason or purpose? Or, as a purpose, or the result of a purpose, was actually attained, was not such purpose had in view, and distinctly contemplated? So, too, as to the numberless adaptations of the various natural forces, in their interconnections, physical, chemical, vital, instinctive, intellectual, æsthetic, moral, and spiritual. How is it, in these, that the lower is made the condition of the higher: that the higher has the capacity of appropriating the lower, and using it for its purposes? So again in the spheres of vegetable and animal structure, their relation to each other, the adaptations in themselves, as in each to the other, to certain manifest purposes of existence. A modern scientist has informed us that the eye is not a perfect instrument. In one sense it is not. A perfect instrument of vision would enable its owner to see

microbes in one moment, and the satellites of Jupiter or of Saturn in the next. But what use would one man in fifty millions have for such an instrument? And, with its necessary complications, if damaged, how and at what expenditure of trouble could such damage be repaired? So the scientist, alluded to, tells us, after all, that it is perfect, in another sense; that, in the actual eye, and with its actual arrangement, we have the best instrument for practical purposes, i.e. the purpose for which it was constructed,—the perfection of adaptation. As with the eye, so with the ear, so with the hand, so with every bodily organ of the system, human or animal. It is sometimes objected to this argument of design, that when investigators begin to look and inquire for it, they have already, in their minds, that for which they are seeking. Of course they have. But does the presence or absence of any specific ideas in the mind affect the question of its validity, as related to any particular object? The teleologist is not seeking to originate the idea of intelligence, of purpose, or design. As himself a consciously designing and purposing agent, he already has it. His inquiry is, can this idea, in certain phenomena, be found and verified? Sidney Smith, one very hot evening, expressed the wish that “he could go out, in some cool spot, and sit in his bones.” The men who make this objection would have the teleologist do as Sidney wanted to do, if indeed his bones would be left him. Quite as little to the purpose is the objection, of late so frequently referred to, in connection with Paley’s argument: that it is mechanical, in its nature and modes of illustration. But this is only saying, that a fact myriad-fold in the modes and particulars of its illustrations was, in this case, illustrated in only one particular way. Paley’s stone, now to the intelligent geologist, affords evidence of order and design, as well as his watch. But the evidence of the watch is not thereby at all diminished. It is to be

said, that some who have faulted Paley, and have taken their better way, have not succeeded half as well, or presented anything like as effective argument. To the plain unsophisticated reader, open to conviction,—and arguments are of little real value to any others,—it will always commend itself as forcible and successful. The advance, indeed, of physical and other sciences, has greatly enlarged the material of such argument; increased ten-thousand-fold this evidence of design in the worlds of matter, of life, and of mind; is found, in what may be called raw material, as in structures. But it is substantially the same fact, to a greater or less degree, which they all exhibit; that, everywhere of purposing intelligence;—design, moreover, not only of all comprehending intelligence, but of wisdom, of benevolence,—actually securing benefit and welfare.

As has been urged, it does not require a great amount of information, or material of fact, to make manifest, in objects, this feature of design, of intended purpose. The imperfectly shaped donkey, chalked out by a boy on a board fence, the arrangement of the mud pies in a baby house, or that of the ribbons on a doll's bonnet, may put it beyond the possibility of questioning. The question, at issue in this case, is, not only that of purpose, but of its character and extent: is it wise and beneficial, or malignant; is it measurable or immeasurable,—in other words finite or infinite? The difficulty, with some minds, seems to be its extent and superabundance. In other words, as it is everywhere, it loses its significance; and, with this, its evidential value. Millions upon millions of arrangements and adaptations, running through millions of years, securing the survival of races and organisms, with no purpose or intent to that effect beforehand. Why accept the fact, upon such slight evidence, in one case, and refuse acceptance, with such myriadfold evidence, in the other?

This argument, the teleological, that of an adequate or-

iginating and purposing Cause, as the rational ground and explanation of all finite existences as effects, is capable, in various respects, of expansion and elevation. Take it, for instance, in its relation to the conscious human facts, of intelligent, rational, and moral existence. Unconsciously, at each stage of the argument already urged, this relation has been assumed. As we have found beginnings, changes, movements, an originating power, that is, will, personality, explains them. As we have seen in them the indications of order, a cosmical arrangement, so an intelligence and will have been accepted as their explanation. As we have found purpose and design in such order, we have risen, in the analogue of our nature, to a rational Agent, thus purposing and accomplishing. And, thus in these outward indications, as in the inward fact of ourselves, personal agents, we are led to a Personal Agent, not less, but more, as the explanation of the fact of our personal existence. The adequate Cause of the human personality cannot be less than that personality, one of its effects. In that effect, an intelligence, rational, moral, and spiritual personality, a being capable of knowing, purposing, and doing,—of thus purposing, and as right or wrong, of referring such action or doing, in its results, to a moral law or system recognized as in operation. Man, thus formed in the image of God, is the proof of God; that God, the Supreme and adequate Cause and Former, is the satisfactory explanation of such effect. These, and similar facts, reveal him as alone sufficient to their production and existence. In this existence and nature, of the dependent and finite being, is the proof and evidence, the rational necessity, for that of the Infinite and Self-existent. "In him we live, and move, and are." Only in him is the sufficient Cause of such existence, of its continued perpetuation.

But supposing it accepted, as it sometimes unwillingly is, there is immediately urged the further difficulty: What

evidence, in this or in what has been previously urged, of the infinitude of this originating, ordering, and purposing Being and Author? The universe is finite. This, an effect, if not a full measure of its cause, is the limit of our knowledge of such cause. There is no leap from the finite universe to an Infinite Author. In one way, perhaps, not. But if there be no stopping-point short of that Infinite Author, the leap can be made. And the result may show that it is the only rational course to be pursued. What do we mean by finite? So far as we are capable of looking at the universe, it is infinite to us. And it is really contrasted, as a negative effect, from an idea positive, that of the Infinite as its necessary opposite. In other words, we have this idea of the Infinite, however we get it; this, too, as positive, as the finite is negative. By no possibility can we contemplate the space in which this universe is contained, as anything but infinite. The duration in which it exists is without end or beginning. Is the Personal intelligence and Power, filling them and working in them, less than coexistent and coextensive? If not, what less than the Infinitude of his Being can be the ground of his existence and working? Supposing, however, an originating, ordering, and designing agent less than infinite, can we, under the law of adequate causation, stop short of an Infinite and Eternal Being, as the ground of that finite agent's existence; as of any and of every higher finite being intermediate giving him existence?

When, therefore, it is said there is no leap from the finite to the infinite, from the dependent existent to the independent Self-existent, the reply may be made, such leap is not necessary. The ideas are given together. You cannot have the negative finite intelligently, and avoid having the positive infinite. The only possible satisfactory explanation of the existence of the former, is the preëxistence of the latter. This necessary Cause and ground of all exist-

ence, as a Personality, originating, controlling, and purposing, has in himself all and more than is in any and all finite personalities, called by him into existence. Taking away from him all defect and imperfection of which we ourselves have knowledge, attributing to him all perfection and excellence which we can conceive, and we have, by necessity of thought, the Infinitude of Personality: intelligence, will, rational, moral, and spiritual Perfection.

Thus reaching our conclusion, let us briefly retrace the steps leading to it. First, in the very structure of the intellectual and rational nature is embedded, so to speak, this idea of the infinite and perfect. The finite, the imperfect, negations, cannot be thought or spoken without implying the infinite and perfect, their positives. This idea, which cannot be consistently thought, but as a reality, accepted as a reality, validates all rational operations, goes with us into all investigations of phenomena, their origin, and modes of existence. Starting with this *a priori*, we encounter, *a posteriori*, the distinct fact of change, changes, manifest beginnings, in these changes, the necessitated fact of a cause, a power originant, and adequate to their production. With the agnostic, at this point, we recognize this adequate originative cause, even if we know nothing of his or its essential nature. But, further, these changes are not mere changes and beginnings, fortuitous and unrelated. They constitute a connected system. There is, in them, orderly arrangement of part to part, of these various parts to a whole. It is not a chaos, but a cosmos. The adequate cause already demanded for movement, changes, and beginnings, in the nature of those movements and changes, is further revealed, as an intelligence;—as having the knowledge as well as power of originating and sustaining these forces and movements to their unified result. But, still further, in this cosmos of orderly system and arrangement, are to be found specific indications of design

and purpose, having manifestly in view certain ends or purposes of welfare, and benefit to vegetable and animal existences, revealing and necessitating purpose and will, in its Author and Controller. Last of all, as this originating Author of all these effects is adequate to their production and continuance, so, as such Author, he is personal,—all that is in finite personality and more, the Infinite Personal Cause and Self-existing Being. As the physical energy and law is the image of his power, as the cosmical arrangement is that of his skill, as the teleological is that of his wisdom and goodness; so is the personal finite, that of his Personality Infinite. He, the Author and Originator of the universe, sufficient to its production and sustenance, is the Self-existent and Infinite,—the necessary ground of that universe, as of any and every finite being, intermediate to its production. “Of him, and through him, and to him are all things.”

And here is to be borne in mind the point urged in the earlier part of this discussion: the difference between perfect comprehension,—and distinct apprehension. It is sometimes urged, for instance, in regard to the arguments presented, of order and design, that it is anthropomorphic, construed after the analogies of finite human personalities. Could it be rationally construed in any other way? If we were divine, or angelic, or beastly, we might take another course. But not otherwise. The theomorphic is above us. So is the angelomorphic. The theriomorphic, the botano, the chemico, the physico, is below us. If we possessed divine or angelic capacities, we might use them. If we construe ourselves, much more Deity, by those below us, we degrade ourselves and degrade him, in our conceptions. This last effort indeed is often made; and we have constructions of the universe out of mere physical, chemical, or vital forces, and upon their analogies. How the personal human constructor came to exist, in such case, be-

comes the problem: a problem solved, in too many cases, by the abdication of moral and spiritual personality, the hopeless plunge of the speculator and constructor himself into the slough of materialism. This is the difficulty with all kinds of evolution, not preceded by the involution of intelligent purpose. The muddle, in this whole evolution discussion, has been the application of a term which properly belongs to the sphere of vitality, biology, to that of chemistry and physics below, and to that of intelligence and volition above. Facts and processes, loosely analogous, are thus construed, as strictly identical. The result is, of course, hopeless confusion. The word "development," in fashion forty years ago, while often running into the same confusion, did not have the material associations of this last word, "evolution." The beginning here must be from above. In our own personality we have the highest known form of beginning. In the necessity of an adequate Cause for this finite personality, as in the nature and capacities of that personality, we are led to the truth of Infinite, Self-existent Personality. There is not in this full comprehension. At the same time, there is distinct and satisfactory apprehension. The proofs and conclusions are such as are accepted and acted upon in other matters, and with reference to all forms, whether of human speculation or of action. To refuse such acceptance, in other matters, would be irrational. Why not so here? Thus it might be argued, looking at the matter as one of mere speculation. How much more so, in view of the immeasurable interests and obligations involved in a right decision!

As an instance of hypothetical induction, the argument may be thus stated:—

Problem: Universe in its phenomena, material, organic, instinctive, rational, and moral, its adequate explanation.

A. Hypothesis of matter, atoms, molecules, vortices, material energy. Fails to account for life, or mind, or the order and purpose manifest.

B. Hypothesis of cohesion, affinity, and vitality. Either one, or all combined, fail to account for the most important phenomena.

C. Hypothesis of natural law. Law, in the sense either of force, or of mode of sequence, accounts for nothing. In one of these senses it is the way in which a thing goes on. In the other, the energy or operative power. But in neither is there properly Cause, adequate and originant.

D. Hypothesis of finite Personality. No finite intelligence or personality, of which we can have conception, is adequate either to the origination or perpetuation of this union of matter and of mind.

E. Hypothesis of Infinite Personality. Adequate, satisfactory. It is so in itself, so in its exclusion of any and all others inferior.

Thus meeting all the demands of the problem, and doing it, to the exclusion of all other forms of solution, it claims rational acceptance.