

# BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL STUDIES

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THE SUPERNATURAL  
WILLIAM BRENTON GREENE, JR.

- I.—*Definition.* 1. Though spiritual, the Supernatural: a. Is not identical with all the spiritual, nor is it plural; b. Its distinction is that it is the Uncaused, the Self-Subsistent, the Autonomous.
2. The points specially to be guarded in this definition are:  
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- II.—*Importance of this doctrine.* 1. In Christian Apologetics. 2. In Christian Dogmatics. 3. In Philosophy. 4. In Science. 5. In Ethics. 6. In Religion, Civilization and Human Achievement. 7. In the Christian Religion, according to its own claim. 8. With regard to the hope of the world.
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# THE SUPERNATURAL

## I.

### DEFINITION.

By the Supernatural we do not mean the spiritual. Yet this has been and is a common conception of it. The distinction between the Supernatural and the Natural is held to be the distinction between moral freedom and physical necessity, between spirit and matter. Such thinkers embrace within the Supernatural not only God, but angels and men. That is, all that is truly spiritual and so, because self-initiating, able to modify and even to break through the necessary succession of physical causes and effects they call supernatural. Thus Bushnell<sup>1</sup> defines the Supernatural as "Whatever it be that is, either not in the chain of material cause and effect, or which acts on the chain of causes and effects, in nature, from without the chain." So Hickok when discussing the "Valid Being of the Soul," says<sup>2</sup>, "The facts of a comprehending—not merely conjoining, nor connecting—power over nature, and of an ethical experience, prove the soul to be supernatural." Thus, and in this representing many living and influential authors, William Adams Brown writes<sup>3</sup>, "The insight that law is universal is matched by the higher insight that it is only in consciousness that we find law. Thus, the supernatural receives its true meaning of the personal, and the false anti-thesis between nature and the supernatural is removed. The supernatural is the natural seen in its spiritual significance." So, too, he says<sup>4</sup>, "This sharp division between nature and the supernatural science no longer recognizes. It knows but one

<sup>1</sup>*Nature and the Supernatural*, p. 37.

<sup>2</sup>*Rational Psychology*, pp. 540, 541.

<sup>3</sup>*Christian Theology in Outline*, p. 229.

<sup>4</sup>*Methodist Review Quarterly*, Jan., 1911, p. 40.

world, both natural and supernatural, or, as we express it in the more familiar terms, both material and spiritual."

This way of thinking is, however, misleading, inadequate and untrue. It is misleading in that it assumes what is yet to be proved. As Henry B. Smith wrote,<sup>5</sup> "The implication or tacit assertion that the Supernatural and the spiritual are identical—that all which is truly spiritual is also supernatural, is the unproved and disputable position." It is a question, and a vital one, whether God and man are essentially the same. It is the question which divides the Old Theology from what is called the "New Theology." This definition, therefore, hides the issue. To accept it as a guide in controversy would blind us to the chief contention. Again, this mode of thinking is inadequate in that it does not reach to the heart of the question. This is not whether there is a kind of being above physical nature and so superior to the chain of necessary causes. There are many who deny even this; but there are many, too, who, while they admit both the reality and the transcendence of spirit as spirit, take, as we have seen, the ground that the human spirit and the Divine Spirit are essentially one. That is, the question is not whether man is above nature; it is whether there is anything above man. If there is not, then no argument is advanced by defining the Supernatural as the spiritual; if there is, then the definition contains no reply. Hence, it is inadequate. To get any where, we must ask, not is there being which is supernatural in the sense of spiritual, but is there being which is supernatural in the sense of absolute, that is, independent and self-existent because uncaused. Once more, the definition under consideration is untrue. It assumes, even when it does not assert, that human freedom and divine freedom are one and the same inasmuch as both are superior to physical or necessary causation. This is the reason why both should be classed as supernatural. The truth, however, is that, though both are alike with respect to this superiority, yet in another and more important respect they are radically unlike. The law of cause and effect, while it differs, does not break down when applied to the human will. As H. B. Smith

<sup>5</sup> *Apologetics*, p. 21.

says,<sup>6</sup> "If it did, then there would be pure contingency and the element of no law pervading the system." Physical and human nature, therefore, are alike in the most comprehensive and significant respect. They are both of them, though differently, yet really, caused and determined. They both of them presuppose a creator and reveal a preserver and governor. They are not, like that creator, preserver and governor, uncaused, self-subsistent and autonomous. This is the distinction in comparison with which all other distinctions are as nothing, and it is to this distinction that the definition of the Supernatural as the spiritual is untrue.

Again, by the Supernatural we do not mean being that, though uncaused, self-subsistent and autonomous, is plural, that is, made up of many such distinct and independent beings. Such a conception is on its face a contradiction. To go no further, what is autonomous must be single. Absolute sovereignty and a plurality of even federated gods are inconsistent.

By the Supernatural, then, we do mean, being that is above the sequence of *all* nature whether physical or spiritual; substance that is not caused, and that is not determined whether physically and necessarily as in the case of physical nature or rationally and freely as in the case of spiritual nature; in a word, unique reality the essence of whose uniqueness is that the reality is uncaused, self-subsistent and autonomous. We call this Supernatural the Infinite to denote the absence of limitation. We call it also the Absolute to express perfect independence both in being and action. We call it, too, the Unconditioned to emphasize freedom from every necessary relation. In short, we apply all three terms to it to affirm the absence of every restriction. Such is the Supernatural that we are about to consider. Does it exist? Does it manifest itself? What is its nature? If a person, can he reveal himself immediately as such? These are the inquiries which we shall raise. And the radical distinctness of the Supernatural from the natural, whether physical or spiritual; and the singleness of the Supernatural,—these are the two positions which our definition as it has been unfolded will call on us to guard most carefully.

<sup>6</sup> *Apologetics*, p. 22.

## II.

## IMPORTANCE OF THE INQUIRY.

Though as abstract and difficult as any, it is more important, because more fundamental, than all. This may be seen in the various departments of thought and life.

It is self-evidently so in Christian Apologetics. The subject-matter of this science is the proof, not of the superiority nor even of the uniqueness, but of the supernaturalness of the Christian religion. The aim of apologetics is to show that Christianity is supernatural and, therefore, superior to and unique among the religions of the world. Thus Christ is to be presented as the Saviour of men, not because he grew up out of the natural, but because he came down from the Supernatural. It is this that makes him, and it is only this that could make him, our almighty Redeemer. That is, apologetics presupposes the Supernatural. It would be as absurd were the the latter not real as would be the attempt on the part of one in Europe to prove that he was a citizen of the United States if there were no United States. Apologetics, therefore, cannot ignore our inquiry. Strictly speaking, it must begin with it. The first and the most necessary work of Fundamental Apologetics is to vindicate the Supernatural as a distinct and a single being.

Similar is its place in Christian dogmatics. Deny the Supernatural and the very substance of this science is evaporated. What it discusses is the Supernatural and the relation between it and the natural. Its chief topics are God, creation and providence, redemption, revelation and salvation: and God is the supernatural fact; creation and providence are supernatural acts; redemption involves a supernatural covenant, a supernatural gift and a supernatural sacrifice and victory; revelation is a supernatural communication of supernatural information; and salvation is the work of the Supernatural and issues in a supernatural transformation. Without the reality of the Supernatural, therefore, dogmatics would be as meaningless as astronomy would be if the stars were but

spectres. Its subject-matter is the uncaused, the self-subsistent, the autonomous.

The case is much the same in philosophy. It must postulate, if it does not prove, the Supernatural. It fails to explain the reality in nature, if it denies or ignores the unique reality that is above nature. Thus positivism, in that it declines to go behind or beyond phenomena, ceases to be a false philosophy. It has no conception, not even a wrong one, of the aim of philosophy. Any explanation to be adequate must be ultimate, and no explanation can be ultimate till it rests on the uncaused, the self-subsistent and the autonomous.

It is so with science. This would observe, compare and classify phenomena. It would confine itself to giving an account of the outside of things. To do this, however, presupposes inquiry as to their inside. What a thing appears to be can be seen truly only in the light of what it is. To interpret the actions of a man, you must remember that he is not a stone nor even a dog. You will not see all that is to be seen in what he does, unless you regard it as the expression of a free self-conscious spirit. Precisely so, if science ignores what is above and behind nature, it fails to discern rightly and certainly to estimate justly what is in nature. The caused, the dependent, the determined must be read as a manifestation of the uncaused, the self-subsistent, the autonomous, the universe in its relation to its unique Creator, if it is to be understood or even if it is to be read as it really appears. Science's own development is establishing this most significant fact. "We can not overlook", says Lindsay,<sup>7</sup> "how truly Spencerianism has been tending to prove that no progress of science shall be able to dispense with supersensible Reality, or to displace metaphysical intuition or belief;" and the fourteen years that have passed since the utterance of this judgment have only confirmed it.

Even more evidently is the Supernatural indispensable to morality. This presupposes a law above nature as well as objective to self. Its characteristic and unique sense of obligation can not be explained otherwise. This is not satisfied,

<sup>7</sup> *Recent Advances in Theistic Philosophy of Religion*, p. 74.

if regarded merely as expressing the demand of the constitution of things. The force even of the latter points to an authority above itself. Nature, spiritual no less than physical, is bound by the law of nature because this law has both its origin and sanction in that which is above nature. This is being appreciated as never before. As Lindsay says again,<sup>8</sup> "The moral problem is now more clearly seen to have its ultimate ground or metaphysical basis in the Absolute." Doubtless, a morality may be developed independently of this religious basis. It must, however, lack permanence as reared on a superficial foundation. It must also lack completeness; for<sup>9</sup> "the ideal law revealed in conscience is fully realized only as religion possesses the soul." This law must be the transcript of the nature and the revelation of the will of the being who is uncaused, self-subsistent, autonomous, that is, who is infinite and absolute and so unique in his holiness. In the sphere of moral law nothing short of this could be ideal. Fairly and fully interpreted, conscience itself affirms as much as this.

In view of all this, it should go without saying that religion and civilization and so human achievement depend directly on the conviction of the Supernatural. It is the heroes of faith who, as a rule, have been the men of action. In comparison with them what has been accomplished by the champions of unbelief? This is yet more evident in the case of the nation. Let a people, as the Anglo-Saxons, base their institutions on faith in the living God, and they move to the front and stay there. Let a race, as the Chinese, substitute agnosticism for religion, and they drop to the rear and keep there. Thus apologetics, dogmatics, philosophy, science, morality, religion, individual progress, civilization in general, presuppose and even demand the Supernatural. Of all truths the most metaphysical, no other is so intensely practical. Its atmosphere is necessary to life.

Beyond this, it should be observed that by its own claim the Christian religion must stand or fall with the reality of the Supernatural. Unless our religion express the intervention in nature, both physical and spiritual, of what is essentially un-

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

caused, self-subsistent and autonomous and, as and because such, both radically distinct from the world and itself single, it is of all frauds the most unblushing and stupendous. It presents itself to us, not as an evolution of the divine in nature, but as a direct revelation of and from God, who, though in nature, was alone before it and is also distinct from it and alone above it. Thus the new life that is characteristic of its confessors it declares to be the result of a new birth, a birth from above, a birth by the spirit of God (Jno. iii. 3), and to be throughout a manifestation of his unique power (Gal. ii. 20). The doctrine that it teaches it affirms to be "the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. i. 24); and, so far from admitting that it may be known from nature, which does clearly reveal his everlasting power and divinity, it insists that it was "kept secret from the foundation of the world" (Mt. xiii. 35). The corner stone on which it rests, even the fact of Christ, it declares to be both "the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. i. 24): and it accounts for his person, by affirming that the eternal "Word was made flesh" (Jno. i. 14); for his death, by teaching that God gave him (Jno. iii. 16) to be "a ransom for many" (Mt. xx. 28); for his resurrection, by ascribing it directly and solely to "the working of the strength of the might of God himself" (Eph. i. 19, 20); and for the power manifest in the church and in its members, by referring it to the Holy Spirit as given by the exalted Christ and from the throne of God (Eph. iv. 7-13). In short, Christianity insists on nothing so strongly as on this, that it is not of this world and so natural, but is directly of the sole because absolute God and thus supernatural. This is *the* message of its Scriptures. Unless, therefore, its supernaturalness can be vindicated, it is discredited, and that, too, out of its own mouth.

Nor may we fail to observe that it is just this supernaturalness of Christianity which makes it the hope of the world. It is the "good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people" because it is the way of salvation from the guilt and from the power of sin. It could not be this, however, were it not supernatural. The condemned criminal cannot justify himself. Another, and one not like himself under the curse of the

law, must bear his penalty. The diseased man can not cure himself. Another, and one not dying from his disease, must give to him of his blood and so of his life. Precisely thus, guilty human nature demands a supernatural redeemer, and corrupt human nature demands a supernatural regenerator and sanctifier; and under a moral government neither may come forward until authorized to do so by the absolute and so sole ruler. Our salvation in a word supposes a new start; and the possibility of this, whether for the race or for the individual, is conditioned on such supernatural intervention. If, as observation and experience no less than Scripture testify, we, as individuals and as a race, are "dead through trespasses and sins" (Eph. ii. 1), we can be quickened and raised up to heaven in the likeness of Christ only as God himself reaches down from heaven and himself lifts us up. The natural evolution of a corpse, even though nature be conceived, as we conceive it, as created and sustained and guided by God, can issue only in increasing corruption. That is precisely the result in which he intends that nature, since he has permitted it to become corrupt, should issue. Ours, therefore, is no ordinary contention. Not only the truth of Christianity, but the hope of the world is bound up with the question as to the Supernatural; and the question as to the Supernatural concerns both his distinctness from the natural and his singleness as regards himself.

### III.

#### THE REALITY OF THE SUPERNATURAL.

The question is not whether the Infinite is, as many agnostics would hold, the all. Neither is it whether the Absolute exists and acts in entire isolation from the world. Nor yet is it whether the Unconditioned sustains no relation to anything. No one of these positions is essential to the conception of the Supernatural. The Infinite, because it signifies unlimited, need not mean the all. It may, at least as well, mean, not that it is not limited in the sense of being distinguished from other things, but that no limit is possible to it as so distinguished.

The Absolute need not mean that which exists and acts in isolation from the natural. It may as well mean that which is not dependent on the natural. The Unconditioned need not mean that which sustains no relations to anything. It may as well mean that which sustains no necessary relations.

Again, not only is no one of these positions of the agnostic essential to the conception of the Supernatural; no one of them is possible logically. The moral infinite can not be less than perfect. Hence, it can not be the all; for the all, to be the all, must be the sum of good and evil. The phenomenal universe demands the Absolute as its ground; but just because it is its ground, the Absolute, as regards some of its activity, can not be existing in isolation from it. The order of the world implies an unconditioned governor; but if he be the governor of the world, the Unconditioned must have come into relation to it.

All this is confirmed by consciousness. Its clearest and strongest testimony, a testimony that must be accepted if we are to be justified in thinking, is to our individuality. That is, consciousness insists that the infinite does not embrace us and so that it is not the all. In a word, not only need not the Supernatural, if it be, be such as has been indicated; but in the nature of the case it could not be such, even if consciousness did not testify that it is not such.

The question, then, is, whether there is a being who, though he embraces nothing but himself, is in himself boundless; whether there is a being who, though now he exists in connection with nature and ordinarily acts through it, is in both his being and his action independent of it; whether there is a being who, though he is related to the universe as its creator and preserver and governor and redeemer, stands, so far as he himself is concerned, in no necessary relation to it—in short, whether there is a being who is supernatural in the sense that, though he has chosen to come into the closest relations to nature, he was before it and is above it and is unrestricted by it, being himself uncaused, self-subsistent, autonomous, and so distinct and single.

The reality of such a being is indicated by the untenableness

of the opposing hypotheses. These are three: Positivism, Monism, Pluralism.

1. *Positivism*.—This is a negative and epistemological hypothesis rather than an affirmative and ontological one. It tries to explain why we cannot know and so should not believe in the Supernatural; it does not essay to provide a substitute for the Supernatural. Nevertheless, in spite of its negative character, it is prevalent enough, and it is important enough, both in itself and because of the degree to which monism incorporates and uses it, to demand separate statement and discussion.

By Positivism, then, we understand the doctrine that we can know phenomena and the laws by which they are connected, but nothing more. The reason assigned for this is that we have no knowledge prior to experience and all our knowledge is by induction from sensations. That is, the world of knowledge is that world, and only that world, which is revealed to us by sense-perception and so is the subject-matter of the Natural or Positive Sciences. Hence, as we cannot see, hear, touch, taste or smell the Supernatural, it must be incognizable; and if we thus do not know and can never know that it exists, what right have we to assert that it does or to believe that it does? Such is positivism. It denies, as must have appeared, both the positions which, as we have seen, it is incumbent on us to guard; namely, the distinctness of the Supernatural from the natural and the singleness of the Supernatural.

The theory of knowledge, however, on which it rests and in which it essentially consists is untrue. We have knowledge prior to experience and all our knowledge is not by induction from sensations.

The most extreme advocates of positivism virtually admit this. Thus Comte, at once the boldest and the most consistent of them, himself the father of positivism, says:<sup>10</sup> "If, on the one side, every positive theory must be necessarily founded on observation, it is, on the other side, equally plain that to apply itself to the task of observation our mind has need of some *theory*. If in contemplating the phenomena, we do not immed-

<sup>10</sup> *La Phil. Positive*, chap. i.

ately attach them to certain principles, not only would it be impossible for us to combine those isolated observations, so as to draw any fruit therefrom; but we should be entirely incapable of retaining them, and in most cases the facts would remain before our eyes unnoticed. The need at all times of some theory whereby to associate facts, combined with the evident impossibility of the human mind's forming, at its origin, theories out of observations, is a fact which it is impossible to ignore." What is this but an admission that, in order to experiential knowledge, there must be *à priori* knowledge; a theory in the mind, if there is to be an induction from facts outside of the mind? Of course, Comte does not mean this. His explanation is that the mind invents its theory, and then, when it has made its observations with its aid, rejects it. Even this, however, allows that the mind must have a theory in order to observe and that it can itself form a theory prior to observation.

The necessity of these admissions appears in the nature of induction. It proceeds in every case on the basis of an *à priori* truth; namely, that the same causes under the same circumstances produce the same effects. For example, you conclude that ice will melt, should the temperature rise to 32° F., because all observation has shown such to be the case. But why should you so believe? From the mere fact that one phenomenon always has followed another it may not be inferred that it always will. If such a conclusion may be drawn, it is only because there is more in its premises than the observed sequence. It must be because we know that there is power in the antecedent, the temperature of 32°, to effect the consequent, the melting of the ice; and also because we know that, the power and the conditions of its exercise continuing the same, the consequent will be the same. These, however, are *à priori* truths. They are not in any way the results of observation or of sensation. All that is given thus is the mere sequence of the phenomena, the rising of the temperature to 32° and the ice beginning then to melt. This the positivists maintain as strenuously as any. This is all the explanation that they offer of the principle of cause and effect. They reduce it to a se-

quence. Yet if they are to generalize with confidence from these sequences, they must admit the *à priori* truths that a cause is such because it has the power to produce its effect and that the same cause under the same circumstances must produce the same effect. And so it is that Comte speaks of the mind as obliged to invent a theory before it can observe profitably. Is it not more rational to believe that it finds itself furnished in advance with the true theory? Indeed, it is contradictory to speak of inventing something the elements of which are neither discovered without nor discerned within.

Moreover, in sensation itself there is given more than mere sensation. As H. B. Smith wrote,<sup>11</sup> "There is a material impact, *and also* a feeling of resistance, not material, but conscious—a resisting self, a person, an Ego—involved (whether or not this is given in the sensation itself is not material, it is certainly implied). And this *conscious knowledge* cannot be derived from the external phenomena, but is a distinguishable state of the ego. The ego cannot be derived from the non-ego." Even J. S. Mill confesses<sup>12</sup> that a series of sensations aware of itself is "the final inexplicability". Positivism can describe the successive sensations, but that something whereby we know them as ours cannot come out of them. How can a mere sequence of feelings of pain generate the consciousness that it is I who feel the pain? Must there not be already the consciousness of self in order to the identification of the pain as my pain? I must recognize the particular peg as mine, if I am to hang my hat on my own peg. Admit that the sensation of pain may be the occasion of self-consciousness and even its necessary occasion, still, can it be its cause? A tree is the occasion of my seeing a tree. If no tree were presented to me, I should not see one. Yet who may say that the tree by itself produces the vision of a tree; or, if we speak strictly, that it produces it at all? What the tree does is to call the faculty of vision into exercise by furnishing it an appropriate object, and thus to show that the faculty in question existed prior to the presentation of the tree. It is the

<sup>11</sup> *Apologetics*, p. 53.

<sup>12</sup> *Ex. of Sir W. Hamilton's Phil.*, Vol. i, p. 262.

faculty of vision that produces the vision. Necessary though the tree is as an occasion, it is only an occasion. In like manner sensation is the occasion of self-consciousness. You may even argue that it is only in sensation that we become conscious of self. Yet who may maintain that sensation gives of itself the consciousness of self? All that it does is to call self-consciousness into exercise and so to reveal the self as existing prior to sensation and thus as independent of it. When Leibnitz was told that the gist of Locke's philosophy was, "Nihil est in intellectu quod non prius fuerit in sensu," he replied, "Etiam, nisi intellectus ipse."<sup>13</sup> Indeed, the intellect manifests itself in sense; *à priori* elements appear even in sensation itself.

Beyond this, if there be no knowledge except as the result of induction from individual sensations, we are involved by the very process of so-called knowledge in utter ignorance even of what we claim to know. The position is, that we know only what we can observe; that this is the mere sequence of phenomena, phenomena as antecedents and consequents; and that we know the consequents only as modes or forms of the antecedents. In a word, scientific knowledge is simply the knowledge of these differing modes. Suppose, then, that we trace back to the utmost point within our reach the last inspected consequents. These can be known "only as we know the antecedents," only as "modes of the antecedents." Then *they* cannot be known at all; for by the supposition, we cannot reach *their* antecedents, having already gone back as far as we can. Thus the whole process of knowing breaks down. As we do not know the ultimate antecedent, all our boasted knowledge becomes a chain of total ignorance. "It is a chain which", as H. B. Smith wrote,<sup>14</sup> "is all hanging and nowhere hangs." What is beyond sense being absolutely unknown, we cannot know even what appears to sense. Hence, the positivist, to be consistent, ought to be agnostic as to every thing. If all that he can know be consequents of phenomena, he cannot know even this. Thus the denial of the Supernatural is the denial of the natural also. In a word, the refutation of

<sup>13</sup> *Nowv. Ess.* II, 1, 2.

<sup>14</sup> *Apologetics*, p. 55.

positivism is that it is a theory of knowledge which is destructive of all knowledge. Of course, this refutation does not prove the reality of the Supernatural. It does, however, dispose of the objection that because the Supernatural cannot be known by sensation it cannot be known at all. Such a theory of knowledge is contradictory and so must be untrue.

2. *Monism*.—This hypothesis, unlike that just considered, is affirmative and ontological. It offers a substitute for the Supernatural as we have described it. It does this by denying the first of the two positions which, as we have seen, must be guarded. That is, it ignores the distinction between the Supernatural and the natural: while either is to be conceived as single, this is so because they are both one and the same. This hypothesis itself assumes two forms according as the one absolute reality is regarded as essentially matter or spirit. In the one case we have Materialistic Monism; in the other, Idealistic Monism.

a. *Materialistic Monism*.—Of this Professor Ernst Haeckel is probably the representative exponent. "By Monism", he says, "we unambiguously express our conviction that there lives 'one spirit in all things', and that the whole cognizable world is constituted, and has been developed, in accordance with one common fundamental law. We emphasize by it, in particular, the essential unity of inorganic and organic nature, the latter having been evolved from the former only at a relatively late period. We cannot draw a sharp line of distinction between these two great divisions of nature, any more than we can recognize an absolute distinction between the animal and the vegetable kingdom, or between the lower animals and man. Similarly, we regard the whole of human knowledge as a structural unity; in this sphere we refuse to accept the distinction usually drawn between the natural and the spiritual. The latter is only a part of the former (or vice versa); both are one. Our monistic view of the world belongs, therefore, to that group of philosophical systems which from other points of view have been designated also as mechanical or pantheistic. However differently expressed in the philosophical systems of

an Empedocles or a Lucretius, a Spinoza or a Giordano Bruno, a Lamarck or a David Strauss, the fundamental thought common to them all is ever that of the oneness of the cosmos, of the indissoluble connection between energy and matter, between mind and embodiment—or, as we may also say, between God and the world—to which Goethe, Germany's greatest poet and thinker, has given poetical expression in his *Faust* and in the wonderful series of poems entitled *Gott und Welt*." <sup>15</sup> This "confession of faith of a man of science," as Haeckel calls it, contains at least the following articles:

1. The universe or God, or, if you prefer, God or the universe, is infinite; for God "is the infinite sum of all natural forces, the sum of all atomic forces and all ether-vibrations."<sup>16</sup>

2. In the infinite God or the infinite universe there are no real distinctions. The organic is essentially one with the inorganic; the animal is essentially one with the vegetable; man is essentially one with the animal; God is essentially one with the world; in a word, the Supernatural is essentially one with the natural.

3. This supernatural or natural God or universe is to be understood in terms of matter. That is, Haeckel's monism is materialistic monism. This is what he affirms. "Even clearer does it become that all the wonderful phenomena of nature around us, organic as well as inorganic, are only products of one and the same original form, various combinations of one and the same primitive matter."<sup>17</sup> True, he would regard mind as well as matter as an aspect of what is most primitive and fundamental of all; namely, "substance": but that he would conceive of substance and so of mind mechanically rather than spiritually—this, too, is clear. Indeed, he says, Monism "strives to carry back all phenomena, without exception, to the mechanism of the atom."<sup>18</sup> In a word, materialistic monism starts with "animated atoms"; it would develop intelligent atoms; and it makes the Supernatural just "the infinite sum" of these atoms.

<sup>15</sup> *Monism*, pp. 3, 4, 5.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 78.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

This hypothesis is invalid in at least the following three respects:

1. It begs the question. It starts with the life and consciousness and mind which are the very things to be explained. That is, it assumes what is to be proved. Thus Haeckel says: "The two fundamental forms of substance, ponderable matter and ether, are not dead and only moved by extrinsic force, but they are endowed with sensation and will (though naturally of the lowest grade); they experience an inclination for condensation, a dislike of strain; they strive after the one and struggle against the other."<sup>19</sup> "Every shade of inclination from complete indifference to the fiercest passion is exemplified in the chemical relation of the various elements towards each other."<sup>20</sup> "On those phenomena we base our conviction that even the *atom* is not without a rudimentary form of sensation and will, or, as it is better expressed, of feeling (*æsthesis*) and inclination (*tropesis*)—that is, a universal 'soul' of the simplest character."<sup>21</sup>

"Thus, then, in order to explain life and mind and consciousness by means of matter," Sir Oliver Lodge writes, commenting on this very passage, "all that is done is to assume that matter possesses these unexplained attributes."

"What the full meaning of that may be, whether there be any philosophic justification for any such idea, is a matter on which I will not now express an opinion; but, at any rate, as it stands, it is not science, and its formulation gives no sort of conception of what life and will and consciousness really are."

"Even if it were true, it contains nothing whatever in the nature of explanation; it recognizes the inexplicable, and relegates it to the atoms, where it seems to hope that further quest may cease. Instead of tackling the difficulty when it actually occurs; instead of associating life, will, and consciousness with the organisms in which they are actually in experience found, these ideas are foisted into the atoms of matter; and then the properties which have been conferred on the atoms are denied

<sup>19</sup> *The Riddle of the Universe*, p. 78.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 79.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 80.

in all essential reality to the fully developed organism which those atoms help to compose!"<sup>22</sup>

2. The hypothesis under consideration does not beg enough. Though it assumes what is to be proved, it must assume more to complete its proof. Starting with "animated atoms" "not without a rudimentary form of sensation and will," it develops out of them the inorganic world; then, the inorganic world into the organic; then, the vegetable into the animal; then, the animal into man; then, man into all that he has become and even into all that he will become. Not less than this is what materialistic monism undertakes to do; and, consequently, it is according to its ability by means of its assumption to explain how this can be done that it must stand or fall.

Now to do this, it has "animated atoms" "not without a rudimentary form of sensation and will." This is what it assumes and so is what it may work with; yet though big and utterly unwarranted as an assumption, this is all that it assumes and so is all that it may work with. But much more is needed. If this vast scheme of development is to be explained, intelligence, and not merely sensation and will, must come in, and must come in at the start. For feeling and inclination presuppose and are impossible without a condition or situation to be felt and to be inclined towards or against. As Haeckel says, "The two fundamental forms of substance, ponderable matter and ether, experience an inclination for condensation, a dislike of strain; they strive after the one and struggle against the other." Nor is this all. The result of an evolution starting with and proceeding by means of this striving and struggling must, in the nature of the case, depend on the kind and the degree of this condensation and of this strain, and on the kind and degree of them from the first instant of attraction and repulsion. Let there have been the smallest variation in these then from what there was, and it would be an entirely different universe that we should have now. How, then, came it about that the atomic feeling and inclination began to act under the one set of conditions that could have resulted in the existing state of things? By the law of probabilities, if it was

<sup>22</sup> *Life and Matter*, p. 42.

by chance, the chances were at least practically infinitely against it. But if not by chance, it must have been by design. That is, intelligence must have been not only implicit in but actually operative at the beginning of evolution. Whence, however, this intelligence? The hypothesis under criticism essays to show its development, but it does not assume it as already in exercise. Yet this it must go on and do, if it is to show anything but its own imbecility.

3. The hypothesis that we are considering, not only begs the question and still does not beg enough, but what it does beg and must beg, even to save its face, is impossible. It assumes that "the universe, or the cosmos, is eternal, infinite, and illimitable," "Its substance, with its two attributes (matter and energy), fills infinite space, and is in eternal motion". "This motion runs on through infinite time as an unbroken development, with a periodic change from life to death, from evolution to devolution."<sup>23</sup> That is, as we have seen, it assumes that the sum of all atomic forces and of all ether vibrations is infinite and in that sense is God. This, moreover, must be assumed. As just indicated, there is no other way of escaping the necessity of positing an infinite intelligence distinct from the universe and operative at its origin. To do this, the cosmos must be regarded as itself "eternal, infinite, and illimitable." Evolution must be the ultimate fact; like God, it must have neither "beginning of days nor end of years;" it must itself be God himself, and so ultimate and thus beyond either explanation or the need of it, if that which is determinative of it be so rudimentary and inadequate as mere atomic feeling and atomic inclination. That is, we can get rid of the Supernatural only by putting the natural in its place. To do this, however, is impossible on any hypothesis, and it would seem to be specially so on the one under review. For the infinite substance which it assumes not only, as we have seen, "fills infinite space, but is in eternal motion." Now this is a contradiction. There are just two ways in which an infinite substance can be said to fill infinite space. It can really fill it.

<sup>23</sup> *The Riddle of the Universe*, p. 5.

That is, it can form a continuum. This, however, as Derr has pointed out, will mean "the annihilation of space." Indeed, there can be no space, if the ether of space be absolutely without pores or vacuities or parts; and this is just what a continuum is, and what it must be to be a continuum."<sup>24</sup> But "it is inconceivable that motion should take place in a continuum."<sup>25</sup> As Lucretius pointed out in his *De Rerum Natura* (II, 95 sqq.), if there were no void spaces in the universe, motion would be impossible. There would be no space to move in; there would be no parts to move. On the other hand, if ether does not form a continuum, if it does have pores, vacuities and parts, if in a word, there is either space within it for its parts to move in or, we may add, space without it for it as a whole to move in, then the cosmos can not be "eternal, infinite and illimitable." It could be conceived to be greater than it is. It would be greater than it is, if its pores and vacuities were filled and if it itself filled the infinitude of space. That is, from the physical standpoint the cosmos cannot both be conceived as "eternal, infinite, and illimitable" and at the same time be regarded as "in eternal motion" either with respect to its parts or with respect to it itself as a whole. The two conceptions are contradictory and so are mutually exclusive. Of course, it may be replied, and it is likely to be replied, to this argumentation that it is purely speculative. This is true. No scientist ever saw an atom or felt the ether. They are preëminently mental creations. We do not cognize them by the senses. As Ladd says, "It is only because of certain irresistible convictions or as symptoms of mind that we believe in their extra-mental reality."<sup>26</sup> Surely, then, criticism of inferences from these mental convictions and assumptions is in order. Thought-constructions must be tested by the laws of thought. If physicists will be metaphysicians, it is by metaphysics that they must be judged.

b. *Idealistic Monism*.—In this, as its name indicates and as has been pointed out, the one absolute reality is conceived, not

<sup>24</sup> *The Uncaused Being and the Criterion of Truth*, p. 72.

<sup>26</sup> *Elements of Physiological Psychology*, p. 677.

<sup>25</sup> *The Uncaused Being*, p. 73.

as matter or substance, but as spirit or subject. The world is not composed of atoms; but it is a system of thought relations, and God is just the unity and the identity of these relations. All existence, consequently, is regarded as a manifestation of the Absolute and the Universal Intelligence; and the inherent power of this "Absolute Idea" is conceived as the sole agency at work in all transformations. Thus, whatever is real is rational and whatever is rational is real; and the rational and real is neither more or less than the process of the logical unfolding of the "Absolute Idea." In a word, if materialistic monism makes the natural physical and puts it in the place of the supernatural, idealistic monism makes the Supernatural an idea and puts it in the place of the natural. That is, as represented by the philosophy of Hegel, in an important sense its source and type, it identifies the Supernatural and the natural in a universal syllogism. That this scheme has advantages over that just considered should go almost without saying. It escapes the embarrassments which, as we have seen, materialistic monism encounters from the start. Thus it does not have to begin by begging animation and mind for matter; for, as Balfour has well said, "it makes reason the very essence of all that is or can be: the immanent cause of the world-process; its origin and its goal."<sup>27</sup> Again, it does not have to beg further, in order to the evolution of the cosmos, the active and developed reason which it is the chief function of the evolution to evolve, for logical movement is of the essence of the Absolute Idea. Once more, it does not have to solve the insoluble problem how the physical universe can be infinite and yet in eternal motion; for it denies that there is a physical universe.

But in spite of these great advantages, this idealistic form of the monistic hypothesis has to encounter difficulties which would seem to be as fatal to it as are those that we have considered to materialistic monism.

1. As Balfour has written, "In all experience there is a refractory element which, though it cannot be presented in isolation, nevertheless refuses wholly to merge its being in a

<sup>27</sup> *The Foundations of Belief*, p. 143.

network of relations, necessary as these may be to give it 'significance for us as thinking beings.' If so, whence does this irreducible element arise? The mind, we are told, is the source of relations. What is the source of that which is related?"<sup>28</sup> We need not fall back on Kant's contradictory hypothesis of "a thing in itself", but must we not admit his dictum that "without matter categories are empty?"<sup>29</sup> That is, there is reality which even idealistic monism must leave unexplained. As an hypothesis of the universe, therefore, it is at least inadequate.

2. Even where it should be strongest it will not work. That is, it breaks down also when it encounters the individuality of the self or ego. The reality of this individuality it denies. It does this by bringing all self-consciousnesses to identity in the divine self-consciousness. Because the self-consciousness of men reveals a similarity of type, the Hegelian infers unity of substance. This, however, is as much a non-sequitur as though we were to argue that all oak trees were one because they were all alike. Nay, it is a much more glaring non-sequitur; for the distinguishing characteristic of every self-consciousness is consciousness of itself as an individual. In the words of Seth, "Though self-hood involves a duality in unity, and is describable as subject-object, it is none the less true that each self is a unique existence, which is perfectly *impervious*, if I may so speak, to other selves—impervious in a fashion of which the impenetrability of matter is a faint analogue. The self, accordingly, resists invasion; in its character of self it refuses to admit another self within itself, and thus be made, as it were, a mere retainer of something else. The unity of things (which is not denied) cannot be properly expressed by making it depend upon a unity of the Self in all thinkers; for the very characteristic of a self is this exclusiveness."<sup>30</sup> Moreover, this fact is one with which an Hegelian specially is bound to reckon, because with him self-consciousness is the ultimate category. How, then, may he deny that exclusiveness, that individuality,

<sup>28</sup> *The Foundations of Belief*, p. 144.

<sup>29</sup> *Critique of Pure Reason*, Müller's translation, p. 45.

<sup>30</sup> *Hegelianism and Personality*, p. 216.

which, as we have seen, is the essence of self-consciousness? No hypothesis can work which thus repudiates the innermost content of that for which it assumes to account. It is not, therefore, too much to say that "the radical error of Hegelianism is the unification of consciousness in a single Self." Though it gave a valid explanation of self-consciousness in other respects, its breakdown in this would be fatal; for this is fundamental.

3. Its explanation, however, is invalid throughout. Even if it might explain away the individuality of the self, it would have to be set aside on other grounds, chief among them the following:

Man is put in the place of God. This is done by making, as we have seen, the human self-consciousness and the Absolute "identical quantities". "God or the Absolute is represented in the system as the last term of a development into which we have a perfect insight; we ourselves, indeed, as absolute philosophers, are equally the last term of the development." Thus in the philosophy of law, of history, of æsthetics, and in the history of philosophy itself, the Absolute is attained, being simply man's record and ultimate achievement along these lines. Specially is this so in the "philosophy of religion," where we should naturally expect to meet it least. The self-existence of God seems to disappear; he has his only reality in the consciousness of the worshipping community. "God is not a spirit beyond the stars," says Hegel; "He is Spirit in all spirits":<sup>31</sup> but this means, if not certainly to "the Master" himself, at least to many of his disciples, that anything like a separate personality or self-consciousness in the divine Being is renounced. In a word, we are put in the place of God. Can any such explanation of the human self be valid? It contradicts that which is scarcely less fundamental in our consciousness than the sense of individuality, and that is the feeling of dependence on the Supernatural. As Bacon has said, 'Man looks up to God as naturally as the dog does to his master;'<sup>32</sup> but this he could never do, were there no God save "his own great self". Again, man as well as God is deprived of real

<sup>31</sup> *Werke*, xi. 24.

<sup>32</sup> *Essay on Atheism*.

existence. After putting the former in the place of the latter, the hypothesis under review proceeds to destroy the former also. This it does by dividing and so, of course, killing him. His one concrete self is split into two. Of these that one of which each of us is conscious is the man: and the other, that which, according to Kant, unifies the former, and, according to Fichte, thinks it, and, according to Schelling, is the ground of it, and, according to Hegel, attains to self-consciousness, and so truly manifests itself, in it, is the Absolute or God. This division, however, does not more truly, as we have seen, undeify God by practically identifying him with the human self-consciousness than it dehumanizes man. Man is not "the empirical self"; or rather, the latter is only half the man, only the objective side of his consciousness. It is a half, too, that cannot exist, that cannot even be conceived, alone. If there are to be merely states of consciousness, there must be a subjective self of which they can be the states of consciousness. Nor does it help matters that the place of this subjective self is taken by what may be called the divine Self—a self identical in all men, a self, as we have seen, identical with man. "The individual seems thus to become no more than an object of the divine Self, a series of phenomena threaded together and reviewed by it—an office which it performs in precisely the same manner for any number of such so-called individuals." Surely this is to destroy man with a vengeance. He is made the mere object of an undeified God. Nothing in himself, he can be conceived to exist only in virtue of what cannot itself be regarded as self-conscious save in him and as far as he. As Seth puts it, "Human persons are, as it were, the foci in which the impersonal life of thought momentarily concentrates itself, in order to take stock of its own contents. These foci appear only to disappear in the perpetual process of this realization."<sup>33</sup>

This is to hypostatize an abstraction. "The impersonal life of thought", which is admitted to constitute the subjective side of human consciousness, is, of course, such. Apart from a person, without a thinker, thought can not be, it cannot

<sup>33</sup> *Hegelianism and Personality*, p. 190.

really be conceived as being; it is like an effect without a cause, it is an effect without a cause. But the empirical self, the phenomenal aspect of consciousness, is, by itself, equally an abstraction. States of consciousness presuppose and necessarily involve a subject of those states. As well think of qualities as existing save as the qualities of some substance. Nor will it help matters to take "the impersonal life of thought," as is done by at least the Hegelians of the Left, as the ground of the individual self-consciousness. The combination of two abstractions will not make one concrete reality any more than zero plus zero will make unity. Hence, Seth is correct when he says of the hypothesis under review: "It takes the notion of knowledge equivalent to a real knower; and the form of knowledge being one, it leaps to the conclusion that what we have before us is the One Subject which sustains the world, and is the real knower in all finite intelligences. It seems a hard thing to say, but to do this is neither more nor less than to hypostatize an abstraction."<sup>34</sup> Now to do this is, in plain English, to make something of nothing.

But this is not the worst. Having so deceived itself as to suppose that it has succeeded in working up mere abstractions into a real agent, the hypothesis goes on to ascribe to its absolute Nothing an absolutely impossible achievement. This is the creation as it were of reality. Though the Absolute is but an idea, though it is merely abstract thought, the logical unfolding of its categories is regarded as giving the whole actual world of nature and spirit. Hegelianism briefly expressed teaches, according to Schopenhauer, that the universe is a crystallized syllogism. This, however, cannot be. "There is no evolution possible of a fact from a conception." Logic can develop the meaning of nature, but it cannot originate it. "It cannot make the real, it can only describe what it finds." Indeed, it itself presupposes nature or reality; and without it, it is, as has been already observed, as powerless as it is empty. How, then, may we posit a mere nonentity like the "Absolute Idea" as the creator of such realities as the physical realm and

<sup>34</sup> *Hegelianism and Personality*, p. 29.

even the human soul? No hypothesis of the self can be tenable which leads to a result so irrational.

c. *Pluralism*.—This is the doctrine that reality consists of a plurality or multiplicity of distinct beings. It may be atomistic as with the atomists, or hylozoistic as with Empedocles, or spiritual as with Leibnitz, or indifferent as with Herbart, whose “unknowable reals” produce the phenomena of both mind and matter. Be its character, however, what it may, it is essentially the reverse of the hypothesis just considered. Monism, in both its materialistic and idealistic forms, admits that the Supernatural is single, but denies that there is any radical distinction between it and the natural. It is but the sum of the natural in materialistic monism; it is but the unity and identity of the natural in idealistic monism. Pluralism, on the contrary, denies the singleness and, consequently, the absoluteness of the Supernatural, but admits the reality of distinctions. “The atoms of the Atomist are endowed with perpetual motion which they do not receive from a transcendent principle, but which belongs to the essence”. We find no “notion of elementary unity” in “the four elements” of Empedocles, but they are equally “original”. The monads of Leibnitz are each of them “little divinities in their own department.” The “reals” of Herbart are themselves “absolute”. That is, instead of one all-comprehending substance or one all-unifying subject, we have a plurality of independent, if not unrelated, substances or subjects.

This hypothesis, according to Ward the one now dominant (*The Realm of Ends*, p. 49), owes its special prominence and importance at present largely to the late William James. “Reality”, he says, “may exist in distributive form, in shape not of an all but of a set of eaches, just as it seems to.”<sup>35</sup> God, then, is not “the absolute, but is himself a part when the system is conceived pluralistically. He has an environment, he is in time, he works out a history just like ourselves.”<sup>36</sup> Distinct from us, he is not single among us or over us, being finite and relative as are we. That this view has not a little to commend it appears almost on its face. As William James

<sup>35</sup> *A Pluralistic Universe*, p. 129.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 318.

points out, God, because finite and relative, "escapes from the foreignness from all that is human, of the static timeless perfect absolute."<sup>37</sup> Inasmuch as he is like us even to the extent of being limited as we are, we can feel that he is one with us. Again, the problem of evil becomes much easier from this standpoint. "The line of least resistance," says William James, "both in theology and in philosophy, is to accept, along with the superhuman consciousness, the notion that it is not all-embracing, the notion, in other words, that there is a God, but that he is finite, either in power or in knowledge, or in both at once."<sup>38</sup> We need not then explain his permission of evil: we may hold that he would conquer it, but cannot. Though indefinitely superior to us, he is no more absolute than are we. Hence, God and we are bound together in a bond of sympathy such as can bind those only who are fighting shoulder to shoulder in an as yet uncertain battle. Once more, reality seems to exist distributively. Though the universe may, in the last resort, be what William James calls "a block-universe,"<sup>39</sup> that is, an absolute system; still, it is as "only strung along, not rounded in and closed," that we become aware of it. We know it simply as an aggregation of "eaches". Why, then, should we admit more than this into any hypothesis with regard to it? That is, in not positing a single because absolute Supernatural, pluralism is at least true to what appears.

On the other hand, however, this hypothesis encounters difficulties neither few nor small. Among these are the following:

1. Pluralism, though true to what appears, is not true to all that appears. It may be true to the world of reality as the senses make that known to us, but it is not true even to our sensations and perceptions as these are interpreted to us by self-consciousness. For we find in the latter, and all men, in proportion as they develop mentally and their development is not biased by philosophy, find in the latter, the idea of the cosmos. That is to say, the human race, in so far as it thinks on these subjects, thinks naturally of the world as one system. Even

<sup>37</sup> *A Pluralistic Universe*, p. 318.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 311.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 328.

Zoroastrianism was not originally dualistic. Now there is no reason why this natural and well nigh universal belief in monism of some kind should not commend itself to us at least as much as the exceptional belief in pluralism. Indeed, the former stands better accredited. Pluralism in its denial of the cosmos denies one of those native principles of the mind which, as we saw in our discussion of positivism, must be admitted or knowledge even by sensation and perception becomes impossible.

Were this not so, however, the bare fact of science would establish that the world is not what William James describes as "only strung along", but is what he calls "a block universe" or what we prefer to term a cosmos. It is not, as the idealistic monist holds, only a system of thought-relations: but it is constructed throughout in accord with thought relations; and so it is one system, that is, a cosmos. The proof of this is that reason can and does interpret it and that mind can and does understand it. Were it otherwise, there could be no science as there can be no science of any jumble of independent facts. It is only as these can be viewed monistically rather than pluralistically that a science of them can be even conceived. The progress of science is, therefore, the denial of pluralism. Though this progress be small in comparison with the land yet to be possessed, enough has been systematized to warrant, if not to constrain, the belief that all can be possessed. Much of the universe may still, as William James would say, not be "closed in"; but what has been "closed in" indicates as the reason why more has not been "closed in", that our reason is limited, not that the world is not a rationalized whole.

2. Where pluralism claims to be strongest it is weakest. The doctrine of a finite God appears to commend itself to the heart. At first sight a God who would prevent evil, but cannot, is more attractive than one who permits it though, since he is omnipotent, he could prevent it. On second thought, however, not only is the mind unable to tolerate a finite God, but even the heart can "see no beauty in him that it should desire him". On the one hand, omnipotence and omniscience may be variously conceived; but, whether as held by the savage or by the

scholar, they are essential to his conception of God. The reason for this is that man has a primitive belief in the infinite. As, therefore, he must naturally believe in God, so he must naturally believe him to be infinite. He could not think of God as the greatest and the best that he knows unless he did so. On the other hand, it is precisely the omnipotence and the omniscience of God which give its unique worth to God's love for us and sympathy with us. These can be supremely precious because they differ from all other love and sympathy not only in degree but in kind. It is just because we can feel that God can do for us and can be to us all that "love which passes knowledge" can prompt that we stay our hearts on him and find perfect peace in him. It is easier far to trust that he loves us even when he chastens us and that he chastens us "for our profit that we may be partakers of his holiness" than it would be to rest our souls on him if we had even to suspect that, in spite of all his greatness, he was limited in power and wisdom as are we. There would always be the fearful possibility that at last we might be cast away. Even Paul, had he been a pluralist, could never have exclaimed, "For I am persuaded that nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. viii. 38, 39). Thus pluralism fails just where it thinks itself the strongest. It compromises with the head for the sake of the heart only to be repudiated by the heart.

3. Logically, pluralism must give the lie to our religious nature and thus silence and at last destroy it. As Derr has written, "The religious implications of pluralism are obvious. All the various 'Eaches' are coëternal and therefore coëqual, and enter into unions or combinations with one another of their own free will. Nothing can be compulsory amid the vast democracy of uncaused beings, for they are all independent of one another, and exist by the necessity of their own nature. They are all *finite* in power, for the sphere of activity of each is limited by each, hence a multitude of *infinite* beings is impossible. Nor can we, with any show of reason, assume that any one of these equal beings can lift itself so high above the rest as to assert sovereignty over them. All the eaches being

gods in their own right, there is no such a being as *A* God; the word, indeed, loses all its significance. And thus pluralism or modern polytheism ends in absolute nihilism, and the religious sentiment must necessarily go by default."<sup>40</sup> Can any hypothesis be true which thus destroys that which is noblest in the noblest being in the world that it is assumed to account for?

These, then, are the hypotheses which contradict that doctrine of the Supernatural which Christianity presupposes and which, accordingly, we would vindicate: positivism, which denies the Supernatural altogether, both its separateness and its singleness; monism, which, in either of its forms, admits its singleness but denies its separateness from the world; and pluralism, which denies its singleness but admits its separateness. Inasmuch as each one of these has been shown to be untenable, does it not follow that we should approach the only other hypothesis possible in the nature of the case, the hypothesis that there is a real Supernatural both separate from the world even as immanent in it and single in it and over it—does it not now follow that we should take up this hypothesis with a presumption at least that it is true? Some world-view that really explains the universe there must be, and this would seem to be the only other possible.

This presumption is strengthened by the fact that the Christian doctrine of the Supernatural would, if true, meet all the necessary conditions. Thus positivism, as we have seen, fails to interpret even the world as made known by the senses, through denying those innate ideas only under whose guidance can the senses conduct to knowledge: but the Christian doctrine of the Supernatural both recognizes and guarantees these ideas; as an idea it is one of them, and its subject, the supreme Intelligence, is the author of them, "the light that lighteneth every man coming into the world."

Again, if monism breaks down, in its materialistic form because it denies an absolute Spirit separate from the physical world, and in its idealistic form because it denies the separateness of such a Spirit from all finite spirits; so the view of the

<sup>40</sup> *The Uncaused Being and The Criterion of Truth*, p. 39.

Supernatural that we would vindicate supplies in both cases the deficiency by holding that God is not only single in himself, but absolutely distinct from the world whether of matter or of spirit.

Once more, if pluralism fails, and must fail, permanently to satisfy man's mental, emotional and religious natures for the reason that its Supernatural is not single and so cannot be absolute, the Christian doctrine of the Supernatural comes up to the requirements even in this respect; for it conceives of the Supernatural as him "by whom were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist" (Coll. i. 16, 17).

Moreover, the Christian doctrine of the Supernatural is a satisfactory hypothesis in fact as well as in logic. To prove and to illustrate this, it is necessary simply to recall what has been said with reference to the "Importance of the Supernatural". As we have seen, not only do Christian apologetics and Christian dogmatics presuppose the Supernatural in the sense in which this paper conceives it as the end of the former and the subject of the latter; but philosophy, science, morality, religion, human progress and civilization,—all depend on its reality and, were there opportunity, could be shown to prosper in proportion as this reality is recognized. Could this be, if the Christian view of the Supernatural were untrue? That a doctrine will work does not of itself prove it to be true; but that it has worked well—this must, at any rate, raise a presumption that it is true, and must greatly strengthen any presumption of this sort already existing. Can less than this be meant by the Highest of all authorities when he says of false prophets, "Ye shall know them by their fruits" (Mt. vii. 16)? Clearly, then, the burden of proof is on those who would deny the existence of the Supernatural. It is for them to refute, it is not for us to establish, the Christian position. Strictly, according to the law of parsimony, no argument for the Christian hypothesis is called for. It is the only one that

has not been proved to be untenable; it has been shown to be satisfactory in theory; it has been found to be indispensable in practice. Therefore, the threefold argument about to be advanced for it ought at least to be received with the highest respect and to be considered as from the start having everything in its favor.

1. The argument from the consent of philosophy.—Most schools of philosophy declare for the Supernatural. In a sense, all of them do. Thus Comte, the founder of positivism, repudiates the Supernatural avowedly, but he devises a very complicated system of worship and finds in "aggregate humanity" an object for it. Even this most significant concession does not satisfy his successors. Herbert Spencer, whether we regard him as a positivist or a monist or an agnostic, not unjustly represents them; and he comes out clearly and strongly for the Supernatural. "The axiomatic truths of physical science unavoidably postulate Absolute Being as their common basis. The persistence of the universe is the persistence of that Unknown Cause, Power or Force which is manifested to us through all phenomena. Such is the foundation of any possible system of positive knowledge. Deeper than demonstration—deeper even than definite cognition—deep as the very nature of the mind is the postulate at which we have arrived. Its authority transcends all other whatever; for not only is it given in the constitution of our own consciousness, but it is impossible to imagine a consciousness so constituted as not to give it . . . Thus the belief which this datum constitutes has a higher warrant than any other whatever."<sup>41</sup> Even Haeckel, the great exponent of monism, while repudiating all being above nature, concludes his "Monistic Confession of Faith" with the words: "May God, the Spirit of the Good, the Beautiful, and the True, be with us."<sup>42</sup> So, too, the first of modern pluralists, William James, even when arguing for a finite God, admits that the hypothesis of the absolute "must in spite of its irrational features, still be left open,"<sup>43</sup> and seems to claim as the reason why it must be so that "it

<sup>41</sup> *First Principles*, pp. 256, 258, 98.

<sup>42</sup> *Monism*, p. 89.

<sup>43</sup> *A Pluralistic Universe*, p. 125.

gives peace".<sup>44</sup> These concessions do not class their authors with the Supernaturalists; but are they not testimony, strong just because it was unexpected and is unwilling, to the truth of the supernaturalistic position? Thinkers can not leave this position and not try to find a substitute for it. Thus they prove at least its necessity and so indirectly its truth.

If such is the force of the teaching even of antisupernaturalists, it is not too much to claim that philosophy as a whole on the whole declares for the reality of the Supernatural, if not in the precise form of the Christian doctrine, yet in what approximates and tends towards it. Did not our limits forbid, nothing could be easier than to illustrate and establish this statement from such masters in philosophy as Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Bacon, Descartes, Berkeley, Kant, Hamilton, Lotze, and many others. Indeed, as Lindsay writes, "We may surely say that it has become more clearly manifest that what thought as to the Primal Reality known as God testifies to is, above all else, the fact that such Inscrutable Reality, or the Unknowable, does undoubtedly exist."<sup>45</sup>

This amounts to a great deal. It shows that the ablest thinkers in all ages, though they may not speak as religious teachers and though some of them may speak even as the enemies of the Christian religion, nevertheless, give it as the last result of their deepest and best thinking that the Supernatural both does and must exist. This, of course, is not demonstration. The objective cannot be *deduced* from the subjective. The general consent, however, that we have been considering does prove that belief in the reality of the Supernatural is not the idiosyncrasy of some peculiar thinkers, and that we must grant it to be a true belief or allow the uselessness and even the folly of the best thinking in every age and the world over. But this is not sufficient. It may be urged that philosophy is the product of an artificial humanity, and that, consequently, it does not voice the natural and so best judgment of the race. We need, therefore, to appeal to,

2. The necessity of religion.—Religion is a universal phe-

<sup>44</sup> *A Pluralistic Universe*, p. 114.

<sup>45</sup> *Recent Advances in Theistic Philosophy*, p. 5.

nomenon. All men as men and because men are religious in one way or another. Even those thinkers who have yielded themselves to an intense and absorbing skepticism and whose religious nature has in consequence become atrophied confess the moral and spiritual necessity of religion, and their skepticism makes their reluctant confession all the more impressive. We have seen this to have been so in the case of Comte. It might as readily have been shown to have been so in the case of J. S. Mill and of many others. What is even more to the point is that no tribe has been found so degraded as not to evidence at least the beginnings of religion. The claims that such had been discovered of scientists like Sir John Lubbock and of travelers like Sir Samuel Baker have all been refuted by wider and more careful investigation. For example, Roskoff has declared that "no tribe has yet occurred without trace of religious sentiments." Peschel has decidedly denied "any tribe having been found quite without religious emotions and ideas." In like vein, Hellwald affirms that "no tribes completely without religion have thus far been met with."<sup>46</sup> The universality of religion would seem, therefore, to be a commonplace of anthropological science; and the fact that, no matter how debased, man is never observed to be destitute of something which to him is religion would appear to show that it belongs to his essence. In a word, religion is so universal among men that it must be necessary to man. As Kellogg puts it, "Its beliefs have been so universally accepted in all ages by men of both the highest and the lowest degree of culture, that we can hardly avoid the conclusion that they must be due to a certain instinct of man's nature."<sup>47</sup> So far as can be seen, he can no more get away from religion than a beast can escape the power of instinct. Indeed, the religious feeling is man's instinct, and so the highest and noblest of all instincts.

In the next place, religion is impossible, if there be no underlying sense of the reality of the Supernatural. Were this absent, whatever we might have, we should not have what we

<sup>46</sup> Lindsay's *Recent Advances in Theistic Philosophy*, p. 54.

<sup>47</sup> *Handbook of Comparative Religion*, p. 10.

recognize as religion. From the highest religion to the lowest, this belief in the reality of the Supernatural, of that which is above the world and which, in so far forth, is distinct from the world and itself single, is the one common and characteristic element. Let there be nothing left of religion but a vague sentiment, an undefined aspiration, an unintelligent impulse; still, so far as it goes, this is a belief in and a craving for a real Supernatural and such a Supernatural as we would vindicate. "In most, if not in all cases where men worship gods many," says Kellogg, "there is discoverable in the background of the religious consciousness the dim outline of one sole Power, of which the many who are worshipped are either different manifestations, or to which they hold a position strictly subordinate."<sup>48</sup> Were this not so, however, our argument would not be weakened. What is significant is not that the Supernatural is conceived in all religions essentially as we have defined it, or that it is conceived at all; it is that all religions, even the lowest, reveal in their development the tendency toward such a conception: just as in appetite the significant thing is not that animals have from the first a clear idea of nourishment or that they have any idea of it; it is that the tendency to suck always develops into the desire for and the eating of what will nourish. That is, as Edward Caird has so well shown in his *Evolution of Religion*, it is the end and not the beginning of a process of development which reveals its nature. Hence, if religion be, as we have tried to make plain, the expression of man's distinctive instinct; so the religious instinct is the instinct for a true Supernatural just as the young animal's tendency to suck is because of an instinct for real food.

Now we find that every instinct has an object fitted to gratify it. According to all observation, the belief in the reality of the object that its craving implies is justified. There is its mother's milk to satisfy the sucking child. There is the southern land to satisfy the swallow's instinct in early autumn to fly to the southern land. There is the ocean to satisfy the young fish's instinct, which constrains it, though it has never

<sup>48</sup> *Handbook of Comparative Religion*, p. 7.

been away from the spawning grounds far up the stream, to swim toward the ocean. Hence, to prove the existence of an instinct is to prove the reality of the object fitted to gratify it. Why, then, should it not be so in the case of the instinct for the Supernatural? Nay, how could it not be so?

This does not demonstrate the reality of the Supernatural. It does, however, demonstrate that the Supernatural exists: or else, that there is an exception to the apparently universal and beneficent law of instinct; that this exception is in the case of the highest of all animals, man; and that it is in the instance of what in him is noblest. That is, the law of instinct breaks down, so far as we can see, only in the one creature that is capable of appreciating it, and with reference to that element of his nature which exalts him most. This is not demonstration, but is it not a *reductio ad absurdum*? This will be shown yet more clearly, if we consider,

3. The necessity in thought.—There is thought. This no one can deny. In denying it we should affirm it: the denial involves thinking, it is itself thinking. Thus thought itself is a necessity.

There is a necessity in thought. Not only can we not help thinking, but we must think in accord with certain rational principles. For example, if you think of finite being, you must believe in other being that is its ground. The former, because it is finite, cannot but be dependent; and what is conceived as dependent can be conceived only as we posit, definitely or not, that which can be its ground. We can no more think otherwise than we can think of a building that stands and yet has nothing on which to stand. There is a principle in the case that thought cannot set aside any more than it can cause itself to cease. Again, you cannot think of an event, a change, an effect, and not act on and thus really think in accord with the principle that everything that is finite, that begins to be, must have a cause. If you are in pain, you try to find out what produces it, and thus you show that, whatever may be your theory, you believe that there must be something or must have been something with power to produce it, that is, a real cause of it. You may even teach with Hamilton, that there is no

positive power in a cause; that the cause of each and every phenomenon is "a negative impotence"; that we believe in the reality of causation, not because it is real, but because we cannot think it unreal. Still, even this theory will not make us any abler to think it unreal. Indeed, our denial of the principle of causation will only render more conspicuous and significant our practical recognition of it. We can no more help acting on it than we can cease thinking. Once more, we cannot think of acts and not regard them as the acts of some subject, of some agent. We can consider acts, as governing, as making, as upholding, as creating, by themselves; but we cannot conceive of them as taking place by themselves. Even when our abstraction of them as acts from their subject is complete, it never occurs to us to suppose that in reality they are either separated or separable from it. Though we may think of them singly we must believe the act to be impossible apart from its subject. This is a principle that thought is bound to observe. It can no more transcend this principle than it can arrest itself. Other necessary laws of thought might be mentioned, but these are sufficient for our purpose.

These principles reveal the necessity of the Supernatural. For example, the ground that, as we have seen, every thought of the finite presupposes is, in the last analysis, the Supernatural. Unless you posit this and thus find in it a self-subsistent ground of being, the finite universe, which cannot be conceived without a ground, is left without one. Thus this principle of thought discloses the necessity, if not the nature, of the Supernatural. Though it does not show us all that it is, it does show us that it must be. Only its real existence can satisfy the demands of thought. In like manner, the manifold changes and effects which make up the world require an absolute or uncaused cause, and so reveal the necessity of the Supernatural. Unless we assume this Supernatural cause, nature becomes at last a causeless effect; and this, because nature is essentially finite, is a contradiction. Nor will it help us to regard the series of finite causes and effects that constitute the world as infinite. This pushes the difficulty off where we cannot see it, but in so doing it only aggravates it. An infinite series of finite causes

and effects is as truly without a sufficient reason as is a finite series of such causes and effects. The main difference between the two is that the former is an infinite contradiction, whereas the latter is but a finite one. Nor does the fact that we cannot go back in the former case even in thought to the point at which the series ends and where we discern the necessity of the Self-subsistent Uncaused Cause render it less a necessity. As vigorously as though it could discern just where such a cause was required does the mind insist on its necessity. Only in such a cause can it find the power that it cannot conceive of the universe as not demanding. Thus this principle, too, makes known to us the necessity of the Supernatural. It does not set it before us as in a picture, but it will not suffer us not to think of it as the painter of the passing world-picture that we cannot help seeing. So also the Absolute Subject that such acts as the creating and the upholding of the universe postulate is the Supernatural. As every act evinces a subject in action, so these acts cannot but evidence an Unconditioned or Supernatural Subject. The reason for this is that these acts are and must be themselves unconditioned, and so can be the acts only of an unconditioned subject. Nor may it be disputed that these acts are and must be themselves unconditioned. Let it be remembered that by the universe we mean the organism into the constitution of which enter all finite, related, conditioned beings and things, and this will at once appear. It is not more evident that such a universe requires, because it is finite, relative, conditioned, to be upheld than that the upholding of it cannot depend in any way on it, and so must itself be essentially unconditioned. This should be as clear as that the unfailing energizing of Atlas in the fable would have had to be absolutely unconditioned by the world that he was supposed to support on his broad shoulders. Thus this principle, as those already noticed and as others that could be adduced, is not only a necessity of thought, but necessarily makes known in thought the Supernatural. If it does not unveil all its lineaments, it does reveal its necessity in the necessity of its acts.

In short, the Supernatural is at the end of all thinking. Take a blade of grass and think long enough and deeply enough with

reference to it, and you come up against the Supernatural. Every line of consistent thinking as to reality brings you to it as directly, as inevitably, as under the Roman Empire all roads led to the "Eternal City." If any do not find this to be so, it is not because it is not so; it is only because they do not follow their thought to its conclusion. Thought is not more a necessity than the Supernatural is *the* necessity in thought. We cannot think truly and deeply and not believe practically in its reality. Hence, again, the already noticed universality of religion. It is not only the manifestation of what we may call the instinct of humanity; it is also the expression of the most profound necessity of rational thought. As Calderwood puts it, "All intelligence moves toward the Absolute or Self-existent;"<sup>49</sup> and, "The essential implication of intelligence is that all finite being is traced to a self-existent fountain of Being."<sup>50</sup>

Now "we find that whatever is necessary to thought in the sphere of the natural has its correspondent reality in being." Does thought affirm that every finite object requires a ground of support? Scientific investigation discovers it: even the earth, that seems to hang unsupported in mid air, swings securely in an orbit made by the action of well-known forces. Does thought declare that every effect must have a cause? The scientist ferrets it out: though with the naked eye he cannot see the microbe that causes the pestilence, he detects and studies it with the microscope. Does thought refuse to conceive of acts save as the acts of some subject? We always find the subject, if we look long and carefully enough: by the ripple on the water far away we may know that it is blowing, though we neither hear nor feel the wind; but let us pull toward the ripple, and soon the breeze itself strikes our drooping sails. If, then, these principles are thus found to be trustworthy in the sphere of the natural or finite, why should we not trust them in the sphere of the Supernatural or Infinite?

Nay, we must trust them. Grant that they are "regulative principles." Still, it is not of intelligence in itself, but of intelligence as that concerns itself with *reality* that they are

<sup>49</sup> *Handbook of Moral Philosophy*, p. 257.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 259.

regulative. As Calderwood puts it, "The whole force of these principles is seen to be concerned with objective reality."<sup>51</sup> Whether there be reality or not outside of the thinking process, the significance of these principles is that they point to it and insist on it. They would not be what they are, *they* would not be at all, if they did not do this. This demand of theirs for reality objective to themselves is what gives to them their character. It *is* their significance. Moreover, as we have already seen, the reality which they demand is, in the last analysis, self-existent, uncaused and unconditioned. This, if we may so speak, is the significance of their significance. If, therefore, we verify or prove these principles on their lower side, as we have seen that we do, we may not distrust them on the higher. As Calderwood writes, "We cannot regard them as trustworthy in their application to the concrete yet untrustworthy in their very significance."<sup>52</sup> Thus, though we were not able to verify them on their higher or supernatural side, verification on their lower or natural side would imply verity on their higher. We should be bound to believe in the objective reality as well as in the mental necessity of the Supernatural, even though we had no faculties with which to apprehend it; just as the astronomer without a telescope is sure that, if he had a telescope, he would find a splendid planet where his calculations, which hitherto have been invariably sustained, tell him that one must be. That is, a principle could not justify itself in every case within the limits of observation, if in its very significance it were untrue; and the regulative principles that we have been considering would be untrue in their very significance, if the Supernatural, on whose objective existence they insist as the reality of realities, were not itself of all realities the most real.

It is not the fact, moreover, that the principles in question have no verification when applied to the Supernatural. On the contrary, there is a consciousness of God. As Shedd says, it is "a universal and abiding form of human consciousness."<sup>53</sup> In addition to the craving after, the instinct for,

<sup>51</sup> *Handbook of Moral Philosophy*, p. 264.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 264.

<sup>53</sup> *Dogmatic Theology*, Vol. i, p. 210.

the Supernatural, which has already been noticed as the universal and necessary root of religion, all men may know, and, as a matter of fact, most men do know, the Supernatural. Though they can neither see nor hear nor touch nor taste nor smell it, they are often awed by it; in their more serious moments they feel its presence; and so they must be conscious of it. Thus the principles which we have been considering are verified in the case of the Supernatural as in that of the natural. The telescope of Galle revealed the planet which the calculations of Leverrier and of Adams necessarily called for as the cause of certain perturbations of the solar system; and, in like manner, we are conscious of the Supernatural that reason with equal urgency demands as the ground and cause of the universe and the agent involved in its creation and preservation and government. Nor may it be said that this consciousness of the Supernatural is a mere hallucination. It is too general and especially too constant to be thus explained. Illusions vanish when the light is turned on them. The so-called illusion of the Supernatural, however, continues, though from the very first every effort has been made and is being made to expose it. Nor may it be urged either that some have lost this God-consciousness and some seem never to have had it. This amounts to nothing in view of its prevalence and persistence. He who does not use his eyes in the light will lose them, and the fish that are now hatched in the streams in the Mammoth Cave have none to lose. The significant fact is not that there are a few men who appear to have no consciousness of the Supernatural; it is rather that not a single individual was ever conscious that there was not a Supernatural. Says La Bruyère, "Je sens qu'il y a un dieu et je ne sens pas qu'il n'y en ait point."<sup>54</sup>

Beyond all this, the ultimate facts, the best attested realities, when considered objectively, that is, in themselves, quite as much as when viewed subjectively, that is, as necessities of thought, reveal the Supernatural as the fact which they all presuppose, as the reality which alone gives to them reality. Thus they evidence the Supernatural as truly as a building evi-

<sup>54</sup> *Les Caractères*, c. 16.

dences its foundation. For example, finite reality implies infinite or self-subsistent reality. But for this as its ground, it could not continue reality. The more real the world may appear the more deeply is this dependence written on it. In like manner, duality testifies to the reality of the Supernatural. How could real mind and real matter interact and together form the cosmos, did they not have a bond and controller as real as they, but superior to them and so supernatural? Such also is the witness of personality. The reality of the finite ego involves the Infinite Ego. As the human spirit, because finite, must depend on something; so because he is a spirit and thus a higher reality than matter, he can depend only on another and Infinite or Supernatural Ego. Hence, we observe that, in proportion as men come to know themselves, does their consciousness of the Supernatural develop. Indeed, self-consciousness cannot be true and not develop God-consciousness. As Calvin writes, "No man can take a survey of himself but he must immediately turn to the contemplation of God in whom he 'lives and moves'." <sup>55</sup> So, too, morality. Its objective obligatory ideal, its law, reveals a law giver and moral governor; and in the fact that his law is universal, eternal, and immutable, we see that he himself must be the Absolute, the Supernatural. Thus do these first and fundamental facts reveal the Supernatural. One and all, they involve it as the reality of realities.

It is possible to object that all this is only subjective delusion. We may affirm with J. S. Mill, that even the necessary principles of thought have no necessary validity; that, for example, from the fact that two and two make four in this world it does not follow that they do so in any other; and that consequently, the necessity to thought of the reality of the Supernatural argues nothing as to its actual reality. We may hold with Maudsley, that the individual consciousness is untrustworthy; that, therefore, though Maudsley, with blessed inconsistency, denied this, the general consciousness of the race is not to be depended on; and, hence, that the practically universal consciousness of the Supernatural affords no real verification of our necessary belief in its reality. We may

<sup>55</sup> *Institutes*, i. 1.

after the manner of Kant, in his Critique of the Pure Reason, declare that we see things, not as they are, but as our minds project themselves into them; and that thus we discern the Supernatural as implied in all the ultimate verities, only because of what we are, not because of what they are. All this we can do. But is it rational so to do? This is *the* question. Can we think thus and not commit intellectual suicide? That is, can we think thus and thought not contradict and so destroy itself? If its necessary principles, if its deepest consciousness, if its ultimate verities, are all to be set aside, it itself must be utterly discredited. This happening, what is left? Not the external world: we know it only as the object of thought. Not the knowing self: we know it only as it reveals itself in thought. Not even the certainty that we do not know the world without or the self within: to know even this involves the trustworthiness of thought. Thus the denial of the objective reality of the Supernatural issues in and so means absolute nescience and practical nihilism. In a word, as H. B. Smith says, "All minds believe and must believe in the Supernatural, unless they proclaim all Truth and all Being to be a mockery and a delusion."<sup>56</sup> It may still be replied that even this *reductio ad absurdum* is no formal demonstration. It should, however, be answered, What use for a demonstration of the Supernatural can they have whose position with reference to the Supernatural gives the lie to those very intellectual processes in which demonstration consists. Moreover, that we have not framed, and cannot frame, a formal demonstration of the objective reality of the Supernatural is itself confirmation of such reality. If we could ground it in any thing deeper and so prove its existence strictly, we should only prove that it was not the Supernatural whose existence we had proved. From its very nature the Supernatural must be incapable of formal demonstration.

<sup>56</sup> *Apologetics*, p. 26.

## IV.

## THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SUPERNATURAL.

The question is not whether the Supernatural has manifested itself fully nor whether it could so manifest itself. As the only manifestation with which we are concerned is to us, and thus to the natural, such manifestation of the Supernatural as the above must, in the nature of the case, be impossible and even inconceivable. Because infinite and absolute, the Supernatural cannot but be, in the most real sense, unknown and unknowable.

It is true that the pantheists dispute this. They hold, not only that the Absolute is known, but that knowledge of the Absolute is absolute knowledge. Their postulates are, that there is one Infinite Substance or Absolute Idea of which all relative and finite phenomena are but modifications; that, consequently, the development of the finite and relative from the Infinite and Absolute, inasmuch as it is a process necessarily implied in and resulting from the very nature of the Infinite and Absolute, must be demonstrable; and that thus man, because himself one with the Infinite and Absolute, and identical in his own consciousness and life with its processes, can and does know it. That is, since man's thinking is the immediate activity of the Supernatural, his knowledge of it is as direct and as complete as it is of himself. In knowing the latter he really knows the former. We have seen, however, that this position is contradicted by consciousness. Its deepest and most characteristic testimony is to the individuality of the self. So far from identifying it with the Supernatural, it affirms the sharpest distinction between them. Thus we cannot take the pantheistic standpoint and not invalidate consciousness; but consciousness is the foundation of philosophy, even the basis of knowledge. Still further, pantheism exposes weakness fatal to itself in the claim which it makes and must make. This claim is that the transition from the Infinite and Absolute to the finite and relative, from the Supernatural to the

natural, can be demonstrated and explained. This cannot be done. As H. B. Smith says, "The real problem—equally a problem with pantheist and theist—is not to show that the one includes the other, but rather to show how the transition *must or may be made* from the one to the other."<sup>57</sup> On either system here is the mystery. Both find at this point a knot that cannot be untied. The difference between them is that theism need not untie it, whereas pantheism must. On the one hand, theism accounts for the natural as the creation of the Supernatural. It is the result of an infinite and absolute self-conscious Will. The method of this will's operation, however, the theist is not obliged to set forth. He need only show, as he can show, that creation is possible to an absolute will; and he may grant that the mode of creation is a mystery necessarily beyond the scrutiny of human science. We ourselves so often make what is other than we are that we should not stumble at the creation of the natural by the Supernatural. The latter act is one whose possibility does not depend on its comprehension by us. Nay, it is one that could not be the kind of act that it must be were it comprehended by us: On the other hand, however, pantheism would explain, and because it admits but one substance, must explain, the natural as an emanation from or an outgoing of, the Supernatural. That is, it may not, as we have just seen that theism may, leave the mode of transition from the Infinite and Absolute to the finite and relative a mystery: but it is *obliged* to explain the transition as a passing of the Infinite and Absolute into the finite and relative; as one thing, not making, but itself becoming, a radically different thing. Now this is not a mystery; it is a contradiction, an impossibility. We need not, therefore, and, indeed, may not, inquire as to the truth of the pantheistic position, that a knowledge of the Absolute is absolute knowledge. In view of what we have just seen that this position involves, such an inquiry becomes irrational.

The question, however, is, whether the Supernatural has so manifested itself that, though partially, it can be and is known by us.

<sup>57</sup> *Apologetics*, p. 69.

This is denied, at least in large part, by the school of Ritschl. In general, their position is that religious knowledge consists merely of value-judgments, while other knowledge consists of existential judgments. That is, knowledge in religion is not the recognition of what is; it is the experience of what is spiritually helpful: whereas knowledge elsewhere is real knowledge because composed of affirmations ascertained to correspond to actuality. Hence, this school claims to be independent of philosophy and denies the legitimacy of natural theology. Religion is wholly an affair of the heart. Science is wholly a matter of the head. The two spheres are distinct and exclusive. As Flint says, "no recognition of any revelation of God is granted except that in Scripture, and only there in so far as there is the revelation of God in Christ. Theology is represented to be incapable of attaining to any theoretic knowledge of God, and to have to do only with what God is felt to be in the religious experience of the Christian. That is to say, it is described as having for its task to set forth regarding God, not theoretical but practical judgments,—not affirmations which really apply to God in himself but affirmations which tell us what he is *worth to us*—that is, value-judgments, which, although they in no way express what God really is, may enable us to overcome the evil in the world and to lead a Christian life."<sup>58</sup> Thus this position, though it may not call itself agnosticism, is such. It would banish knowledge from religion and would reduce it to an affair of feeling only.

It may be refuted on the following grounds:

1. Its pretension to independence of philosophy and its consequent denial of natural theology are inconsistent in the extreme. It is on nothing but an unsound philosophy that this pretension bases itself. "It rests wholly on agnosticism as to reason and on the Kantian reduction of religion to a mode of representing the moral ideal. It assumes that Kants' philosophy as modified in certain respects by Lotze is the basis of theology." This, however, is an enormous assumption; it is an assumption wholly in the sphere of philosophy; and, last but not least, the epistemology assumed is wrong.

<sup>58</sup> *Agnosticism*, pp. 593, 594.

2. The school that we are examining proceeds on a false psychology. It presupposes that what are called man's different natures can operate in independence of each other. Hence, the religious and the theoretic spheres can be kept apart, and so a doctrine can have high religious value even though it have no foundation in objective fact. The truth, however, is that man's natures do not operate independently. They are not even separate themselves. Man's spiritual being is one and indivisible. It does not have even different powers. Its so-called faculties are but so many functions of one power, and these functions invariably involve each other. Intellect and will, for example, cannot be divorced, and thus the religious and theoretic spheres cannot be exclusive. That they could be, man would have to be other than he is.

3. The place assigned by this school to judgments of value is destructive of their value. That they have an important place in religion is not to be denied. Religion is animated by a practical motive. It does prize truth according to its effect on the heart. Further, religious judgment includes an element of ethical decision. It is he who wills to do the will of God who knows the doctrine. Finally, only the religious man can appreciate spiritual truth; for it is "spiritually judged". In these ways religious judgment does differ from pure intellectual or theoretic judgment, as, for example, in geometrical demonstration. The element of value does enter into the former. In a true sense the head depends on the heart. 'No man can call Jesus Lord but by the Holy Ghost.' All this, however, implies that the judgment of value rests on a theoretic judgment; and not vice versa, as Kaftan holds and as Ritschl would seem to mean. The spiritual helpfulness of a doctrine depends on its truth; its truth is not proven by its apparent helpfulness. The deity of Christ is a precious doctrine, because it is the interpretation of a fact; and it would lose all its preciousness, if his body were still lying dead in a Syrian grave.

The position that we would establish as to the manifestation of the Supernatural is denied again by the avowed agnostics. They admit, and many of them strongly insist on, the objective

reality of the Supernatural; but they hold yet more tenaciously that it is unknown and even that it must be unknowable. For example, Mansel, though he believes firmly in the reality of the Infinite and Absolute, denies that it can be present to us in consciousness; Max Müller, though he finds the principle of religion in the consciousness of the Infinite, holds that we are conscious of it only as the "Beyond", as the mere negative of the finite, and so, of course, that we cannot know it; and Spencer, though he claims that we are conscious of the Infinite and Absolute as the positive basis of all our consciousness of the finite and relative, nevertheless, insists that we are conscious of this positive basis as without limits and thus as unknown and unknowable.

This theory whose chief forms in its distinctly religious reference have just been indicated is, generally speaking, exposed to the following objections:

1. It proceeds on a false theory of the nature of knowledge. This is, that to know anything we must know it in its essence and be able to define it itself. This, however, cannot be a true theory of knowledge. If it were, there could be no knowledge. Not even a blade of grass do we know absolutely; that is, in its essence and apart from its relations. Moreover, we often know certainly what we cannot define at all. You can be sure of your friend's handwriting, though you cannot give the marks by which it is distinguished from that of others. In short, knowledge may be real, though it is neither absolute nor definite. You can know something, though you do not know anything fully or exactly.

2. The denial that the Supernatural can so manifest itself as to be known by us proceeds on a false theory of the condition of knowledge. This condition is the identity of the subject knowing with the object known. "Quantum sumus scimus" and "Simile simili cognoscitur". Hence, to know the Supernatural, we must be ourselves supernatural. While, however, in order to knowledge, there must be a kinship between subject and object, this is far from being, and, indeed, differs radically from, the identity claimed. We know the external world, though we are not the external world. Were the theory true, self-knowledge would be the only knowledge.

3. The denial that we are considering proceeds on a false view of the Infinite and Absolute. It is regarded as the all and the unrelated. Hence, as to know is to distinguish what is known from other things, the Infinite cannot be known; for if it could be so distinguished from other things as to be known, or even from the knowing self, it would no longer be the Infinite that was known: and as we can know only what has come into relation to us so as to be known, it would no more be the Absolute. That is, the Infinite and the Absolute, as regards the capacity for being known, is like a vase which is bound to go to pieces as you take hold of it.

As we saw, however, when we were considering just what was the question with regard to the reality of the Supernatural, there need not be, there is not, and there could not be, any such Infinite and Absolute as agnosticism presupposes. That is, the conception of the Supernatural on which it is founded is contradictory. Nor is this all. As should now be evident and as Flint has taught us in his classic work on Agnosticism, agnosticism as to the Supernatural must, unless inconsistent, become agnosticism as to everything; and agnosticism as to everything, whether in the form of doubt or of disbelief, involves a fatal contradiction. In a word, together or singly, these objections are a *reductio ad absurdum* of the agnostic position; and thus, though they do not prove the reality of the manifestation of the Supernatural and of our knowledge of it, they do open the way for the following proof:

1. There is no *à priori* impossibility that the Supernatural should manifest itself and should be known as manifested. Admitting that only its bare existence has been established, it does not follow that no more can be established. Nay, that a thing is often raises a presumption or expectation that what it is will appear. This presumption or expectation is attested by the spirit of discovery which it produces. Nor may it be urged that all this applies only to the sphere of the natural. That is to beg the question. It is to assert the thing to be established.

2. The reality of the Supernatural cannot be known and its nature not be known also to some degree at the same time.

There is not anything the existence of which can be apprehended without an idea of at least some of its qualities. It is by means of the acts or the noises or the peculiarities in appearance of a strange beast that men in the first instance become aware of its existence, and there is no other way in which they can be assured of it. Knowledge that it is involves by a necessary law of thought some knowledge of what it is; and to this extent the establishment of its reality establishes also that it has, in so far forth, manifested itself and this manifestation been recognized. It cannot be otherwise in the case of the Supernatural. Because the law just referred to is a necessary law of thought as such, if we know the reality of the Supernatural, we know that to some degree it has manifested itself, and been recognized. We cannot know that it exists and not know something of what it is. Thus the mere question whether the Supernatural can manifest itself implies that it has done so sufficiently to be apprehended. But this raises the presumption at once, and it is from this presumption that our inquiry should proceed, the presumption that this manifestation of the Supernatural and the consequent recognition of it by us will keep on. Other things being equal, the antecedent likelihood is that what has been going on will continue.

3. In knowing the existence of the Supernatural we know it as that whose nature it is to manifest itself. For example, as we have seen, we know the Supernatural as Infinite Being and so as the ground of all finite being. Now it is not claimed that the former simply as being tends to manifest itself in the latter. In order to this, there must be, in addition to Infinite *Being*, a principle of movement, an act. Still, Infinite Being looks toward finite being, and thus toward manifestation in it, so far as this, that it can be the ground and condition of it. Again, as we have also seen, we know the Supernatural as the First Cause. It is not only Infinite Being. It is also a principle of movement; it has the power to act, to create. Now we do not hold that the First Cause must produce an effect and so manifest itself in it. The First Cause need not be, as we might show that it could not be, one that acts neces-

sarily. Yet, when there is nothing to the contrary, the presumption in the case of power is that it will exert and so manifest itself. Indeed, ordinarily, the power of self-manifestation implies a tendency toward it. Once more, as we have seen, too, we know the Supernatural as the Infinite Agent of the infinite acts that the universe, because finite, presupposes and thus itself evidences ; namely, creation, preservation and government. It must be, then, that in these acts, and so in their results, the Supernatural itself is really manifested. It is as impossible that an agent should not express himself in his acts as that these should not involve an agent. They are the agent himself in exercise. In simply knowing the existence of the Supernatural, then, we know it as that whose very nature it is to manifest itself. In the Supernatural as Infinite Being we have the necessary ground of the finite and to this extent the possibility of its manifestation in it. In the Supernatural as the First Cause we have the power of self-manifestation and in so far forth a tendency toward it. In the Supernatural as the Infinite Agent of the infinite acts that the finite universe implies, we have the actual manifestation of the Supernatural itself.

4. The same result may be reached, and just as conclusively, from the standpoint of the natural and phenomenal. This is the effect of the Supernatural. As we have already shown, we cannot really think otherwise, and it cannot be otherwise. See, however, what this law of cause and effect involves. The existence of the universe as an effect not only demands the existence of the Supernatural as its cause; but inasmuch as a cause must express itself more or less in its effect, it implies that the universe, though a partial, cannot but be a real manifestation of the Supernatural. In the natural, therefore, the Supernatural must appear and, in so far forth, must be known by us. We could no more avoid this than we could avoid seeing and knowing the artist in his work. This is true on any rational theory of the universe. Both the possibility and the fact of such a manifestation of the Supernatural must be conceded by all who hold to evolution as much as by those who believe in creation. Evolution—of what? Evolution in

the abstract is only a name for a possibility, a term descriptive of a process. There must be a Supernatural Something, an Absolute Reality; if the possibility named is to become actuality, if the process conceived is to operate. Darwin demands living germ cells if he is to work his development hypothesis. Huxley dispenses with life, but cannot get along without protoplasm. Lucretius does not require this, but even he must have atoms. Whence, however, the atom? Science says that it is evidently "a manufactured article." It, therefore, because an effect must be a manifestation of its cause. Whence protoplasm with its assumed power of generating life? Yet more, as being a more pregnant effect, must this be a more pregnant manifestation of its cause. Whence life? This is the highest and richest of all. Must not, then, its successive evolutions be a continuous as well as the fullest manifestation thus far considered of the First Cause and so of the Supernatural? As H. B. Smith says, "This cuts the roots of the theory that the Supernatural is simply something in itself inscrutable, remote, isolated—an unintelligible abstraction—for we have obtained not only *the Supernatural itself*, as a datum of reason and philosophy, but also *the Supernatural manifested*, as necessary to any evolution, development, progress, or construction of a universal system."<sup>59</sup> That is, the manifestation of the Supernatural in nature and our consequent knowledge of it is as much a necessity of thought and so as truly a reality as we have seen to be its objective existence. 'The heavens must declare its glory'. 'The firmament must show its handiwork'. 'Its everlasting power and divinity must be understood from the things that are made'. 'The spirit of man must be the candle of the Lord'. 'Christians must be epistles of Christ known and read of all men'. 'The church must make known the manifold wisdom of God.' 'The angels, since they are his ministers, must reveal his will.' In a word, all nature, both spiritual and physical, *must* manifest the Supernatural; and in all the universe we should discern the manifestation. In this nature finds the sufficient reason for its being, the ultimate condition of its existence. Throughout, as

<sup>59</sup> *Apologetics*, p. 41.

regards both its origination and its continuance, the workmanship of the Supernatural, it could not be otherwise. What, then, does nature show the Supernatural to be?

## V.

## THE PERSONALITY OF THE SUPERNATURAL.

In affirming this we deny, on the one hand, the rude and antisupernaturalistic materialism of Lucretius, which would account for all things by means of atoms and motion; modern materialism, which for atoms and motion would substitute physical force; idealistic materialism or monism, as that of Tyndall, Huxley and Mill, which in place of matter and force would put an inscrutable mode of being whence they both come; East Indian pantheism, which regards the Supernatural as spirit abstract and undefined; materialistic pantheism, as that of Spinoza, whose Supernatural is the absolute substance; idealistic pantheism, as that of Hegel, which would conceive the Supernatural as thought, with logical law, and as developing by logical law the universe; the theory of the pessimistic philosophy of Schopenhauer, that the basis and cause of the universe is unconscious will: and, on the other hand, the position of the "cosmic philosophy" of Spencer and Fiske, that the Supernatural is "superpersonal"; that is, it is infinitely higher than personal, and so is unknown and must be unknowable. In opposition to all these views, on the criticism of which our limits forbid us to enter, we hold that the Supernatural is an identical, self-conscious, self-determining being; such as we are, a person, only infinite and absolute and unconditioned. This we would vindicate as follows:

1. The Supernatural can be personal. This is denied by many, notably by Spinoza and by Fichte in his earlier teaching, on the ground that personality is necessarily relative. The essence of it, it is said, is that it implies another outside of itself. Hence, the Supernatural, because the Absolute, cannot be personal. The condition of absoluteness is freedom from conditions of every kind. This position, however, confounds personality with individuality. The latter is a mere relation.

It consists in separation from other things. It could not be if there were not other things. That is, its existence depends on its relation to other things. But personality is not a mere relation. As says H. B. Smith, "It is a point of fixed being."<sup>60</sup> Its essence is, not that it is marked off from other persons or things; for were this so, beasts would be persons. Its essence is self-consciousness and self-determination; for it is this internal distinguishing of the self as object from the self as subject, not any relation to other selves, or things, that constitutes personality. The objection, therefore, falls. Necessary relativity is inconsistent with the Absolute, but personality as such is entirely self-dependent and so altogether independent. As it appears in us it is relative. This relativity, however, is the result of our finiteness. We are persons, not because of it, but in spite of it. Indeed, the perfection of personality is possible only in the case of the Infinite and Absolute.

Nor may it be replied, that, though self-consciousness and self-determination do not involve any external relativity, they are determinations; that, according to the Spinozan maxim, "every determination is a negation;" and that on this ground, consequently, if on no other, the Supernatural or the Infinite and Absolute cannot be personal. This is to confound the laws of being with those of thought. That all determination or definition limits is true of mathematical quantities and of logical general notions, but it is not true of concrete beings. To hold that even Spinoza meant this is to misconceive him. As to beings, the opposite is true. As Harris says, "The more determined or specific a being is by the increase or multiplication of its powers, the greater and not the less or more limited, is the being."<sup>61</sup> Indeed, being without any determinations and specifications becomes an abstraction. We can conceive of it as real, and so as being rather than thought, only as we conceive of it as constituted in this way or in that. Thus do the laws of thought itself themselves witness to the difference between themselves and the laws of being. Hence, as we have all along insisted that we must do, we can be true to the

<sup>60</sup> *Introduction to Christian Theology*, p. 97.

<sup>61</sup> *The Philosophical Basis of Theism*, p. 29.

necessity in the former only as we recognize this difference. Indeed, as Lindsay puts it, "It is precisely in denying the Supernatural the power of being personal that his infinitude is parted with. This self-limitation of the Infinite—the great renunciation—is yet really its self-assertion and its self-revelation."<sup>62</sup> Evidently, therefore, the Supernatural can be personal: at least without some such determination as that of personality the Supernatural could not *be*.

2. As there must be a real Supernatural, so he must be at least personal. Three considerations will evince this clearly:

As much as this is involved in the nature of a first-cause. Whatever the Supernatural may not be, it is, as we have observed, of his essence that He should be the First-Cause. It is not more certain that there must be such a cause than it is certain that this cause cannot but be supernatural. "Now we have a real, though limited, experience of such a cause within ourselves, and there alone." We are conscious of being able to originate action, to initiate events, even in a measure to modify the processes of nature, in virtue of our free will or power of self-determination. That is, the only finite first-cause, if we may so speak, known to us is found to be such because of its personality. Its personality is what makes it, in spite of its limitations, a kind of first-cause. Would it, then, be otherwise were all restrictions to be removed? Nay, could it be so? It is of the essence of a first-cause that it should be personal. It could not originate action were it not self-determining. Unless, then, it continue such, it must cease to be a first-cause. And this will be true whether it be finite and natural or infinite and supernatural. The only difference between the two cases will be, not that in the latter it will not be personal, but that it will be the perfection of personality. This is so because even the transition from finite to infinite, while it must involve the perfection of what is under consideration, cannot change its essence and not destroy it itself. Hence, unless the Supernatural is to cease to be the First Cause, he must be at least a person as we are.

This follows as surely from the law of "causal resem-

<sup>62</sup> *Recent Advances in the Theistic Philosophy of Religion*, p. 315.

blance". The gist of this law is that nothing can be in the effect which is not potentially in the cause; or that the cause must always be, in its nature and possibilities, superior to its effect. Thus, while we can believe that a man has made a machine, we could not believe that any mere machine could make a man. In the former case the cause would transcend the effect. In the latter the cause would fall below the effect, and for this reason would appear to be and would be impossible as its cause. Now the universe contains the personal. The personal or man is that in it which is highest. It is that toward the development of which all tends. In short, the personal is both the crown and the goal of the world considered by itself. As the evolutionists say, 'the personal is the meaning of the whole process of evolution.' How, then, can the First-Cause of the world, the originator, sustainer and director even of evolution itself, be himself less than personal? As the inspired psalmist says, "He that planted the ear, shall he not hear?" "He that formed the eye, shall he not see?" (Psalm xciv. 9); so consistent thought must decide that the source of that self-consciousness and self-determination in which creation culminates cannot himself be less than personal. If he were, the law of causal resemblance, elsewhere universally true, would break down precisely where, unless the world were a chaos, it should hold most strictly.

The law of universal development just referred to necessitates the same conclusion. In the words of Lindsay, "Do we not see the creation struggling toward personality, and mounting step by step through the preliminary stages of the vegetable and animal world, until in man it actually attains to individual personality, and becomes a self-conscious mind? Whence this universal tendency of all that lives toward personality, if it be not the law of the world; and whence this law, if the Principle of the world is an impersonal one? And if personality constitutes the preëminence of man over the inferior creation, can this preëminence be wanting in the highest Being of all? Can God, the most perfect Being imaginable, be devoid of personality the most perfect form of being?"<sup>63</sup> May it

<sup>63</sup> *Recent Advances in the Theistic Philosophy of Religion*, p. 329.

not be, however, it is replied, that the Supernatural is superpersonal? Hence, it should be observed, that,

3. The Supernatural, though he must be at least personal, cannot be higher than personal. This does not mean that man is the measure of the Supernatural. Because infinite and absolute, as we have already seen, the Supernatural must always be unknown and unknowable to even the highest form of the natural. Spinoza himself, though holding that the infinite Substance has infinite modes, teaches that we know but two of them, thought and extension. Even with respect to the essentials of personality the Supernatural Person must be infinitely higher than ourselves and so quite different from us. What self-consciousness is that has absolutely no limitations, what self-determination is that has absolutely no restrictions, we cannot imagine and we never shall be able to imagine. To the natural, even in the respects in which they are most akin, the Supernatural is the eternal as well as the supreme mystery. The very love of Christ, for example, "passes knowledge". That the Supernatural cannot be higher than personal, however, does mean, on the one hand, that he cannot be higher in the sense of less determinate. The reason is that in the case of being, as we have already observed, highness is directly proportional to determinateness. Absurdity is inherent in the position of those thinkers who, as Spencer and Fiske, in postulating that the Supernatural, though personally non-existent, may yet be higher than personality, as Lindsay says, "place being plus intelligence below that which has it not, and who, in spite of the self-evidencing power of the theistic idea, assign that which is self-conscious and self-determining to a lower platform than that which blindly moves on to its end."<sup>64</sup> In a word, the Supernatural cannot be supernatural in the sense of impersonal, because the supernatural in this sense is really the sub-personal.

Nor, on the other hand, can the Supernatural be more determinate than personal, and so, in this way, if not in that just noticed, be superpersonal. Personality is of all possible modes of existence the highest. It is not simply the highest known

<sup>64</sup> *Recent Advances in the Theistic Philosophy of Religion*, p. 271.

to us, it is not merely the highest of which we can conceive; it reveals itself as finished, perfect, ultimate. It seems to say, not only has development never been traced beyond me, but development ends, and must end, with me. There may be higher and lower kinds of personality, but no other mode of being can be so high as personality. If the ground of this assertion be demanded, the one but the sufficient answer is that it is an ultimate truth. Just as in the sphere of thought reason reveals itself as alone because ultimate, so that we are sure that in thought there is not and could not be anything higher than reason; so in the sphere of being personality reveals itself as alone because ultimate, so that we are sure that in being there is not and could not be anything higher than personality. In self-consciousness and self-determination, that is, in personality, we meet determination which is as evidently ultimate as it is self-evident. Even the evolutionists would seem at least to have felt this. If not, why does Fiske say that the moral sense in which the reality of personality comes out most clearly—the moral sense is “the last and noblest product of evolution which we can ever know.”<sup>65</sup> Thus the existence of the Supernatural and his manifestation in and through the universe of which he is the creator and preserver and governor are not more truly necessities of thought and so realities than is his personality. Not to admit this is to give the lie to our own personality, and, consequently, to all else; for it is in our intense consciousness of our own personality that the conception and conviction of reality arise. In a word, if there be reality, we must be real; if we are real, the Supernatural whom we presuppose must be so; if the Supernatural exists, as he cannot be less than self-conscious and self-determining, so he cannot be more. Such, that is, personal being is the apex and the foundation of all being. This is the last and highest testimony of our own personality, the most evidently real of all realities.

<sup>65</sup> *Outlines of Cosmic Philosophy*, Vol ii. p. 324.

## VI.

## THE PERSONAL OR IMMEDIATE MANIFESTATION OF THE SUPERNATURAL.

By this we mean, such a manifestation as would be such a direct communication from the Supernatural as it is claimed that the Decalogue is; such supernatural works as the miracles, if they were wrought, must have been; such a supernatural act as regeneration, if it be a real act, evidently is; such a supernatural person as Christ could not but have been, if he was, as he said, both "the Son of God" and "the Son of man." The characteristic of these manifestations of the Supernatural is not that they are more truly personal than is his manifestation of himself in and through the universe. No matter how many instruments a person may use, his action is always personal. No matter how numerous may be the media in and through which he reveals himself, his revelation is always personal. In the cases under consideration, however, no instruments are employed, no media intervene. God himself spoke and wrote the words of the Decalogue; God with his own arm, as it were, wrought the miracles; God by his own power alone quickens into newness of life the soul "dead through trespasses and sins;" Christ is "the image of the invisible God", he reveals him by himself becoming "God manifest in the flesh." Such supernatural acts as these, then, are not simply truly personal; they are *only* personal: indeed, they appear conspicuously supernatural just because they are only personal; though they occur in nature, and though they need not and should not be conceived as violating or even as suspending any law of nature, they are so evidently not at all of nature, they are so manifestly due wholly to wisdom and power independent of it and superior to it, that they must proceed from the Supernatural Person alone. If they took place, they cannot but be interventions of his in the ordinary course of nature. Could they, then, take place? This is the question of questions to the Christian. If they could not, Christianity is a lie. Its most positive and characteristic claim is that it is

based on the direct personal intervention of the Supernatural in the history of the race, in the development of the universe. As we saw when considering the importance of a true doctrine of the Supernatural, the New Testament cannot be honestly interpreted and yield any other teaching than this.

But this is not all. The question just raised is even more fundamental. Not only Christianity, but all higher religion is at stake. The reason for this is that the immediate knowledge of God as the supernatural Person is involved in the very conception of religion as based on the self-revelation of a personal God. The operatives in a factory may sustain a real and a conscious relation to the manager of it, though he never comes among them or speaks to them or interposes in the direction of affairs. He may have revealed himself so clearly in the plan of the factory, in sustaining it in operation, and in the orders of the foreman whom he has placed over it, that all in it can and, if rightly disposed, will, discern his wisdom and acknowledge his power and respect his authority. It will not, however, be nearly so natural and easy for them to do this as it would be if the manager came daily among his people and listened to them and himself personally took part in the control of the work; and if his people are not rightly disposed toward him, it is certain that they will not recognize him as they should, if there is no personal intervention on his part. They will lose sight of him himself in the machinery which he has designed and is operating.

Just so, there might be true religion, did we know of God only what is clearly seen from "the things that are made." That "we live and move and have our being in him" ought to dispose us to "acknowledge him in all our ways", and the 'earth is so full of the goodness of the Lord' that it would seem that we could not help loving him. All this, however, though true religion, would be only an undeveloped form of it. It is a form, too, which, it is certain, would not be attained by a sinful race. As already implied, not liking to retain God in their knowledge,' they would look only at his works, and so these works would in time even hide him himself from them. In order, therefore, to the higher exercises of religion and to

any true exercise of it in the case of sinners, we need to feel, that God himself is in the midst of us; that he not only acts through the laws of nature, but independently of them; and that he can and, on occasion, does, put out his own hand and solely by his own personal power effect what the forces of nature though under his direction could not do and what may even seem to set them aside. In a word, as things are, in order to the development of religion, we must not only recognize the Supernatural as the personal God, but we must recognize him also as only personal or as simply personal; that is, as one who, in addition to presiding over nature and working through it, can and does also manifest himself by interposing personally in it and by operating independently of it, though on it and in it. Only thus can we appreciate sufficiently the reality because the personality of God's revelation to us.

Even the impression of the Supernatural made in the creation, if it is to abide, needs to be deepened by supernatural interventions in history. Unbelief should not, but does, conclude that, if the Supernatural manifested himself immediately and so simply personally only at the beginning, he does not manifest himself as a person at all, and so did not even then. This is substantially the position of the whole modern rationalistic school. Not less truly do belief in a personal God and in supernatural interventions stand or fall together than belief in a true creation and in supernatural interventions stand or fall together. As there can not be true religion save as we believe that God himself has spoken to us, so we shall not long or truly believe thus save as we hold to an immediate knowledge of God as only or simply personal.

The ultimate reason for this is that the self-revelation of a personal God cannot be authenticated sufficiently as such, unless it be accompanied by supernatural interventions. An effect, reason dictates, can be assigned to a particular cause only as it reproduces what is distinctive of that cause. Hence, the necessary inference is that if the Supernatural Person reveals himself, the revelation will be, at any rate, at times, both above nature and in contrast with, if not in opposition to, nature. Accordingly, were such a revelation to be throughout natural, though, as we have seen, necessarily presupposing and thus

indirectly revealing the Supernatural, reason would hesitate to recognize it as really supernatural. Though it would *be* such, it could not be certainly discriminated as such. Even, the cry of a man would seldom be mistaken for that of a beast: it always has a human quality. Nevertheless, it is only as it utters itself in speech that we can be altogether sure that it is a man whom we hear. Just so, the supernatural Person can, and ordinarily does, confine his manifestations within natural instrumentalities; but it is only as he breaks away from these and reveals himself both in contrast with nature and above it, that is, as only the supernatural Person could—that his revelation as a whole can be authenticated absolutely as being what it really is. Thus belief in the personal intervention in nature, and so above and in contrast with it, of the supernatural Person is indispensable to the highest conviction of the reality of his self-revelation. Without such interventions, the latter could not be recognized infallibly.

The proof of these conclusions is the history of religion. Whenever men have persuaded themselves that they are divine messengers they have adopted likewise the belief that they are able to work miracles. Among such in modern times are Swedenborg and Irving the Scotch preacher. Impostors also, perceiving that miracles are necessary in order that the human mind may receive a religion as divine, have invariably claimed miraculous powers. Such instances recur constantly from the days of Elymas the Sorcerer down to the Mormon Joseph Smith. Though, too, the founders of false religions have not themselves made these pretensions, their followers have made them for them. Witness the miracles that came to be attributed to Gotama and to Mohammed by their disciples. Thus it would appear that men are so constituted that if they are truly to see God in nature, they must recognize him as a person who can and, on occasion, does manifest himself immediately and in contrast with nature, and that even the revelation of himself in nature can be sufficiently authenticated only by such immediately personal and exclusively supernatural interventions. No question, therefore, can be more important than this, if so important as this. Are such interventions, that is, are miracles possible; and if so, can they

be recognized? The very existence of all religion worthy of the name would seem to be suspended on the answer to this inquiry.

The denials of the possibility of supernatural intervention in the course of nature may be reduced to one. They all take their stand, whether positivistic or transcendental, on the position that the course of nature is and must be uniform. If they do not always hold that what has been is what will be, they do hold this to be true at least to this extent, that the order and method of the new will be the same with that of the old in that everything will still be accomplished through the forces of nature; there will not be, as there could not be, the personal intervention of the Supernatural. This hypothesis, however, prevalent though it is, is exposed to the following objections:

1. It may not be decided by *à priori* considerations. We can argue for or against the uniformity of nature only from what nature and the Supernatural have been found to be. Antecedently, there is as much reason to infer that nature must not be uniform as that it must be uniform; and that is no reason. In a word, the question is one of fact; it does not involve a necessary principle. There is no must in the case.

2. It begs the question. It is at any rate an open question whether the course of nature has been uniform. There is the best of testimony that it has not been. It is hard to see how the testimony for the resurrection of Christ, for example, can be set aside and all testimony not be invalidated.

3. It begs a question to beg which is for these theorists suicidal. As has just been implied, in doing so they knock the ground from under their own feet. Whether the course of nature has been violated or has not been violated, can be known only from testimony; there is and can be but negative testimony, that is, the absence of testimony, that it has not been; there is the most positive and the best testimony that it has been. To decide, therefore, that it has not been is to decide against the testimony, and this is to invalidate the one possible ground of judgment. It is like appealing to reason to disprove reason.

5. Nor may it be replied that the very point at issue is

whether any testimony can extend to the Supernatural. If this be so, it follows that we do not know that there have been supernatural interventions in the course of nature, but it follows just as surely that we do not know that there have not been any. The possibility of the personal manifestation of the Supernatural is left just where it was before.

5. Nor does the objector gain anything, if we concede that the uniformity of nature never has been interrupted. Were this so, we might not infer that it never could be. Induction from individual facts, however numerous or well attested, cannot give necessary truth. That things have been so and so does not prove that they will so continue. It is always possible that there are other facts which, if considered, would show the possibility, if not the certainty, of change.

6. This will appear more clearly when we remember just what the uniformity of nature is. It is not a principle; it is only the name of a mode of action. It does not state *why* things are as they are; it states only *how* they are, or rather how it is assumed that they have been. It amounts to no more than this, that the same causes acting under the same conditions produce the same results. This is the only principle, the only ultimate truth, the only immutable law, in the case. What is there in this to hinder at any time the personal intervention of the Supernatural? There is nothing in this principle to forbid the introduction of a new cause in the course of nature. All that it secures is that nature shall be uniform if no new cause be introduced. So far as the so-called principle of the uniformity of nature is concerned, the Supernatural may come in at any point, and when he does his strictly personal manifestation must ensue.

7. The modern doctrine of the conservation and the correlation of energy, so far from opposing, tends to confirm this position. Indeed, this doctrine implies the constant manifestation in nature of the Supernatural himself. The sum of force in the universe can continue the same only because the Infinite and Absolute Force is "ever reënforcing finite waste, change and decay." As Herschel has pointed out, "vital force" does pass away. When, for example, a beast dies, his chemical elements appear in other forms, but what becomes of

his life, his soul? Thus vital force, at least, would run out, if the Supernatural did not intervene to supply it. Even the modern "physicist proper declares that the laws of matter alone will not explain life."<sup>66</sup> In a word, the very uniformity of nature depends on the coming of the Supernatural into nature. It has been planned with reference to it. So far, then, from the objection based on the uniformity of nature, disproving the personal intervention of the Supernatural in nature, it would seem to suggest and demand the proof of its possibility and even probability.

The following mere outline of this proof is the utmost that our limits will permit.

1. The abstract possibility of supernatural interventions in the course of nature cannot be rationally questioned. Sir Oliver Lodge is reported to have said lately: "The possibility of what we call miracles has been hastily and wrongly denied. They are not necessarily more impossible or lawless than the interference of a human being would seem to a colony of ants. They should be judged by historical evidence and literary criticism." Indeed, the most consistent skeptics and agnostics have not denied them. J. S. Mill was ready to admit the Supernatural, if it could be found. Matthew Arnold, though he held that with the progress of science all miracles would be explained away, did not regard them inconceivable. Even Hume, though he was the author of the famous objection that no amount of testimony could prove a miracle, again and again allows its abstract possibility.<sup>67</sup> Beyond this, it could easily be shown that men generally and, as it would seem, naturally believe that there are such interventions. In a word, if the bare existence of the Supernatural be admitted, his intervention in nature must be possible *a priori*. Otherwise, he would not be the Supernatural.

2. This possibility becomes much clearer in view of the fact that the Supernatural, as we have already shown, is a person and is constantly acting in and through nature. This granted, no objection can be raised to strictly personal action on his

<sup>66</sup> Ward's *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, vol. ii, p. vi.

<sup>67</sup> *Essays*, ii, pp. 131, 132, Ed. ed., 1788.

part. As Mozley says, "The primary difficulty of philosophy relating to Deity is action at all. . . . If action is conceded at all there is no difficulty about miraculous action."<sup>68</sup> A being who can use tools can certainly work with his own hands.

3. It is probable that the Supernatural will choose to do so. This follows from the fact that he is a person. It is characteristic of a person, not only to manifest himself in action, but also in strictly personal action. We see this in our own case. It does not satisfy us to hold intercourse with others by proxy alone. We wish to speak to them ourselves face to face. It does not develop us to do nothing but tend a machine. Unless there is room for handicraft, production will be at the cost of manhood. Hence, it is only to be expected, that the Supernatural would manifest himself in a strictly personal way; that he would speak to us; that he would act directly on us; that he would do something with his own hand alone in the course of nature; that he would even himself come and dwell among us, at least for a time, as a man with men. Were the Supernatural Person not to do something of this kind, we could scarcely conceive of him as the Supernatural *Person*. So far as we know, a person will certainly choose to act thus.

4. This conclusion is much strengthened by the consideration that nature would seem to have been constituted with a view to such action by the Supernatural Person. As Godet says, "Nature is from, by, and for spirit";<sup>69</sup> and, though, as we have seen, the Supernatural and the spiritual are not identical, yet the Supernatural, because *the* Person, must also be *the* Spirit. That is, as is involved in Godet's statement and as this paper has tried to show, the Supernatural must be behind nature; the Supernatural must uphold nature; the Supernatural must be the end of nature: that all this should be so is the necessity of thought. This, however, implies that nature has been so arranged as to presuppose the personal intervention of the Supernatural. Otherwise, it would fetter him; and depending on him and existing for him, as it does, that it should fetter him is inconceivable.

<sup>68</sup> *On Miracles*, p. 84.

<sup>69</sup> *The Defense of the Christian Faith*, p. 127.

5. But we are not left to inferences like the above, trustworthy though these could be shown to be. We know that the Supernatural has acted in a purely personal manner. All historic time, whether of the heavens or of the earth, of the earth or of man, must have begun with such an act. Get rid of all miracles, if you please; admit only the uniform sequence of natural phenomena, if you will: and the great miracle of creation remains on any natural theory of the universe, evolutionary or not; and creation is an absolutely personal act. It must have taken place; the uniformity of nature, if nothing else, is the demonstration of that: and it could have taken place only by the immediate and so personal action of the Supernatural; for before the creation there was nothing in which and through which he could act. Whether, therefore, the Supernatural has so acted again or does so act to-day is for us candidly to inquire. His nature as a person renders it probable that he will; and the fact that he must have done so once, that is, at the creation, increases this probability.

6. The progressive development of religion is inexplicable unless the Supernatural does continue so to manifest himself. Religion, at least in all its higher forms, presupposes, not only the possibility or even the probability, but the fact of such personal manifestations of the Supernatural. It believes in communion with God himself. Were the reality of that to be disproved, its life would be destroyed. If God did not make himself known to those who are in sympathy with him save as the "heavens declare his glory and the firmament showeth his handiwork," if he could not himself dwell in us as "a principle of a new and a divine life"; the power of such religion as tends to persist as man develops would be gone. Can it be, then, that such personal manifestation of the Supernatural is not real? Can it be that religion is only the most solemn of all delusions? If so, there is no mystery so great as that of its persistence. Nothing has been able to overthrow it, yet it itself rests on nothing.

7. This conclusion is much strengthened by the fact that the course of human development, and specially of human religious development, has been interrupted and perverted by sin. Hence, though the normal religious needs of men did

not demand, as we have just seen that they do demand, the personal intervention of God in human life and history, his abnormal needs brought about by the entrance of sin would so require. Thus, because sin has marred the workmanship of God in physical nature and has defaced his image in the human soul and has deflected his development of the race, the revelation of the Supernatural in and through the natural is far from being as extensive as or what otherwise it would have been. Again, because of the noetic efforts of sin we can not discern fully or interpret truly even the partial and perverted revelation of the Supernatural which the natural still affords. Once more, and as what is most important, sin makes necessary the revelation of a new kind of knowledge, of that with regard to God which nature could by no possibility reveal. Nature can reveal only the essential attributes of God, only what he must be and, consequently, must require because he is God; but what guilty sinners need to know is his grace and how it can be obtained, that is, the free purpose of his heart, and this can be known only as he himself shall directly declare it. Therefore, even were we to allow that the personal intervention of the Supernatural in the natural would be unlikely, the world continuing to develop along its original and God-laid lines; the presumption would all be the other way, the world having been deflected from its first and true line of development. In a word, to quote B. B. Warfield, "Extraordinary exigencies (we speak as a man) are the sufficient explanation of extraordinary expedients."

8. Must not, then, directly and exclusively supernatural works, such as we designate miracles, be expected, both to call attention to the messengers bringing the good tidings of the grace of God and to authenticate them as his ambassadors and so to attest the truth of their proclamation? Moreover, as such supernatural interventions, because their purpose is as just stated, might not be expected when no new revelation was being made; so at the epochs characterized and constituted by such revelations, as, the age of Moses when God revealed himself as Jehovah the redeeming God, and, above all, in "the days of the Son of man" when the eternal "Word was made flesh and dwelt among us" and "fulfilled all righteousness"

in our behalf and "died for our sins" and "was raised again for our justification" and ascended to the right hand of God to be "head over all things to the church"—at such times and under such circumstances would it not be the most difficult of miracles in the sense of wonders, if we did not discern miracles? Thus, so far from their being credible only because they occur in connection with Christianity, Christianity itself would be incredible because impossible without them. To use the thought and almost the exact words of Robert Hall, it could not be supposed that God would give even his Son to save us and not himself ring his bell for us to hear him.

9. Nor may it be replied that were the Supernatural thus to intervene directly in nature, such manifestations could not be recognized as such by us. This overlooks the fact that it is the manifestation of a person to persons that is under consideration. Now personality is known immediately by personality, and more especially if there be a moral affinity between the persons. You do not need to see every beast to be sure that a man is not a beast. You feel at once, and you can not help feeling, a unique kinship between him and yourself. You know directly what he is. And somewhat so, it is not necessary that you should have surveyed all nature in order to recognize the Supernatural as supernatural. You feel immediately both the unique kinship between him and yourself, and *also* the infinite difference. Because he is a person, you recognize at once his personality *and* the supernaturalness of his personality. You know directly what he is, if only a little of all that he is. Of course, this will depend greatly on the moral affinity between you and him. A bad man may become insensible to the supernaturalness of the Supernatural, but he becomes at the same time unconscious of the personality of the Supernatural. Both go together; and the former reveals, and cannot but reveal unmistakably, the latter. Hence, truly to know the manhood of Christ is to feel him to be "the Son of God." In a word, as persons we are too much like the Supernatural Person and too conscious of our superiority to all else than ourselves in nature not to recognize at once his infinite superiority. In the unique light of the kinship between us and him we cannot but see his supernaturalness. Thus in

every respect is the reality of the strictly personal intervention of the Supernatural in the natural a real necessity of thought.

## VII.

### CONCLUSION.

What, then, is the net result of the discussion? It is not that Christianity is thereby established as the supernatural religion. This must still be decided by the appropriate evidence. The way, however, has been opened, and the only way, for the fair consideration of this evidence; and this has been done in that we have established the reality of the existence of the Supernatural, of his manifestation through nature, of his personality, and of the possibility and even probability of his personal intervention in nature. It is true that no one of these has been in the strict sense demonstrated. But in the nature of the case this is impossible. Himself the ground and so proof of everything, there is nothing that can be the ground and so proof of the Supernatural. Yet as the building necessarily evidences the foundation on which it rests; so all nature, and especially that in it which is highest and surest, namely, reason, demands the reality in the above respects of the Supernatural. This must be granted or reason must be stultified. To have shown this is thus both the utmost that could be shown and in itself enough.