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I. CALVIN'S TRADUCERS—WHO THEY WERE AND WHAT THEY THOUGHT.

To understand a man should be the honest purpose of all who undertake to write about him. It is acknowledged by those not too friendly to the system known as Calvinistic, that John Calvin is the worst understood of all the men of history, and the best hated. Fairbairn says: "He is one of the best hated men in history; round his name fierce controversies have raged, and still rage. * * There is something imposing in the multitude and variety of aversions that converge on Calvin."

Calvin's doctrine of Election, which he describes as a profound mystery and which must not be curiously examined, but nevertheless is a profitable doctrine, calculated to destroy the very roots of pride and presumption, is the initial cause of the intense hatred of his name. In his system of theology, under this doctrine, occurs the startling statement, that God, for the glory of his righteousness, consigns some to damnation; and the expression, brought against him, "A terror-moving decree." "This celebrated place; *Decretum quidem horribile fateor*, which does honor to his feelings, has also served as the foundation of abuse." (Ancillon, *Melanges Critiques*, p. 37. People accuse Calvin, says that writer, of describing God's decrees as horrible, whereas he simply meant that we ought to tremble at contemplating this mystery; as he himself expresses it in the French version of the "Institutes." Rivett, III, in his treat-

VI—PROOFS OF GOD'S EXISTENCE AND CHARACTER.

Man's possession of the idea of God is a proof of the dignity of his nature. Had he originated it, it would indicate an even higher nature, but it would at the same time weaken the proof that God exists. If the idea be born within man's own mind, then there may or may not be an answering objective reality. If the idea be beyond the power of human discovery or invention, then the fact that man has it shows that it must have come from God, and that therefore God exists. As we hold it to be a supernatural revelation, this fact might seem to stop any effort to prove God's existence. Occam held that none of the articles of faith are demonstrable by reason, not even the existence and unity of God; Scotus, that none of the Christian dogmas are rationally demonstrable; even Aquinas believed that the distinctively Christian dogmas are undemonstrable. Though these views be true, nevertheless any proof, outside of intuition or mathematical demonstration, may be strengthened by corroborative evidence; moreover, the proofs give shape to the idea. Beyond this it is an interesting inquiry to see what proofs that God exists can be given, outside of the Bible, on the basis of natural religion alone. There are four of these usually given.

THE ARGUMENT FROM COMMON CONSENT.

This may be stated as syllogism. Whatever is universally believed is true; the belief in God is universal; therefore God exists. The principle of the major promise is stated by Cicero in his "Tusculan Questions" thus: "*Omni autem in re consensio omnium gentium lex natural putanda est.*" St. Vincent of Levens, in the fifth century, enunciates it in his "Commonitorium" in these words: "*Quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est.*" This principle is at least questionable. As announced by Vincent it

was limited to the church. Does it require an absolutely universal consent, of the learned and the ignorant, of the wise and the unwise? If so, there are few truths or facts that can claim such universal credence. Moreover, even of these beliefs there are some that are not true; as all men at one time believed the earth to be flat and the center of the universe.

But if the principle were true, it would not apply to the case before us; for the belief in God's existence is not universal. Plato makes Clinias say: "*Καὶ οἱ πάντες Ἕλλην-
ές τε καὶ βάρβαροι νομίζουσιν εἶναι θεός.*" Even as thus expressed it is not true. Some Hottentot and Australian tribes, and others, doubtless, have had no knowledge whatever of a superior being, and no belief in gods of any kind. Deaf mutes and atheistic philosophers are also exceptions. Moreover, the gods of the nation are not God, and a belief in them is not a belief in Him. The fact that the great majority of men believe in divinities may be regarded as indications of a primitive belief, now sadly perverted, in the only true God.

The argument, as presented above, is worthless. There is a modification of its suggested Whiteley, which has some force: "Whatever belief is held by the wise and good is probably true; the belief in God and the conception of Him grows in strength and purity with the civilization of man; unless, therefore, our nature is a delusion, human wisdom and virtue a mockery, the belief in God, held by the leading races and by the leading men of the race is likely true. Darwin says, in "The Descent of Man:" "The question (i. e., the origin of man), is of course wholly distinct from that higher one, whether there exists a Creator or Ruler of the universe; and this has been answered in the affirmative by the highest intellects that have ever lived."

B—THE ONTOLOGICAL ARGUMENT.

Dr. R. L. Dabney says that this argument originated with Epicurus. Ueberweg states that Epicurus taught that "we possess a distinct knowledge of the gods, for they

often appear to men and leave behind representative images in the mind."

The argument is usually attributed St. Anselm, the Piedmontese Archbishop of Canterbury in the 11th century, famous for his dictum, "*Credo ut intelligam*," and for the clear and correct statement and development of the doctrine of Christ's satisfaction to divine justice for man's sin. Anselm's Ontological Argument is found in his "Proslogium," and has been thus summarized by Ueberweg: "All men have the idea of God, even those who deny it, for they cannot deny that of which they have no idea. The idea of God is that of a being absolutely perfect, one whom we can not imagine to have a superior. Now, the idea of such a being necessarily implies existence; otherwise we might imagine another being, who, by the superaddition of existence to the perfection of the first, would thereby excel him; that is to say, excel one who by supposition is absolutely perfect. Consequently we can not conceive the idea of God, without being constrained to believe that he exists."

The principle of this proof has been approved and adopted by some of the most astute and profound philosophers. Descartes, in his "Third Meditation," presents it in three forms: 1. "As soon as I perceive myself, an imperfect being, to exist, I have the idea of a perfect being, and am under the necessity of admitting that this idea has been imparted to me by a being who is actually perfect, who really possesses all the perfections of which I have some idea—that is to say, who is God." This form is founded on the idea of perfection. 2. He combines causality (which principle indeed underlies all three forms, which makes it questionable whether in any the argument is purely ontological) with perfection. "I do not exist by myself; if I were the cause of my own existence, I should have given myself all the perfections of which I have an idea. I exist then by another; and this being by whom I exist is all perfect; otherwise I should be able to apply to him the same reasoning, which I have just applied to myself." 3.

Finally, he puts the argument on the basis of the infinite. "At the same time that I perceive myself as a finite being, I have the idea of an infinite being. (As the corrective). This idea, from which I cannot withdraw myself, and which is derived from no other idea, came to me neither from myself, nor from any other finite being; for how could the finite produce the idea of the infinite? Therefore it has been imparted to me by a being really infinite."

Leibnitz, in his "Meditations Concerning Knowledge, Truth and Ideas," presents the argument syllogistically: "A being from whose essence we can conclude existence exists in fact, if it is possible. Now God is such a being that we can infer from his essence his existence. Therefore, if God is possible, God exists."

Cudworth, More, Clarke, Butler, and others, have also urged this proof; but, on the other hand, Gaunilo, a monk, contemporary with St. Anselm, asserted that it is a paralogistic fallacy with which the archbishop had deceived himself; and Kant has confirmed this distinctive criticism; alleging that we are not allowed, as this argument does, to infer existence from a mere definition; we could as logically infer the existence of a perfect island, because we can for such an idea.

A metaphysical argument is suggested by the ideas of space and time, those mysteries of ontology. What are they? Real, as most think, or merely ideal, as alleged by Kant and his school? We may safely say that no one but a philosopher, with a theory at stake, will deny their reality. Indeed they are so real that it is impossible for us to conceive their non-existence. We can not conceive nor believe the annihilation of either space or time. Let all mental being cease, let all matter perish, and yet space and time survive. If, however, this be not true, nevertheless the existence of any mind or atom of matter demands a when and where to be. Moreover, they are universal, omnipresent. Beyond the stellar orbits, the utmost confines of the created universe, where even ether ceases, space and time still reign, and we can not conceive it otherwise

So far we are treading the adamantine walks of necessity; we are in the relentless grasp of thoughts that hold us and yet can not satisfy us. How necessary, how immense, yet how empty? A vacant space, an unfilled time—the soul shrinks back as from a skeleton, whose eyeless sockets and fleshless fingers speak of the absence of life and soul. There must be something to dwell in space, so live in time; something as eternal, as immense, as infinite as they. They are the infinite where, and the infinite when; there must also be an infinite Who, that fills and animates them. Dr. Samuel Clarke used a somewhat similar argument as a proof of God's existence.

C—THE COSMOLOGICAL ARGUMENT.

Whatever begins to exist must have a cause *ab extra*; the universe had a beginning; therefore it had a cause *ab extra*. The principle of this argument, found in its major propositions, is that of causality, and is an a priori axiom. It is a superficial and false philosophy, which emasculates cause of its power and makes it mere invariable antecedence and sequence. It is contrary to common sense; for who does not see the difference between the regular successions of the seasons and of day and night, on the one hand; and the warmth of spring and the melting of the snows, the rising of the sun and the appearance of day, on the other. The order of sequence is equally invariable in all these cases; but there is nothing in winter to produce spring, nor in night to bring forth day; while manifestly warmth does melt the snow, and the sun does make the day. But even on the lower view of cause, the principle is true and sufficiently answers our purpose; an effect is a sequence, which must have an antecedent.

Aristotle presents the cosmological argument, using motion as the effect to be accounted for. In common with all the Greek philosophers, he believed in the eternity of the material universe; not one of them seems to have conceived the idea of *ex nihilo* creation. Motion, however, must be accounted for; and Aristotle holds that the Deity is unmoved, passive, and, like a magnet, unmoved Himself,

His attractive power causes motion in the universe.

The argument is now applied to the entire universe ; and the issue turns on the minor premise, did the universe have a beginning ; is it an effect, a sequence demanding an antecedent ? The universe is composed of matter and mind, both of which are now known to exist. That something now exists necessitates that something must have always existed, for the absolute origination of being is unthinkable, incredible, impossible ; it contradicts the axiom of causality. Were finite mind and matter, or was either of them this eternal existence ?

It is a remarkable fact that very few have asserted that finite mind is eternal. The proof is overwhelming that it is not so upon this earth. History, tradition, geology, evolution, all affirm that there was a time when man began to exist upon the earth.

It is equally remarkable that some contend for the eternity of matter, this is perhaps the most interesting, because the most fundamental question in natural theology. That matter is not eternal is shown. 1. By the teachings of geology and evolution. If geology is a trustworthy science, and evolution is the true explanation of the present condition of matter, then it is presumably true that matter had a beginning ; for both of these teach that matter is now in its most highly developed state ; that the past has been a progress from the more simple to the more complex ; that matter can be traced back to an azoic, structural condition. If that be true, if as we go back matter tends to come to a point, is it presumable, in the midst of eternity, these converging lines become parallel ? Must we not believe that they come to an initial point ?

2. Mind is unquestionably superior to matter ; this is allowed by the materialist even. The Creator is without doubt superior to his own creation. If then matter existed before mind and produced mind, both of these principles are violated. Matter, the inferior of mind, can not therefore have been the prior and the creator of mind, its superior. The mind revolts against placing matter on the

shrine of the universe, making it the source, absolute and present, whence the things have sprung.

If matter and finite mind both began to exist, then the universe itself had a beginning and a cause *ab extra*, and that cause is God.

Kant and others have objected to this argument that it proves a finite creator alone ; that the universe, the created effect being finite, we can not argue from its origination an infinite cause. It is not a satisfactory answer to this objection to urge that the immensity of the universe, transcending, as it does, the power of human measurement and computation, makes it practically infinite. No, the chasm between the immense and the infinite is an infinite chasm, so long as the immense is a bounded, limited finite. Kant has not been answered in our current works on natural theology. Dr. S. S. Laws, late of Columbia Theological Seminary has successfully met Kant by calling attention to the simple fact. that the bringing of something out of nothing, the absolute *ex nihilo* creation of a single atom, is an infinite act, requiring omnipotence to effect it. He might conjecture an angel, wise and powerful enough to produce the universe out of preexisting material, but no angel, nor archangel, nor all combined finite power can create from nothing a grain of sand.

It is objected again that the argument proves naught but a casual power. Infinite power, however, is an attribute, which must belong to some omnipotent, casual being.

Hume's objection that we have never observed the creation of a universe, and therefore know nothing about it, has no weight, except to the theoretical dogmatic empiricist. I never saw a telescope made, and yet am sure that all the telescopes I ever saw were made. The principle of causality is a priori, universal, necessary ; so that when we recognize the universe as having a beginning, we are compelled to believe that it had an adequate cause.

This argument involves the infinitude of God in power and knowledge ; his eternity and omnipresence ; his spirituality as the creator of mind, and his unity, as there cannot

be more than one such creative being.

This principal form of the argument from causality is based upon the fact that the universe is an infinite effect, and therefore reveals an infinite cause. There are two other applications of the principle of causality, which are commonly presented as independent proofs, but which are better placed with this, as corollaries to the main argument. The first of these is :

I—THE THEOLOGICAL ARGUMENT.

Whatever effect shows design is the product of wisdom ; the universe is full of design ; therefore its Creator is wise. Socrates, Aristotle, and Cicero, among the ancients, expressly admitted and applied this principle to prove the existence of the gods. Leibnitz, Herbart, Lotze and Wendenberg, in modern times, assert it on philosophical grounds, and Paley has applied it with a rich variety of popular examples. Epicurus denied it, as is done more recently by Hume, Kant, Hegel and others.

To the every-day man of common sense there is no doubt that everything in nature has a purpose. This is conclusively shown in numberless instances, where he sees the design clearly revealed ; and even more convincingly in those rare instances, where he is puzzled to know why such a thing exists. The various parts, tissues, organs of the human body at once show the purpose of their being ; with one or two exceptions. The mammae of the male and the vermicular appendage to the intestines excite wonder and court investigation, because of the obscurity of their purpose ; while no unsophisticated person doubts the design of the heart, stomach and lungs.

Hegel's doctrine, that "final cause is simply the inward nature of the thing," breaks down in its application to those numerous instances, in which the things adapted are separate and independent of each other ; as the sexes, matter and mind, food and the digestive apparatus, the sun and its attendant system.

Kant's objection, that this argument proves an architect and not a creator, may be freely admitted as true ; as

it is merely intended to show that the creator, revealed by the cosmological argument, is also an intelligent and wise architect. By his creative power, He brought the material elements of the universe into being ; and now, as the wise architect, He gives them useful form.

The Creator then, is a designer, and a designer is a person. A person is a spirit, who freely acts with a view to ends ; so God reveals Himself in the purposes displayed in the universe. Here we are confronted by the pantheist, who asserts that God is the universe, the universe is God manifested ; and who denies that God is or can be a person, because personality implies limitation, and God is the unlimited.

This subtle, plausible objection is rarely successfully met by the theist, because of obscure and erroneous ideas of what is meant by the infinite, the unconditional, as applied to God. As understood and employed by most philosophers and theologians, there is and can be no infinite, unconditional being. The neo-platonists so refined and sublimated the notion of the Deity that they finally made Him destitute of being, and He became the non-existent. So it must be when we assert that God is the unconditioned. He can not be unconditioned except as unqualified and unrelated ; and as unqualified and unrelated, He is not only unthinkable, but unbeable ; a being without qualities, a substance without attributes, does not and cannot exist. So far from God's being the summum genus of an absolute generalization, formed by thinking out qualities and thinking in objects, He is to be found at the other end of the scale, as the individual being, a single object with the utmost plurality and richness of qualities. Every one of these qualities is a condition of His being ; so that instead of being the unconditioned, He is more fully conditioned, as He is richer in qualities, than any other being in the universe.

He has all the conditions that belong to infinite, absolute perfection. Amongst the conditions of perfection are those of personality. A personal being is a free, self-conscious intelligence ; an impersonal being is neither free, nor self-

conscious, nor intelligent. A personal being is more perfect than an impersonal. As a person, God has all the conditions of infinite excellence, intellectual, aesthetic, moral; all the conditions of perfection in His relations to the universe, as creator, benefactor, judge. God is unlimited in His perfections, but is limited by them; and he has no limitations that are not perfections and none that are not self-imposed.

Origen taught that God is self-limited; that the absolutely unlimited would be unable to conceive itself; and that God's omnipotence is limited by His goodness and wisdom.

In denying God's separate, individual personality and identifying Him with the universe, pantheism robs God of His freedom, makes man but an irresponsible wave in the ocean of being; banishes all that is moral in mechanical necessity, and makes the universe a machine run by the power of blind force.

II.—THE ENDAIMONOLOGICAL ARGUMENT.

This is akin to the preceding. The Teleological considers the manifestations of skill or intelligence in the purposes displayed in the universe, while this has regard to the benevolent designs revealed. The universe is full of means adapted to produce the happiness of sensitive beings; therefore its creator must be benevolent. Both the principle and the facts of this argument are indisputable. The principle is intuitive, and the world is full of the evidences of God's goodness. This is most strikingly seen, when the goodness is unnecessary and is manifestly an addition to what would otherwise be complete. Note the gratification of our appetites; the needs attendant upon their satisfaction would seem to be a sufficient incentive, and yet there is much positive enjoyment in both eating and drinking.

To this argument a very weighty objection is found, which applies indeed to the teleological as well. If the principle or fact of design is admitted, it must be impartially applied, and we find some things in nature which are apparently purposeless, and other things whose design is

evil. The first form of the objection is not important, as all such apparent cases may be properly explained as due to our ignorance. There may be, and doubtless is, a purpose even when we fail to see it. If there be purpose at all, indeed if the universe as we find it is due to an intelligent creation and providence, there must be an adequate purpose in every law, fact and thing in nature. A purposeless act of an intelligent being is incredible.

But there are many cases in which the design is manifestly evil ; that is, to produce suffering. The claws, teeth, stomach and intestines of the cat are plainly adapted to and designed for the capture, killing, eating and digestion of mice. The sensor nerves are not only capable of and intended for pleasure, they are equally capable of and intended for pain. If benevolent designs indicate a benevolent creator, why do not pain-producing designs indicate a pain-wishing creator ? Unquestionably they do. Every perfect being has both of these elements in his nature ; it is as real and as high a perfection to hate the wrong as it is love the right.

There is, however, a radical difficulty here, which we confess our inability to meet. We do not understand why sin was allowed to enter a world created and controlled by an infinitely wise, holy and powerful God. No theory of the will can explain it ; and the existence of satan, either as a created or as an eternal being, does not meet it. This is one of the things we know not now, but hope to know hereafter.

There are four possible alternatives : 1. The creator is a being, whose character, like fallen man's is a mixture of good and bad. No one entertains this view, although man has had gods of this character. 2. There may be two eternal beings, one producing the good, and the other causing the bad. This is the Parsee and Gnostic doctrine, but has been abandoned as ontologically incredible. There can not be two eternal, infinite beings 3. There is no design in either case. This is the position of Herbert Spencer and all materialists and pantheists ; but it is contradicted

by the intuitive belief of every man's common sense. 4. There is left the alternative, that the one benevolent creator, for reasons we do not fully know, has allowed sin to enter His universe, and has introduced suffering as the warning, chastisement and punishment of sin.

Granting the existence of sin, then the fact and the need of suffering become apparent. Pain is needed and is used for three good purposes. First, it is warning against a greater evil that threatens. If the violation of the laws of health was not attended by pain at the beginning, we should ignorantly continue practices which would eventually destroy life. An aching head is often nature's warning signal that we are approaching rocks or quicksands. Again, sufferings are chastisements, designed for the correction of our faults. As a father wisely chastises a wayward child that he loves, so does God those whom He cherishes as His children. In the third place, sufferings are also used as punishments. God is not only a father, He is also a sovereign and a judge; and as such he inflicts, even in this life, punishments upon the incorrigible. There are few things in this world so sad as the spectacle of a soul, whose sordid and irresponsible conscience attests that capital punishment has been executed.

The teleological and endaimonological arguments are designed to show the character of God, rather than prove His existence. They reveal the Creator to us as a wise, benevolent and just person.

D—THE ETHICAL ARGUMENT.

There are no connate ideas, but there are innate or native ideas. These are not connate, born with the mind, nor are they bestowed upon it at any time by the Creator; they are not adventitious. They are innate or native to the mind, because they are born in it, are native to it. The mind has the power in and of itself of thinking them, and must think them, when the occasion comes which suggests them. They are the conditions of thought and of being, and are sometimes called the categories. Such innate ideas are being, time, space, cause, and others.

Of these primary, fundamental ideas, one of the most important is the idea of right with its opposite, wrong. When the mind is sufficiently mature, as soon as it observes a moral act, an act that has a moral character, an act that is either right or wrong, the mind at once apprehends the ideas of right and wrong as moral co-relatives. These, as original ideas, have two pairs of derivations inseparably associated with them ; one is the idea of approval, and the other that of obligation. We naturally approve the right and condemn the wrong ; we naturally judge ourselves and others under obligation to do the right and shun the wrong. Obligation can not be an abstraction but must be a person. Obligation implies an authority who imposes it. There must therefore be a moral law-giver, whose nature is the right, who approves the right and condemns the wrong, and who lays on us the obligation to shun the one and do the other. This is the usual form in which the ethical argument is given.

Kant rejected, in his later thinking, all the other arguments as fatally fallacious, and based the belief in God's existence upon an ethical argument different from the above. He does not found it upon his categorical imperative directly ; but, as he gives it, it is substantially the same as that which Addison puts into Cato's mouth as proof of immortality. His argument in brief is this : Virtue and happiness are not the same ; virtue is the *supremum bonum*, and happiness the *summum bonum* ; they ought, however, to harmonize—the virtuous man ought to be happy. Manifestly he is not so in this world ; we are bound, therefore, to conclude that there is a being who can and will harmonize them. Kant went through the woods and picked up a crooked stick at the last. It requires his strong mind to see the cogency of this ethical argument.

A survey of the battle ground shows the cosmological argument, buttressed by the teleological and endaimonological, and the ethical as the impregnable fortresses of theism. These have been assailed and battered, but they have not been demolished nor captured. God is the creator, an infinite, single, wise, good and righteous person.