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I.

LYMAN BEECHER ON THE ATONEMENT—ITS
NATURE AND EXTENT.

LYMAN BEECHER, *clarum et venerabile nomen*, was President and Professor of Systematic Theology in Lane Seminary, from the time of its full organization in 1832 to the date of his resignation in 1850; and continued to be Professor Emeritus until his death in 1863. In this relation he was truly eminent as a theological teacher, though his services in that line have been somewhat obscured, in the public estimation, by the superior brilliance of his career in the pulpit, and in the more general service of the church. While he was not remarkable for the extent of his reading, or the scope or comprehensiveness of his theology—while indeed lacking in method and system, and apparently impatient of exactness in definition and completeness in demonstration, he was always vigorous, earnest, broad in his theological conceptions, and always powerful in impressing his own convictions on the minds of those who became his pupils. If they were sometimes carried from point to point in his theological cursus, without due respect for logical order or for scholastic completeness in doctrine, they were often more than compensated by the fervors which he enkindled in their breasts, and by the grandeur of his presentation of his favorite topics in the scheme of grace. Though they may not have gone forth from his training as fully drilled in technical issues, as amply supplied with theological

V.

THE ORIGIN OF THEISM.

A CONSISTENT use of words would require us to look for some common attribute as the bond of union between the various theisms of the world—Polytheism, Pantheism, Henotheism, Monotheism—and to confine the application of the word Atheism to those forms of belief which lack this attribute. It would then be found perhaps that Animism* and Materialism represent the two poles of religious opinion: that Atheism is always materialistic, and that theism always proceeds under animistic conceptions, imputing change to agency of which the human will is the type, and, even in the extreme case of Pantheism, being, in a measure, anthropomorphic. Usage, however, has not been determined by the demands of strict logic. Theism is now confined to a narrower meaning. It is generally understood to be synonymous with Monotheism, and, as it would obviously be a mistake to call a polytheist an atheist, the denial of Theism is indicated by Antitheism. In fact, the term Atheism—which has always been one of uncertain application—seems to be rapidly going into disuse. But while Theism is employed in the restricted sense just named, the word God is still used with great latitude of meaning; so that writers are quite ready to say that the idea of God is universal who would hesitate to say that all men are theists. There is good reason for this distinction, it must be confessed, for while the discussion of Monotheism may involve an inquiry into the genesis of the religious feeling, the two questions are nevertheless distinct, and an answer to one does not necessarily settle the other. This must be kept in mind in the present discussion, the object of which is to inquire how men came into possession of their

* "The theory of the soul is one principal part of a system of religious philosophy which unites in an unbroken line of mental connection the savage fetish worshipper and the civilized Christian. The divisions that have separated the great religions of the world into intolerant and hostile sects are, for the most part, superficial, in comparison with the deepest of all religious schisms, that which divides Animism from Materialism" (Tylor's "Primitive Culture," vol. i., p. 453).

belief in one living and true God, and the form of which will be determined by the answers that have been given to this question. These answers fall under the four heads of Development, Revelation, Inference, and Intuition.

It is obvious that these four theories are not mutually exclusive. For were it possible to show that as related to antecedent beliefs the history of Monotheism is the record of an advance from the lower to the higher, and is therefore a development, it is probable that it might also be shown that this advance was due to a growing perception of the unity of nature; and, therefore, that belief in the Divine was in all its stages inferential. In other words, the same belief may be an inference when considered as related to the believer, and a development when considered in relation to antecedent beliefs.

It can hardly be necessary to add that the truth of Theism is not necessarily affected by the question concerning its origin,* though the anxiety of some to have it appear that belief in God is intuitional, seems to imply that a measure of insecurity is felt in regard to a belief that rests on any other foundation. Yet the world was old before men learned the law of gravitation; and the recent appearance of a doctrine is not, in scientific circles at least, regarded as a reason for discrediting it. Suppose it were true that man attained to his monotheistic position only after a long journey of doubt and darkness. That fact alone would surely constitute no valid objection to Theism. For if the evolution of a belief is an argument against the truth of the belief, it is an argument against the belief in evolution, and the evolutionists would be the first to suffer by the application of such a canon. It might be said, indeed, that though it were possible to establish a genetic relationship between Monotheism and antecedent impure or less pure forms of religious belief, there would be nothing in this incompatible with the idea that Monotheism is due to some form of Divine communication. For if God may gradually communicate to man the truth respecting His Pluripersonality, there is no antecedent absurdity and certainly no impiety in supposing that He may as gradually communicate the truth respecting His Unity

* "As any inquiry which regards religion is of the utmost importance, there are two questions in particular which challenge our attention, to wit: that concerning its foundation in reason and that concerning its origin in human nature. Happily the first question, which is the most important, admits of the most obvious—at least, the clearest solution. The whole frame of nature bespeaks an intelligent author; and no rational inquirer can, after serious reflection, suspend his belief a moment with regard to the primary principles of genuine Theism and Religion. But the other question concerning the origin of religion in human nature is exposed to some more difficulty" (Hume's "Natural History of Religion," Introduction).

and Infinity. The advocates of development, however, may very properly be asked to establish their position before Christian theists are called upon to accommodate their religious convictions to its requirements.

I.

If the primitive religion was not Monotheism, what was it? Hume says it was Polytheism—his reasons being its wide prevalence, its relative inferiority, the assumption that the path of human history has been upward, and the difficulty of supposing that a monotheistic faith once obtained by grasping the unity of nature could ever be lost. He accounts for the genesis of Polytheism in this way: Primitive man was a savage. He was incapable of generalization. His attitude toward nature was not that of a philosopher, but of an Egoist. He was interested in the phenomena that were most intimately associated with his pleasure or pain. He construed the phenomena of the external world according to the analogy of his own nature. He thought the thunder and the rain, the sunshine and the breeze were living things. He invested them with selfhood. He prayed to them; and so as soon as he had a religion at all, he was a Polytheist.

There is no reason for crediting Hume, as Pfeiderer does, with keen psychological insight in his treatment of this subject; though it is, perhaps, as good a presentation of the naturalistic theory of religion as any to be found elsewhere. If primitive man was a savage, incapable of any mental processes beyond those that concerned his immediate bodily wants; if his religious ideas grew altogether out of materials furnished by his five senses, he may have been a Polytheist. But Hume's theory begs the question. It is an *à priori* defence of an *à posteriori* philosophy. It postulates a state of facts in the prehistoric period and then challenges refutation. Aside from Revelation, what do we know about the capacities of primitive man? What right have we to say that while the causal judgment was in full exercise the moral nature was dormant? What right have we to assume that although man was capable of reasoning on the basis of a supposed analogy between himself and natural phenomena, he was incapable of realizing his own dependence or of rising from the consciousness of his limitations to the thought of a being independent and unlimited? If the primitive religion was Polytheism, it is altogether gratuitous to say that it was generated out of fear; and with Theism resting, as Hume affirms, on sound rational grounds,

there is no psychological advantage in favor of a primitive Polytheism rising gradually to the conception of the living and true God, as opposed to a primitive Monotheism subsequently corrupted. If, however, men have emerged out of Polytheism into a purer faith, this has not come about, as Hume says it has, through the tendency to flatter local deities ending in the ascription to the worshipped object of the attributes of unity and infinity. It is far more likely that men rose to a monotheistic faith by means of a growing appreciation of the unity of nature.* Comte's views, so far as this particular point is concerned, are preferable to Hume's. "All great modifications of the religious spirit," † he says, "have been determined by the development of the scientific spirit. If men had not been capable of comparing, abstracting, generalizing, or proving more than monkeys or carnivorous animals, they would have persisted in a fetishism more or less gross."

Primitive religion, according to Comte, was fetishism. Primitive man regarded the world as a living thing. As the girl supposes that her doll is alive, and the boy strikes the unoffending table that he runs against, so the savage by an instinctive anthropomorphism imputes life to all things, and his objects of worship become such by means of this animistic conception. If we concede the postulates that underlie this theory, namely, that what is lowest in the scale is earliest in the order of time, and that the savages and uncivilized races of to-day are types of primitive man, it will not be difficult to secure for the theory of primitive fetishism a certain plausibility. Indeed, one would be inclined at first to say that if religion had a naturalistic genesis at all, fetishism was certainly its earliest form. So Comte teaches. So Schultze believes.

To one who approaches the subject from the side of supernaturalism the prevalence of fetishism presents no difficulties. Certain Portuguese navigators found the people of West Africa worshipping inanimate objects. They called these objects *feitigos*, the name given to charms and amulets which they carried on their persons and cherished with a semi-religious regard. Did these Portuguese Catholics believe in God in no higher sense than their regard for charms or crucifixes made evident? What right have we, then, to say that these ignorant people of West Africa had no other and higher idea of God than the worship of the fetish indicated? And even if they had no other idea of the Divine Being, how do we know that they did not

* Kuenen's theory of the genesis of Monotheism—ethical monotheism, he calls it—does not differ much from Hume's. See *National religions and universal religions*, p. 128.

† *Phil. pos. Rig.*, v. ii., p. 203.

descend to that point of degradation from an original faith in God? This indeed is the legitimate inference from the literature of India, as we know on the authority of the earlier writings of Max Müller. But it is among the advocates of naturalism that we find the strongest witnesses against primitive fetishism: some of them affirming that it is not the lowest, and therefore cannot be the earliest religion; while others as confidently say, agreeing here with the believers in supernaturalism, that it is a manifest corruption of an older and purer faith. Herbert Spencer says that, so far from fetishism being the mark of a low and degraded life, it is not found until a certain degree of culture and reflection has been reached. There is no fetishism, he tells us, among the Fijians, Australians, Tasmanians, and Bushmen. Von Hartmann, on the other hand, whose recent work is an attempt to give a naturalistic explanation of the development of religious consciousness, maintains that fetishism resulted from a corruption of primitive Henotheism.

Fetishism may or may not be the crudest form of religion. But however crude it may be, there is something in it that calls for explanation. This is evident from the wide differences to be found among writers respecting the employment of the term. Thus Schultze, in successive chapters, speaks of stars, mountains, water, wind, fire, plants, and animals as fetishes. Tiele puts the worship of heaven under this category. Comte calls the doctrine of the *anima mundi* a veritable fetishism. Lippert says that even a man may be a fetish. And in equal forgetfulness of the original application of the term, we are beginning to apply it to any object for which special regard is felt when we wish to speak of that regard in dyslogistic terms. Variety of application indicates variety of meaning, and this again shows that the worship of a fetish is not in itself an ultimate fact, but is conditioned by an antecedent belief. If the stick is worshipped because the stick is alive, and the stick is regarded as alive because the world is regarded as alive, then we must credit the fetish worshipper with powers of generalization which the doctrine of *anima mundi* implies; so that a general conception and a very abstract one would underlie fetishism. We should still have to ask why this object is treated with fetishistic regard and not that, if all objects are equally alive and it is the mere fact of being regarded as alive that accounts for fetishism. This question cannot be answered by illustrations borrowed from the nursery, as though the fact that the child treats her doll as a real baby, supposing that it may be ill or disturbed in sleep, were parallel to the manifestation of religious feeling in the worship of the fetish. If the fetish is a place where a soul is supposed

to dwell, as Lippert thinks,* then the mountain or the tree may be a fetish. But according to this view, the worship of the fetish is really the worship of a disembodied spirit. Happel† has given the best account of fetishism, and has shown pretty conclusively that the fetish was not originally worshipped as God, but that it was the means of establishing relations between man and something higher, heavenly and divine—that in short it was “not merely a symbol, but a sacrament.” Baring-Gould expresses a similar idea. “A fetish,” he says, “is a concentration of a spirit or deity upon one point.”‡ It is an abuse of terms, therefore, to speak of the stars as fetishes. Fetishism is “the worship of tangible inanimate objects,” as Max Müller says; or we may say with Tylor, that it “denotes the doctrine of spirits embodied in or conveying influence through material objects”; or better, we may say with Happel, that the fetish is “some valued object with which the supernatural powers are brought into union by means of magic.” Here, as before, the general conception conditions the concrete fact, and whether this general conception be called the religious consciousness, or animism, or belief in God, or belief in ghosts, it must be explained upon naturalistic principles before there can be any naturalistic philosophy of religion. It is because Herbert Spencer realizes this so fully, and is so painstaking withal in the elaboration of his theory, that his account of the origin of religion is specially worthy of attention.

According to Mr. Spencer, the worship of the fetish is the worship of an indwelling spirit. Belief in ghosts is the beginning of religion. Primitive man saw in his shadow some material suggestion of his second self. In his dreams he realized this idea more fully, and through the appearance of the dead to him in his sleep, and also his apparent ability to wander away beyond the place where his body was resting, he came to believe in the separate existence of the soul, and its continued existence after death. Ancestors who had been feared when living were propitiated when dead, and those who had been loved when in the flesh became the objects of reverence when they departed this life. So religion began; and Mr. Spencer is at great pains to show that what at first was only reverence for a deceased ancestor, took on in the course of time the form of tree, plant, animal, and hero-worship, the worship of the heavenly bodies, and finally of the one infinite and eternal God. Mr. Spencer has faced the problem which his philosophy required him to face. He believes that all forms of life and thought

* “Die Religionen der Europäischen Culturvölker,” p. 14.

† “Die Anlage des Menschen zur Religion,” p. 133.

‡ “Origin and Development of Religious Belief,” p. 175.

can be explained in accordance with the fundamental statements contained in his "First Principles." If any phenomena were shown to be incapable of being thus accounted for, and so of being brought within the scope of his philosophy, the incompetency of his system would be at once confessed. At the same time if he should succeed in showing how the phenomenal world of thoughts and things may have emerged, the consistency of his system would not prove its correctness. And supposing that Mr. Spencer were to show by an array of facts how our present Monotheism may have grown out of ancestor-worship, the strongest reason for believing that it so originated would be the "First Principles" upon which his philosophy is built, and any successful attack upon the "First Principles" would be fatal to the author's philosophy of religion. On the other hand, the strongest reason for the rival or supernaturalistic theory as to the origin of the idea of God, would be the special evidence that God exists, together with the exceptional evidences of Christianity. Mr. Spencer would be required, therefore, if he would do his work with thoroughness, to assail the whole Christian system. The most he can be said to have attempted hitherto, is to give a naturalistic interpretation to religion, and the defects which characterize this attempt are so numerous and so serious that his theory can hardly be said to have even plausibility.

In order to prove that the idea of God is developed out of the worship of ancestors, it was necessary to show that where homage was paid to ancestors, no homage is also paid to the gods. For, if the worship of gods and the worship of ancestors co-exist, it will be impossible to say that god-worship is transformed ancestor-worship. Ancestor-worship is universal in China, but it was probably antedated by the worship of God alone; and to-day the worship of God and the worship of ancestors co-exist in that country, the ritual of Confucianism prescribing "a worship of God for all, but in which the ruler of the State should be the only officiator, and a worship of ancestors by all, or at least by the heads of families for themselves and all the members in their relative circle."* Again, it does not follow that the veneration of ancestors, such as filial piety may naturally suggest, is worship, and particularly such worship as men pay to God. Men have prayed to and for the dead, without losing sight of the distinction between such acts and the proper worship of God. Mr. Spencer illustrates his habit of loose thinking when he proceeds to show that ancestor-worship is still practiced by Protestant Christians. "Obviously," he remarks, "dead parents are frequently thought of

* Legge: "The Religions of China," p. 23.

among us as approving or disapproving. Their expressed wishes acquire a sacredness which they had not during their lives. They are figured in the midst of relatives as though they knew what was being done, and as likely to be hurt by disregard of their injunctions. Occasionally a portrait will be fancied to look reproachfully on a descendant who is transgressing." And yet again, it does not follow that because the savage conceives of God as his father, he is, therefore, worshipping his ancestor. Yet, take the religion of the Amazulu, as reported by Canon Calloway, which Spencer thinks is such a manifest illustration of ancestor-worship. The account of their god Unkulunkulu, which is said to mean "the old-old one," is given in the following words: "The ancients said that it was Unkulunkulu who gave origin to men and everything besides, both cattle and wild animals. The sun and the moon we referred to Unkulunkulu, together with the things of this world; and yonder heaven we referred to Unkulunkulu. When black men say Unkulunkulu or Uthlanga, or the Creator, they mean one and the same thing. It is said Unkulunkulu came into being and begat men; he gave them being; he begat them. . . . The Unkulunkulu is no longer known; it is he who is the first man; he broke off in the beginning. Unkulunkulu told men—saying: 'I, too, sprang from a bed of reeds.' Unkulunkulu was a black man, for we see that all the people from whom we sprang are black, and their hair is black."* Does it follow from this that the Amazulu were worshipping a deceased ancestor, or does this account imply anything more than that conceiving of God as the cause of all things, they have expressed their idea crudely, but under the very natural image of paternity? If these statements are to be taken as proof of ancestor-worship, Christians may, with equal propriety, be accused of worshipping an ancestor because they repeat the Lord's prayer and address God as their Father in Heaven. But the most far-fetched specimens of Mr. Spencer's reasoning are to be found in that portion of his book where he attempts to show how the worship of trees, animals, idols, fetishes, mountains, heroes, and even of Jehovah have grown out of ancestor-worship. Thus fetish-worship came through the identification of the deceased with a portion of his clothing; idol-worship, from the habit of making a likeness of the deceased. Animal-worship is explained by saying that the deceased was supposed to enter into animals, or that a certain animal took up its abode in the house of the deceased, or yet again, that the animal name survived when the ancestor who bore the name

* "Principles of Sociology," p. 309.

was forgotten. Certain plants, the soma for example, yield intoxicating beverages, and on this account are supposed to be inhabited by a spirit. Hence tree-worship. Ancestors are spoken of as having come from the mountain or the sea, and the word that indicates direction being mistaken for a word denoting parentage, the sea and the mountains became objects of religious regard. So the stars are believed to be the homes of deceased ancestors, and they are worshipped. It is possible that in some cases objects of worship were related, as Spencer says they were, to reverence for dead ancestors, but no one can read the discussion of this subject in Spencer's "Sociology" without feeling how baseless his reasoning is, how little evidence there is for the support of his theory, and how that little is strained to make it yield the desired result. Ridicule is the best reply to a theory which requires us to believe that such awe-inspiring phenomena as the mountains, the ocean, and the stars have impressed men religiously only through the roundabout ghost theory of Herbert Spencer. Greek Mythology is Spencer's best ally, but even with the strong support of Lippert, it will be very difficult for him to overthrow the results of comparative Mythology and effect a euhemeristic revival. We may give the "heroes" any place we please, and that will not affect the conclusions that have been reached about the "gods." They may illustrate the process of apotheosis or incarnation: they may be men on their way to complete deification, or they may be gods who have been subjected to the limitations of earthly life. It seems to be an established fact that, so far as the gods are concerned, the myths that relate their history become less human the farther back we go; and it is remarkable, to say the least, that the mythology of the Vedas should give us substantially the same stories as we find in Greek literature, with this difference, that, whereas in the latter the mythology is all personalized, in the former reference is unmistakably made to the bright powers of nature.* The conclusions of modern mythologists are pitilessly fatal to Spencer's theory; for his theory requires him to make good the statement that the "divine man as *conceived* had everywhere for antecedent a powerful man as *perceived*." Mr. Spencer knows what is expected from him. He knows that his theory will be

* "Few will venture to deny that the stealing of the bright clouds of evening by the dark hours, the weary search for them through the long night, the battle with the robbers as the robbers are driven away by the advancing chariot of the lord of light, are favorite subjects with the poets to whom we owe the earliest Vedic songs. . . . But whether the Vedic hymns contain the germs of the Iliad and Odyssey, or whether they do not, it seems impossible to shut our eyes to the fact that the whole mythical history of Hellas exhibits an alternation of movements from the west to the east, and from the east back to the west again, as regular as the swaying of a pendulum." (Cox, "Mythology of the Aryan Nations," vol. i., p. 102.)

required to stand the test of universal application, and he has had before his mind the allegation made apparently by some advocate of the evolution hypothesis, that "no Indo-European or Semitic nation . . . seems to have made a religion of worship of the dead." Yet the only reply that Mr. Spencer makes is an expression of regret that evolutionists do not see eye to eye on these religious questions, followed by the statement that the Jews worshipped an ancestor in Jehovah, and that Abraham was under the sway of a living potentate to whom he paid homage and from whom in return he received promises. As has been already said, it is not necessary to appeal to supernaturalism in order to refute the fetish theory, or the theory of ancestor-worship. Von Hartmann has no sympathy with supernaturalism, but he has shown most convincingly that polytheism, fetishism, demonism, and the worship of ancestors, were constituent elements in the state of things that followed the downfall of an antecedent Henotheism.*

The foregoing theories proceed upon the assumptions of an empirical philosophy. If the ultimate atoms of science and philosophy are sensations, there can, of course, be no such thing as *a priori* truth. The beliefs that we entertain regarding cause, substance, and personal identity must be generalized experiences. Belief in God, and all moral ideas must be the slow growth of many generations. The development theory of the genesis of Theism would, according to this philosophy, be the only consistent theory, and the question after that would be whether such a Theism is believable. This is only a special form of the larger question, whether empiricism does not end in philosophical scepticism. And this leads to the remark that the knot of controversy in the theories of Hume and Comte and Spencer is to be found in the deep-lying questions of knowing and being. A sound philosophy of belief would have to deal with the theory of Hegel as well as with that of Hume. According to Hume, the unit of knowledge is a sensation. The end of this is scepticism. Kant saw this, and has rendered philosophy the great service of showing the absolute necessity of certain *a priori* judgments. He has shown that there are certain categories which are not only not derived from experience, but which condition the possibility of experience. He was sure of their subjective truth. He was sceptical of their objective reality. Scepticism soon became dogmatism, and a subjective idealism was the result. The philosophic movement, however, did not end here. And so the self, instead of being the world, became the type or symbol of the

* "Das religiöse Bewusstsein," pp. 93-108.

world. An infinite Self was posited. A great system of objective idealism was presented which is simply the doctrine of evolution expressed in the terms of mind instead of matter. Religion, of course, became a moment in a great process, and, as taught likewise by the positivists, must pass through successive stages of fetichism and polytheism before it attained to pure monotheism.

Everything is involved in the question as to the priority of mind; and, therefore, though Hume's theory and Hegel's theory respecting the origin of religion are both contrary to fact, there can be no question that Hegel's is more in harmony with the requirements of Christian theism. In order that this may be seen, let the two theories be placed side by side. Let us suppose, with Hume, that all the theisms of the world have been derived inferentially from the facts furnished by the senses. The thunder-storm is feared, and treated as a living thing. This, according to Hume, is the beginning of religion, of belief in God. Yet, can the savage, who exhibits this terror, be said to have a god? Why should the fear of an inanimate object, supposed to be alive, be regarded as the worship of a god any more than the fear of a wild animal known to be alive? Hume admits that the gods of these primitive polytheists are no better than the elves or fairies of our ancestors, and that these "pretended religionists are really a kind of superstitious atheists." But in saying this he surrenders the proof of his theory. For if these natural objects were not gods, and the fear of them was not religion, what evidence have we that religion had its origin in fear? None whatever. On the other hand, if a terror-stricken savage be our type of primitive religion, the question then emerges, what is religion? Have the brutes religion? asks von Hartmann in the opening chapter of his recent book. On the basis of naturalism, the answer must be, yes: and what is more, the dog's religion is greatly in advance of that which Hume imputes to pre-historic man.

It is asked, sometimes, in opposition to Hume's doctrine, how it is possible that our Christian Theism can be built on this foundation of superstition; how it happened that religion survived when fear subsided, and how, moreover, the theistic sentiment grew in spite of the disappearance of the crude Animism upon which it was based. These questions, however, do not annihilate Hume's theory; for it may be said that we have replaced the crude notions of the past by a corrected view of nature. We certainly should not surrender our reasoned Theism even if it could be shown to have grown out of facts furnished by the five senses. If, however, our Theism has originated in this way, then between the savage who crouches in terror in the presence of a thunder-storm, and the Christian who worships the living

and the true God, there is no common ground. It is an abuse of terms to call them by the same name. Whatever may be the effect of a naturalistic interpretation of religion upon our belief in the truth of theism, it destroys the solidarity of religious life, and cuts us off from all historic relationship with the polytheisms and fetishisms of the world. The Hegelian theory does not do this. For according to the Hegelian conception of religion, it is a manifestation of God. Hegelianism accentuates the subjective element in religion. According to its teaching, religion is something within. The infinite and eternal God is alike the postulate of all religions; and whether this truth be articulated in the full Monotheism of revelation, or be only struggling into speech in the Polytheisms of the world, it is nevertheless the truth which constitutes the great brotherhood of religious belief. To theists, to Christians, and especially to those who realize the great missionary obligations of the Church, this community of religious life under wide diversity of manifestation, is a matter of great importance. Christians commonly recognize it by saying that the impure religions are corruptions of an original Monotheism. But Hegel recognizes it too, though in a different way. For whether fetishism be a nascent form of the religious consciousness, or whether it be a degraded and shrivelled remnant of what was once a larger and brighter faith, it is in either case a witness to the continuity of religious life.

It is hard to support either the theory of Hegel or that of Hume by an appeal to the facts; but the writer who undertakes to combine the two will fall into hopeless difficulty. This, however, seems to be the position now occupied by Professor Max Müller. In all his earlier writings, Max Müller affirmed without qualification, his belief in the intuitional basis of religion. In his lectures on the Science of Religion, he said: "Religion is a mental faculty which, independent of, nay, in spite of sense and reason, enables man to apprehend the Infinite under different names and under varying disguises." In the preface to the first edition of his "Chips from a German Work-shop," he said: "An intuition of God, a sense of human weakness and dependence, a belief in the Divine government of the world, a distinction between good and evil, and a hope of a future life—these are some of the radical elements of all religion." In his "Science of Language," he expressed the belief that the perception of the Infinite "is not the result of reasoning or generalizing, but an intuition as irresistible as the impressions of the senses"; and M. Le Page Renouf, in his Hibbert Lectures, quotes these words of his "learned predecessor," apparently without knowing how completely his predecessor,

in his own Hibbert Lecture, had abandoned this high intuitional ground.

It is true, that in these lectures Max Müller still speaks after the style of a Hegelian, or rather of a Brahman, of the relation of the individual and finite Self, to the infinite or real Self, so as to imply that he believes that God is the postulate of all religions, and that a theistic background lies behind the crudest fetishism. This, however, is not case. He does not formally withdraw the statements made in his earlier works. He writes with an apologetic aim, and wishes to show how religious belief can be defended on the theory of a naturalistic genesis of it. To this apologetic attitude, no objection can be made; but in Max Müller's case, the apologetic soon becomes the dogmatic, and it is apparent before the lectures close that monotheistic faith, in the judgment of Max Müller, has been gradually evolved as the result of a long process of inference based upon the testimony of the five senses. These are the words in which he states the object which he had before him: "We want to reach a point where religious ideas take their first origin, but we decline to avail ourselves of the beaten track of the fetish theory on the left, or of the theory of a primordial revelation on the right side, in order to arrive at our goal. We want to find a road which, starting with what anybody grants us, viz., the knowledge supplied by our five senses, leads straight, though it may be slowly, to a belief in what is not entirely supplied by the senses—the various disguises of the infinite, the supernatural, and the divine." * "We claim no special faculty," the author said apologetically on page 30. On page 165 he now says dogmatically: "To admit a religious instinct as something over and above our ordinary mental faculties, in order to explain the origin of religious ideas, is the same as to admit a linguistic instinct in order to explain the origin of language, or an arithmetic instinct in order to explain our powers of counting." Discarding, then, the doctrine of an intuitive knowledge of God, Max Müller undertakes to show how man, possessed only of his five senses and his ordinary mental faculties, derived his knowledge of God out of the facts presented to his notice in the external world. Taking Vedic literature as giving the best account of the theogonic process, he tells us that at first certain semi-tangible objects of nature, the rivers, the trees, and the mountains, were worshipped; that worship of the intangible objects of nature—the sun, the sky, the clouds, marked the next stage; that from the worship of the sun

* "Origin and Growth of Religion," p. 163.

and the clouds, the Vedic religionist went forward to the worship of invisible deities, Indra the rain-giver and Maruts the storm-god; and, finally, that the evolution of belief ended in the denial of the existence of these gods or Devas, and in the affirmation of the self-existing One. Max Müller says that the idea of the Infinite is involved in the whole process. He would make this the point of union between his former *a priori* and his present empirical theory of the origin of religion. But it is not the same infinite in the two cases. The one is the infinite of the reason; the other is the infinite of the senses. The one is a name for God; the other signifies mere physical bigness. There is a great difference between the indefinite and the infinite. Mere bigness will not generate religion. Nor does Max Müller show that primitive man entertained any other feeling toward the tree or the river that was his first object of worship than one of wonder. Wonder is the mother of religion, if Max Müller's account of its genesis is correct. If the Vedas, as now interpreted by Max Müller, are to be taken as giving us a true picture of the evolution of religion, and man is assumed to have had only his five senses and a few categories to start with, it is safe to say that he rose to the conception of the Infinite at a very late period of his history. The more natural account of the process as given by Max Müller would be to say that religion, which began in wonder, advanced a step when men took animistic views of nature and treated the rivers, the clouds, and the sun as beings whose actions might be interpreted according to the analogy of their own personality; that afterwards men began to grasp the idea of a power or of powers behind phenomena, and through the notion of agency or cause to believe in invisible deities; that, finally, the existence of these separate deities or *devas* was denied, and the great generalization of one eternal Self took their place. So regarded, the doctrine of the Absolute becomes the climax in a great system of development, the basis of which is not belief in the Infinite, but Animism or the tendency to argue from our own personality to the existence of powers analogous to it. An apprehension of the Infinite by man, relating the religions of the world to one another in a descending scale, or a revelation of the Infinite in man, relating these religions to one another in an ascending scale—these seem to be the only modes in which the Infinite can be conceived as the postulate of all religious thought. Max Müller's claim that a religion which is generated by the five senses may through all its stages involve an apprehension of the Infinite, cannot be allowed. There is no reason why we should regard the idea of the Infinite as the first religious product of the five senses, and there is no reason why the abstract conception of the Infinite should

take precedence of the simpler conceptions of cause, power, and moral obligation.

Max Müller must be regarded as believing in primitive Polytheism. His theory is, that, beginning in the wonder excited by certain semi-tangible objects of nature such as rivers and mountains, religion advanced to the worship of the bright powers of nature, and after that to the belief in invisible deities. To this statement Max Müller would object by saying that he has repeatedly affirmed that Henotheism, and not Polytheism, is the primitive religion; and, moreover, that the question whether Polytheism or Henotheism was first, is irrelevant, since "when man had arrived at a stage of thought when he can call anything, be it one or many, God, he has achieved more than half his journey. He has found the predicate God and he has henceforth to look for subjects only to which that predicate is truly applicable." These statements, however, do not make it necessary to change the affirmation just made regarding Max Müller's belief. It might appear that until man had the predicate God he could not well be called either a polytheist or a henotheist. The fair implication of the sentence just quoted is that until man found the predicate God he was an atheist. But Max Müller distinctly says that when men were worshipping the rivers and the mountains and the sky they were henotheists, although they had not found the predicate God. If we had asked them whether the sky and the river were their gods, he tells us they would not have understood what we meant. To be a henotheist then it was not necessary to have the predicate. They worshipped gods whether they called them gods or not; and more than that, it was necessary for them to have gods before they found the predicate, and it was necessary that they should have a plurality of gods before they found the predicate. This is the result of his theory of the genesis of religion. Primitive man is worshipping, let us suppose, different objects: the sun, the clouds, the river. This is the first form of religion. Ask him now if these are gods. You may as well ask children, says Max Müller, "whether they considered men, horses, flies, and fishes as animals, or oaks and violets as vegetables. They would answer No; because they had not yet arrived at the higher concept which at a later time enables them to comprehend by one grasp objects so different in appearance." That is to say, God is not a name to express a being upon whom we are dependent, be that being one or many; but God is a class-name given to objects already worshipped, and expressing the common quality which worship denotes. If the predicate is found in this way, then in the nature of the case the worship of the gods and a plurality of gods is presupposed in the discovery of the predi-

cate. It would be different if man came otherwise by the predicate. If, for example, the idea of God antedated the worship of this or that being, the application of the predicate might be monotheistic, or henotheistic, or polytheistic, according to circumstances. Max Müller's views respecting the origin of this predicate have undergone a great change since he wrote the first volume of his "Chips from a German Work-shop," and a corresponding change is noticeable in his use of the word Henotheism. Thus he says: * "There is one kind of monotheism, though it would be more properly called theism, or henotheism, which forms the birthright of every human being. . . . This primitive intuition of God, and the ineradicable feeling of dependence on God, could only have been the result of a primitive revelation in the truest sense of that word. . . . This primitive intuition of God, however, was in itself neither monotheistic nor polytheistic, though it might become either. . . . It is too often forgotten by those who believe that a polytheistic worship was the most natural unfolding of religious life, that polytheism must everywhere have been preceded by a more or less conscious theism. In no language does the plural exist before the singular. No human mind could have conceived the idea of gods, without having previously conceived the idea of a god. . . . There are in reality two kinds of oneness. . . . There is one kind of oneness which does not exclude the idea of plurality; there is another which does. When we say that Cromwell was a protector of England, we do not assert that he was the only protector. But if we say that he was the protector of England, it is understood that he is the only man who enjoyed that title. If, therefore, an expression had been given to that primitive intuition of the Deity, which is the mainspring of all later religion, it would have been 'There is a God,' but not yet, 'There is but "One God."' The latter form of faith, the belief in One God, is properly called monotheism, whereas, the term henotheism would best express the faith in a single god." Henotheism as here defined, is a very different thing from the Henotheism of the Hibbert Lectures. There we are told that Henotheism differs from Polytheism, simply in the fact that in Polytheism the deities together form one divine polity, under control of one supreme God. To say that primitive religion was Henotheism in this sense, means only that that primitive religion was a crude and undeveloped Polytheism. Max Müller would have been in no danger of being quoted as a believer in primitive monotheism, had he used the term Henotheism in his earlier writings, in the sense which it has in his Hibbert Lectures. Here it means anarchic Polytheism;

* Page 347.

there it means relative Monotheism: and while Max Müller is the originator of the word Henotheism, it is to Schelling that we are indebted for the distinction expressed in the original application of it.

Schelling's views are given in the earlier part of his "Philosophy of Mythology," and are referred to very copiously by Schultze in his "Fetichismus." The unity of the race is the starting-point of the theory. Primitive man was possessed of a religious nature. He was filled with a sense of the presence of God. This original knowledge was not given in the form of an objective revelation, but existed rather as a religious instinct. Schelling may be classed, therefore, with those who hold the intuitional view respecting the origin of the idea of God. This primitive belief was Monotheism, but it was a relative and not an absolute Monotheism. From this watershed of primitive Theism, two streams have descended, one issuing in pure Monotheism, the other in Polytheism. The hypothesis of a relative as distinguished from an absolute Monotheism, is defended on two grounds: In the first place, it is said to furnish an answer to the question how man first embraced Polytheism. For, if original Theism was belief in a God, there was nothing in this to exclude plurality, and Polytheism might naturally grow out of it. In the second place, it is said that Monotheism, as the belief in one and only one God, is itself a generalization reached through contact with, and formulated as a protest against, an already existing Polytheism. But it is only in a very modified sense, that Schelling can be regarded as holding the development theory as to the genesis of the idea of God. He must rather be classed with those who hold that primitive man came into possession of his theistic faith through divine endowment. It is easy, therefore, to pass from him to the consideration of the second answer that has been given to the question with which we are dealing.

II.

Whether primitive man began with relative or absolute Monotheism, is a question that need not be debated here. If it could be shown, as of course it cannot be, that Adam, though made in the image of God, and having a knowledge of God, did not at first realize the antithesis which the expression "only one God" implies, it would be necessary to admit that in so far as absolute Monotheism differs from relative Monotheism, an element of evolution enters into theistic belief. And in such a belief, if it were entertained, there is nothing necessarily contrary to Scripture, or out of harmony with the analogy of God's dealings with the race. This is a speculative question,

however, and we may leave it to those who write the history of opinion "*a mundi incunabulis*," to inquire, as Brücker does, respecting the metaphysics of Cain and Abel, and to ask whether Adam had a perfect philosophy.

It is more important to note the fact, that aside from the declarations of Scripture upon the subject, there is good reason to believe that Monotheism was the primitive religion. And it is certainly true that Polytheism, fetishism, and idolatry are corruptions of an earlier and purer faith. "Five thousand years ago the Chinese were monotheists—not henotheists, but monotheists; and this monotheism was in danger of being corrupted, as we have seen by a nature-worship on the one hand, and by a system of superstitious divination on the other." So says Dr. Legge.* And says M. Emmanuel Rougé: † "The first characteristic of the religion of ancient Egypt, is the unity of God, most energetically expressed." Says Le Page Renouf: ‡ "The gods of the Egyptian, as well as those of the Indian, Greek, or Teutonic mythologies, were the 'powers' of nature, the 'strong ones,' whose might was seen and felt to be irresistible, yet so constant, unchanging, and orderly in its operations, as to leave no doubt as to the presence of an ever-living and active intelligence." Says Professor Grimm: "The monotheistic form appears to be the more ancient, and that out of which antiquity in its infancy formed polytheism. . . . All mythologies lead us to this conclusion." § This too was once the belief of Max Müller, though, as has been shown, his opinions seem to have undergone a change under the pressure of a demand that religion shall be accounted for as a product of man's five senses. "The more we go back, the more we examine the earliest germs of any religion, the purer, I believe, we shall find the conceptions of the Deity, the nobler the purposes of each founder of a new worship." || Von Hartmann is in substantial accord with this opinion, and is at pains to name Max Müller as the originator of the term Henotheism, without noticing that the Oxford Professor uses it in a sense very different from his own, and that the Henotheism of the Hibbert Lecture is a very different thing from the Henotheism of the "Chips from a German Work-shop." Hartmann's discussion of naturalistic Henotheism, is exceedingly interesting. There are no people, he says, whose oldest literature does not show that the worship of Heaven was in the beginning, the highest national God. But the worship of Heaven

* "Religions of China," p. 17.

† Quoted by Renouf, "Hibbert Lectures," p. 93.

‡ *Ib.*, p. 127.

§ Quoted by Naville, "Heavenly Father," p. 21.

|| "Science of Language," 2d series, p. 443.

as one being, was simultaneous with the worship of a plurality of heavenly phenomena, and these phenomena were worshipped under the animal and subsequently under the human names which a child-like poetic fancy suggested. Plurality, however, was not incompatible with unity. These nature-men worshipped many gods, yet they worshipped one God. There was a contradiction in their religion which they did not realize, and which led on to Polytheism on the one hand, and to abstract Monism on the other. This was Henotheism, and Henotheism von Hartmann defines, not as anarchic Polytheism, nor as democratic Polytheism—Polytheism without a supreme head;—Henotheism, he says, denotes “a conception and treatment of a religious object, as if it were not merely *a* god, but as if it were in fact *the* god, yet without intending to exclude the same consideration of other gods along with it.” Hartmann believes that Monotheism—relative Monotheism Schelling calls it, Henotheism he prefers to call it—was the primitive religion, and that Polytheism, fetishism, idolatry, and ancestor-worship, were corruptions of a purer faith. Yet it was a naturalistic Henotheism. Primitive man did not conceive of the distinction between soul and body. He did not think as we do of personality and the Infinite. Yet he worshipped one God. His God was the bright Heaven—the overarching sky; nay, it was the totality of phenomena grasped as a unity and construed according to the analogy of his own personal existence. He was in some respects such a man as Spinoza, or Strauss, or Mr. Pollock, or Professor Seeley. His God was the Universe. This is saying a great deal for the intellect of primitive man. Hartmann is a good witness against anthropologists like Tylor and Lubbock. But a being whose childish faith was an unconscious anticipation of the doctrine of the Absolute, could hardly have been incapable of distinguishing between agent and act, between phenomena and power behind phenomena. Primitive man did not worship Heaven, because Heaven was a part of the grand totality of things. It is the relationship between Heaven and the Father in Heaven that accounts for this early and wide-spread form of faith. The oldest literature is not necessarily a record of the oldest religion. It is fair to suppose that just as the worship of Heaven was corrupted into the worship of multitudinous gods, so the worship of Heaven itself was a corruption of the originally pure worship of the living God. So apparently thought Max Müller once when he said, “Those who at a later time called Heaven God, had forgotten that they were predicating of Heaven something that was higher than Heaven.”*

* “Science of Language,” Second Series, p. 457.

If, then, the primitive religion was monotheistic, how did man come into possession of it? It has been said that he received it by revelation; that is, that it came to him as an objective communication from God—or, as Watson says, that he derived it “by sensible converse with God.” This would imply, as Schelling expresses it, “a previous atheism of consciousness.” It would imply that until God in some sensible form appeared to man, he must have been without any knowledge of Him. This would give us a very mechanical conception of the origin of religious life, in place of that which treats man as possessed of a religious nature, and as carrying within him the witness to his divine kinship. It is sometimes said that the idea of God is due to tradition, but this is evidently a wrong use of terms. The tradition theory as to the diffusion of religious belief is very closely associated, however, with the theory which makes the origin of religious belief a matter of objective revelation. Coming from without, and not originating within, such a religious belief could only be perpetuated through a traditive agency.

Mr. Gladstone holds that prior to the dispersion of the nations there was a revelation comprehending the great salient doctrines of redemption and including the Trinity and the atonement; that these doctrines, which in their pure form have been preserved in the Bible, were perverted and corrupted in the heathen world; and that in this way the analogies traceable between Christianity and heathen mythology are to be explained. But they may be otherwise explained, it should be said, in a way that does equal honor to Christianity. It may be said that these mythologies are abortive efforts of the religious consciousness to give expression to that which Revelation alone can adequately state; that they are prophetic of better things to come; that they are typical of that larger and fuller inspiration which speaks through apostles and prophets and makes them infallible organs of the Holy Ghost.

Mr. Gladstone's view, though consistent with, is not demanded by, the belief that fetishism and Polytheism are corruptions of an original Monotheism. Heathen mythologies are broken lights. They come from one original and shining source. But was this the light without or the light within? It is more rational to believe that Adam had a highly illuminated religious consciousness, than to suppose that he and his posterity were dependent on objective communications given once for all or repeated at intervals and perpetuated by tradition. The objections to the theory of an original objective revelation are very strong, and have been well stated by Professor Flint, Dr. Cocker, Dr. Fairbairn, and others. But whatever doubt there may

be as to the mode in which Adam received his Monotheism, there can be no doubt as to the main source of ours. Any account of our faith in God would be incomplete which took no note of our relation to the history of Theism. We are theists because we live in a theistic community, were born of theistic parents, have received instruction in theistic doctrine, and so—indirectly through tradition, as well as directly through personal contact with the Bible—are indebted to Revelation. If we may so express it, Adam derived his Monotheism by Inspiration, and we have derived ours from Revelation. This, however, is only a partial statement of the case.

Setting aside the distinction between Revelation and Inspiration just referred to, it is easy to see that the question between those who advocate the theory of development on the one hand, and that of Revelation on the other, is whether man has attained to his idea of God by slow stages and his own unaided efforts, or whether he had it to begin with and by Divine communication. It is the question whether history has been an improvement or a degradation. It is one form of the great debate between the natural and the supernatural, in which so much that is precious is involved. Whether the antithesis between the natural and the supernatural is necessary in order to a belief in the supernatural; whether when the utmost has been conceded and the facts of the phenomenal world have been articulated in accordance with the demands of an uncompromising naturalism, this naturalism means anything more than ORDER, and whether order does not still find its only explanation in MIND; whether omnipresent naturalism as to process is not another name for omnipotent supernaturalism as to agency—is a question which this discussion may very properly suggest, though the answer to it cannot now be attempted. Naturalism is undoubtedly religion's great enemy.* But it must be remembered that if we believe in God, we believe also in Jesus and a supernaturalistic uniformitarianism, though it may save theism, is disastrous to Christianity.† This, however, is a digression. Our Theism, as has been said, stands in direct historic relation to the Bible. Yet we have not been simply the passive recipients of a revelation. We have not sat at the feet of our teachers without asking for the reasons which accredit Theism, and, therefore, an acknowledgment of indebtedness to revelation does not do away with the necessity for considering the inferential element that enters into theistic belief.

* As an illustration of this, see Professor Seeley's recent book, entitled "Natural Religion".

† Theologians recognize this making a distinction between the *potestas ordinata* and the *potestas absoluta* of the Divine Being. See "Outlines of Theology," by Dr. A. A. Hodge, p. 149.

III.

No one acknowledges our obligations to tradition and revelation more fully than Professor Flint. Yet he believes at the same time that the theistic concept is an inference. These positions are not incompatible. For, while we are indebted to the Bible for a full, clear, and discriminating Monotheism, we are also in possession of materials out of which some knowledge of God would have been gained, even if we had not known the Bible. There is, in other words, a subjective preparation for this objective truth. There is a natural Theism as well as a revealed Theism; and this natural Theism is a factor in our Monotheism. The question is, whether this natural Theism is to be regarded as an inference or as an intuition. Those who hold that belief in one God is the slow growth of centuries, hold that the theistic concept is an inference; but those who hold that belief in God is an inference do not necessarily hold that it was crude in its beginnings. The advocates of development theories generally assume that primitive man was incapable of reasoning in any other way than by supposing that physical objects are alive. But why should the causal judgment be developed only in this crude form? Why should primitive man be assumed to have no conscience? Why should the idea of the Infinite, or of necessary being, not present itself to his mind? And why is it unreasonable to suppose that before men became corrupt and degraded, as the result of sin, they were able to go by a direct inferential process, from their own existence to the existence of one God? It may be said that this view presupposes the fact of Revelation. No, it does not. It simply follows from the conclusions that have been reached regarding primitive Henotheism that if the theistic concept is an inference it started as a very pure and complete inference. Primitive Henotheism, in this respect, is in remarkable accord with the Bible's account of the beginnings of human history. If we derive our idea of God through inference, then it is an inference reached by analogical reasoning. And Animism is not only the common element in all theisms, as has been already said, but it is the root of all forms of belief in God. To this no objection need be made. It is said in ridicule of belief in a personal God, that it is anthropomorphic. But would our conception of God be higher if it were zoomorphic? The attempt to get rid of anthropomorphism, that is to say, of the personality of God, ends in identifying God with the order of nature—ends in Atheism, Professor Seeley to contrary notwithstanding.

Dr. McCosh and Professor Flint are very pronounced in the opinion

that belief in God is an inference. "Our conviction as to God," says the former, "is not a single instinct incapable of analysis, but it is the proper issue of a number of simple principles, all tending to one point." It is easy to accord with all that has been said by these writers without being shut up to the conclusion that natural Theism is altogether inferential. It is true that belief in God is not a simple, irreducible, and universal conviction. The writers just named have shown very clearly that what has often passed for intuitive knowledge regarding God, is really a process of reasoning and nothing more. And it is also true that belief in God can be vindicated; in other words, that reasons can be given for belief in God. In so far as our Theism is a reasoned Theism—is a Theism corroborated, corrected, and made clearer by argument, there is an inferential element in our faith that must be taken notice of in the answer to the present inquiry. And further: since it is possible to vindicate a belief already in possession by arguments based upon the causal judgment and man's moral nature, there is no reason why these arguments should not lead a man to God even though he did not believe in Him before. There is not much to encourage the belief that mankind would have been able to make the passage from Polytheism to Monotheism by means of reasoning. But some have made it in that way. The argument is very complex, as the idea of God is very complex, and elements enter into the inferential processes of which it may be impossible for most men to keep count.* For, as Dr. Ladd has shown, in an admirable article on this subject, all the elements of our nature contribute to this concept, and the belief is itself a synthesis of our entire manhood. So that though it be true, as it undoubtedly is, that men believed in God long before they made use of the argument from final causes, it does not follow on this account that belief in God is not inferential. Professor Flint does not believe that men were atheists until they were led to acknowledge the existence of God by a process of deliberate reasoning. In saying that the theistic concept is an inference, he is far from saying that it is simply a scientific hypothesis, resorted to for the purpose of explaining the facts of the universe. He holds that the theistic belief is reached by a process of unconscious inference. There is in the theistic inference he supposes, the same unconscious process that there is in vision, in the perception of distance, in the recognition our fellow-men. "We grow up unto the knowledge of God as we grow up unto acquaintance with the minds of our fellow-men, through acquaintance with their acts. The Father in Heaven is

* *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 1877.

known as the Father on earth is known. The latter is as unseen as the former. No human being has really ever seen another. No sense has will or wisdom or goodness for its object. Man must infer the existence of his fellow-men, for he can have no immediate perception of it: he must become acquainted with their character through the use of his intelligence, because character cannot be heard with the ear, or looked upon with the eye, or touched with the finger."*

Professor Flint's illustration is apt, and without doubt, there is this element of unconscious inference in theistic belief. But however rapid the process, it is a process still. Belief in God is, therefore, according to Professor Flint, belief because of reasons. Are we sure, though, that the theory of unconscious inference is a full answer to the question respecting the genesis of the idea of God? It does not follow that because reasons can be given for a belief, the belief is due to those reasons. In accounting for the genesis of a belief, we may have to consider the cause behind as well as the reasons before. In other words: An irresistible tendency to believe in God, and this an ultimate fact, however interpreted, may exist along with the reasons for believing in such a God, and the evidence which furnishes us with the predicates of infinity and moral perfection.

IV.

It is not difficult to understand how primitive Monotheism—through the operation of a poetic fancy, or through the moral and spiritual degeneracy of mankind, and among people intellectually degraded—may have been corrupted into Polytheism, idolatry, zoolatry, and fetishism; and how through a process of abstraction simultaneous with, or subsequent to this corruption, whereby the distinction between God and nature was ignored and the anthropomorphism which imputes personality to God was eliminated, a monistic or pantheistic conception of the universe may have been brought about. But whatever relation existing Monotheism may sustain to an antecedent Monotheism, it is a reasoned belief. Its value, moreover, as a scientific hypothesis is not lessened, because, as is generally maintained, there is "a religious knowledge which we have of God previous to scientific apprehension." † Men differ widely in their explanations of this unreasoned Theism, and these differences are sometimes lost sight of

* "Theism," p. 77.

† Dorner's "System of Christian Doctrine," Clark's ed., vol. i., p. 207.

through the application of a common name. It is necessary, however, to have a common name to express the idea that belief in God is not altogether due to objective revelation and that it is not simply a scientific hypothesis. There is no word that will serve this purpose better than the word Intuition. It must be understood, however, as used in a very wide sense, and as embracing the views of writers who are very widely separated from each other. There is, for example, the theory of Schelling, that we have an immediate intuition of the Absolute, a theory that has been made familiar to us through Sir William Hamilton's refutation of it. There is, besides, the theory of Jacobi, afterward developed by Schleiermacher, which builds upon the religious feeling or consciousness of dependence.

The introduction of this element into theistic discussion has its advantages. For the demands of our nature are not fully met when we regard God as the necessary Being standing in antithesis to a world of contingent existence, or as the First Cause standing at the beginning of a chain of second causes; nor yet by regarding Him as the necessary counterpart of our moral nature. For, besides the ethical nature of man, which speaks in the terms of law, and the intellectual nature of man, that speaks in the terms of the causal judgment, man is possessed of a religious instinct. He has a spiritual nature. It is the place which the philosophy of Schleiermacher gives to the religious feeling that constitutes its merit, that gives it its fascinating interest; and, it may be added, makes it dangerous. For it not only affirms the subjective element in religion, it gives it supremacy; so that his theory of religion becomes, as one has well expressed it, "the apotheosis of individualism." * Yet the religious feeling, or sense of dependence, is not the same thing as an immediate knowledge of God. It may be religious consciousness, but it is not God-consciousness. It is proper to say, "My heart cries out for God." It is rational to believe that God exists as the object of the soul's desire. But, however emotionally expressed, the proper interpretation of the psychological fact is that we feel dependent, and inferentially, therefore, believe in God. Great religious thinkers, however, Mr. Mansel among them, have made the mistake of identifying the sense of dependence with a consciousness of the Supreme Being.

No philosopher of our day is more pronounced in his affirmation of an intuitive belief in God than Professor Calderwood. He says that "belief in the existence of the One Infinite God is a *necessary belief*, that is, a belief essential to our nature, so that the opposite can-

* Dr. A. W. Fairbairn, in the *Contemporary Review*, April, 1882.

not be believed when the real problem is presented to the mind."* It must be admitted that we have at least a choice of hypotheses as to the genesis of the concept of the Divine existence. We may say that belief in one Infinite God is a constituent factor in the mind of man, though dormant here and perverted there; or we may say that the belief is a generalization requiring culture, thought, abstraction, and perhaps Revelation for its full exhibition. The former view is taken and very ably defended by Dr. Calderwood. Antitheism, however, is a stubborn argument against it. It must be remembered, too, that the idea of the Infinite is a very different thing from the idea of one Infinite, Personal God. One could wish that Dr. Calderwood had not defended the intuitive character of belief in God by undertaking to show "that there are no arguments sufficient to warrant the belief in God as it is now found among men." "All arguments," he says, "are not only unnecessary as shown by the fact that men believe without them, but they are insufficient to lead to the conclusions which they profess to reach." It may seem to make more clear that the belief is intuitive, to show that the proofs which have been offered are unsatisfactory; but, whatever opinions may be entertained regarding the value of the proofs, most men will agree that they at least show that belief in one Infinite, Personal God is not a simple and irreducible belief. If it be said that the test of an intuition is that being ultimate it cannot be referred to antecedent belief, it can be said with at least as much force on the one side, 'the belief in God is not ultimate for, look at the proofs,' as it can on the other side, 'the belief is ultimate, for the proofs are unsatisfactory.' And the worst of it is that, though the theist may not be convinced that his belief is an intuition, the anti-theist will make the most of the statement that theism lacks argumentative support.

Dr. Charles Hodge says in his "Systematic Theology"† that belief in God is "innate." His position, however, is not the same as Dr. Calderwood's. He does not deny the validity of the theistic argument. Our innate idea of God is not incompatible in his mind with the *a posteriori* arguments in proof of the Divine existence. And when he affirms the universality of the belief, it is not belief in the existence of one Infinite, Personal God. Indeed, he distinctly says, "All that is maintained is, that the sense of dependence and accountability to a being higher than themselves exists in the minds of all men." When, moreover, he affirmed that belief in God exists prior to reasoning, he meant that there was no conscious passage from the pre-

* "Philosophy of the Infinite," p. 46.

† Vol. I., p. 192.

mises to the conclusion; that the sense of dependence and the Being upon whom we are dependent are both grasped in a single synthesis of thought. Logically, however, these ideas are distinct, and the passage from one to the other is inferential.

To the names already mentioned must be added in this connection that of Dr. Caird; for, while repudiating intuitionism in the common acceptance of the term, he yet declares "that in all religious experiences there are involved feelings and acts which are possible only to spiritual and intelligent beings, which are grounded in certain necessary relations of the human spirit to the Divine, and which, therefore, do not rise accidentally, but in conscious obedience to the hidden logic of a spiritual process. . . . It is necessary that mind as mind should relate itself to God."* Accordingly, belief in God is not an inference taken up into the soul through the force of reasons. Rather is it a belief that flows by influence of a Divine impulse into the channel of the soul's activities, and that is ever pushing itself into fuller, freer, and more manifest expressions. These writers all agree that an unreasoned Theism antedates the Theism of argument, and that the soul "spontaneously recognizes God" without waiting for elaborate reasoning in proof of His existence. How, then, is this constitutional impulse Godward to be explained?

1. It has been held that we have an immediate and intuitive knowledge of the Absolute. Few maintain this belief, and those who do, are not believers in a personal God.

2. It is said that belief in God is an ultimate truth—an *a priori* belief. If it were, however, it would be universal; the opposite would be unthinkable, and proof impossible. The theistic concept will not stand these tests, and, therefore, cannot be an intuition in the strict sense of the term.

3. The idea of God is held by some to be a stage in a great process of development, whereby God comes to self-consciousness. To quote the Hegelian language of Caird, without pretending to understand exactly what it means: "A philosophy of religion is not the thoughts or reasonings of a finite observer as to the being and nature of God and our relations to Him, but simply a conscious development of the process . . . by which the finite spirit loses or abnegates its finitude and self-sufficiency and finds its truer self in the life and being of God. . . . All true thought of God is itself Divine thought. . . . If, therefore, rational and speculative knowledge of it is, in one point of view, man's knowledge of God, it is in another God's knowledge of Himself." †

* *Philosophy of Religion*, p. 80.

† *Ib.* p. 53.

4. The spontaneous faith in some higher power which all men seem to have may be a synthesis of inferences unconsciously performed, and one to which all the elements of our nature have contributed. This is probably a correct account of natural Theism, though it is not necessarily exclusive of yet another method of explaining the genesis of the idea of God.

5. For it may be that God is Himself the true cause of the concept of God. This was the doctrine of Descartes, and there is much in the analogy of our religious life to lend it very plausible support. We know that God has revealed Himself to man through His Son; we know that He reveals Himself in man by the Holy Ghost. To the agency of the Spirit we impute all holy thoughts. He spoke by the prophets, and under His inspiration the Church's life is perpetuated. God's work is marked by unity. The higher spheres of life and activity differ from the lower, but they follow the analogy of the lower. They are prophesied in the lower. The lower are index fingers showing the path of God's purposive route. Why, then, may we not use the highest forms of God's manifestation of Himself to help our knowledge of the lower? In Him we live and move and have our being. In all the processes of grace He is first. We love Him because He first loved us. We find Him because He first finds us. We confirm our faith by reasons. We may even resolve our unreasoned faith into separate inferences, and that faith may still be the fruit of a Divine contact with the soul. God has breathed into the soul, and this inspiration bubbling to the brim in conscious thought has been colored by its surroundings. We have mistaken this iridescence of argument, this coloring of feeling, these reflected lights of the outer world, as the ground of our belief. We err. It is not by arguments without alone, it is also by the breath of God within, that we get our first impressions of the Divine existence.

It must be admitted that consciousness does not testify to the correctness of this position; but neither does it testify against it. Nor can the wide diversity of view respecting the divine existence be urged in opposition to this inspirational account of the genesis of the thought of God, for the same light may shine brightly and dimly through different media. There is a light that lighteth every man. Theism is an inferential passage from the finite spirit to the Infinite Spirit. But it is more than that. Animism, or belief in mind, is not the only bond between the various faiths in God. The religions of the world sustain relation to ancestral Monotheism, but they sustain relation, too, to the ever-present Spirit of God, and this witness of the Spirit is the common bond between them all. Theistic proofs are

not unnecessary, and they should not be disparaged. Yet belief in God is older than its defences, and rests on other ground than inductive probability. It may be hard to prove that God himself is the cause of our belief in Him, yet this view falls in with the analogies of subsequent revelation, and it is consonant with the idea of God's ever-present operation to believe that His thought is so far confluent with our thought that we know Him through His own immanent presence in the soul.

We find, therefore, when we examine our belief in one living, personal God, that we cannot put our explanation of it under any one of the four categories that have been named. It is made up of different elements ; and among them will be found the indwelling presence of God himself, the unconscious inference whereby we grasp the idea of dependence and a Being on whom we are dependent in one indivisible synthesis, the historic proof and elaborate defences of a reasoned Theism, and the progressive revelations of the inspired Word.

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