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ART. I.—REVISION MOVEMENT.

IN entering upon a brief discussion of the revision movement, it is due to ourselves and to those who entertain the same opinions, to say that we hail with pleasure all efforts to disseminate the Holy Scriptures, and all commentaries, translations, paraphrases, notes, and auxiliaries of whatever kind, conducive to a proper understanding of the Scriptures. To spread a knowledge of the truth abroad, is the great duty of all Christians—of all good men. And regarding the Bible as the great chart of all human rights, its moral code as the only perfect summary of all duties, as a guide to all wise legislation, and the principles taught and illustrated in its sacred pages, as the only hope of the peace, perpetuity and prosperity of our nation; we regard it the sacred duty of every patriot to aid in propagating it through the length and breadth of our land. It is worth more than all human constitutions, all political mass meetings, philosophic theories of government, or learned and eloquent political discussions. The fact that every good man loves the Bible and every bad man hates it, speaks volumes. The noble origin and the high destiny it claims for man, is the source of his highest aspirations and of his holiest inspirations. Here is the great secret of his wonderful progress in civilization, in literature, art and science. Substitute for the light of the Bible the dark dreams of Atheism, Pantheism or Infidelity, and man in his own estimation placed on a level with the brute will soon assimilate to the brute. History and philosophy alike verify this fact.

As christians and patriots, then, we stand forth the humble but uncompromising advocates of the Bible. We regard all efforts of

ART. V.—BRECKINRIDGE'S THEOLOGY.

The Knowledge of God, Objectively Considered. Being the First Part of Theology considered as a Science of Positive Truth, both Inductive and Deductive. By ROBERT J. BRECKINRIDGE, D. D., LL. D., Professor of Theology in the Seminary at Danville, Kentucky. *Non sine luce.* New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 530 Broadway. 1858. 8 vo., pp. 530.

In the general notice which we have already taken of this book, we promised, in our present number, to make it the subject of a more distinct consideration. That promise we proceed to redeem.

Dr. B. has been so eminently a man of action, and the impression so widely prevails that action and speculation demand intellects of different orders, that a very general apprehension was entertained, when this work was announced as in press, that it was destined to be a failure. Few could persuade themselves that the great debater was likely to prove himself a great teacher—that he who had been unrivalled in the halls of ecclesiastical legislation should be equally successful in the halls of theological science. There was no foundation for the fear. Those qualities of mind which enable a man to become a leader in any great department of action are precisely the qualities which ensure success in every department of speculation. Thought and action are neither contradictory nor opposites. On the contrary, thought is the soul of action, the very life of every enterprise which depends on principle and not on policy.* It is the scale upon which the thinking is done that determines the scale upon which measures are projected and carried out. Bacon was none the less a philosopher because he was a great statesman, and the highest achievements of Greek genius were among those who were as ready for the tented field as the shades of the Academy. The small politician, the brawling demagogue, the wire-worker in elections, the intriguing schemer and the plausible manager can never succeed in any walk of meditation; not because they are men of action, but

*Non viribus aut velocitatibus aut celeritate corporum, res magnae geruntur, sed consilio, auctoritate, sententia. Cic. de Senect. c. 6.

because they are incapable of any thing that deserves to be called action. Restlessness and action are no more synonymous than friskiness and business—and the interminable piddler, the miserable maggot of society that can never be still for a moment might just as well be confounded with the industrious citizen as the man of tricks with the man of action. He who is able to embody great thoughts in achievements suitable to their dignity, he who can think illustrious deeds is precisely the man who will think most forcibly in fitting words. Actions and words are only different expressions of the same energy of mind, and the thought in language has generally preceded the thought in deeds. Convinced that the popular impression in regard to the incompatibility of action and speculation was a vulgar prejudice, we were prepared to anticipate from Dr. B. in the field of speculative theology, as brilliant success as in the field of ecclesiastical counsel. We expected to find the same essential qualities of mind, the same grasp of thought, vigor of conception, power of elucidation and skill in evolution. We dreaded no failure. We should not have been disappointed at marks of haste and carelessness in the composition, nor occasional looseness of expression, nor such bold metaphors and animated tropes as belong to the speech rather than the essay. We knew that Horace's precept had not been observed as to the time that the work had been kept under the eye. Blemishes attaching to it as a work of art we were not unprepared to meet with, but we were certain that the thoughts would be the thoughts of a man with whom thinking had been something more than musing; the system, the system of one who had not been accustomed to sport with visions. We expected to see the truth in bold outline and harmonious proportion, the truth as God has revealed and the renewed soul experiences it, clearly, honestly, completely told. That Dr. B. has realized our expectations seems to be the general verdict of the public. The work has been received with unwonted favour. It has been praised in circles in which we suspect the author's name has been seldom pronounced with approbation. We have seen but a single notice of it in which censure has been even hinted at, and that was in reference to a point in which the work is entitled to commendation. We allude to the place to which it consigns the argument from final causes for the being of a God. That argument as it is presented in modern systems of Natural Theology, is not only inconclusive but pernicious. The God that it gives us is not the God that we want. It makes the Deity but a link in the chain of finite causes, and from the great Creator of the universe degrades him to the low and unworthy condition of the huge mechanic of the world. For aught that appears matter might have been eternal, its properties essential attributes of its nature; and He may have acquired His knowledge of it and them by observation and experience as we

acquire ours. His power may only be obedience to laws which He has inductively collected; as knowledge on our part, according to the philosophy of Bacon, is the measure of our power. The argument turns on the arrangement of things. Its depth lies in the illustrations of general order and special adaptation which the universe supplies. It does not follow that God *made* the things which He has arranged. He who uses this argument either collects in the conclusion more than he had in the premises, or he limits the finite and conditions the unconditioned. Surely no intelligent advocate of Theism can be content with a result like this. The true place for the consideration of final causes is just where Dr. B. has put them, in forming from the works of God some conception of His nature and perfections: Given a *Creator*, we can then deduce from the indications of design that He is an intelligent and spiritual being; and this is the light in which, until Scotch psychology had almost succeeded in banishing from the halls of philosophy metaphysical speculations, all the great masters had regarded this argument. The schoolmen use it to illustrate the *intelligence*, not the *being* of God. That, they rested on a very different aspect of the great question of causation. Howe elaborately demonstrates a Creator before he comes to Wisdom or Design. The process is instructive through which this argument has come to be invested with the importance which is now conceded to it; and if it were not that the mind is all along preoccupied with the notion of a Creator, if it received its impressions of God from the study of final causes alone, we should soon see that the God of contrivances was not the God in whom we live and move. Creation, as a mysterious fact, putting the nature and operations of the Supreme Being, beyond the category of all finite causes, removing God immeasurably from the sphere of limited and conditioned existence, is indispensable to any just conceptions of His relations and character. Hence the Scriptures uniformly represent the ever living Jehovah as distinguished from all false deities by his creation of the heavens and the earth. This is His memorial throughout all generations. He is not an architect of signal skill and gigantic power who works materials ready to his hand, and the qualities of which He has mastered from long and patient observation, but by a single exercise of will He gives being to all the substances that exist with all their properties and laws, and arranges them in the order in which they shall best illustrate His knowledge, wisdom and omnipotence. The finite is dependent on Him for its being as well as its adjustments, and Providence is a continued exercise of the energies of creative power and love.

But it is time to proceed to the book itself. Dr. Breckinridge treats theology as the knowledge of God unto salvation, and his aim is "to demonstrate, classify and expound those maui-

festations of the Divine Being, from which this knowledge is derived. These manifestations are Creation, Providence, the Incarnation, the Work of the Spirit, the Sacred Scriptures, and the Self-conscious Existence of the Human Soul. The grand departments of theology, that is, the great topics of which it treats, are, God Himself; the God-man who is the mediator between God and men; and Man himself in his self-conscious existence, as created and re-created by God. The system of truth which Dr. B. has developed from these sources and digested under these heads, is that which in all ages has been the life of the church—that which constituted the ancient creed and has been embodied in modern confessions and particularly in the standards of the Presbyterian church. Dr. B. makes no claims to novelty in doctrines. He has trod in the footsteps of the flock. Satisfied with the old, he has sought no new Gospel, and one of his chief merits is that he has presented the ancient truths of salvation with a freshness, an unction and a power which vindicate to them the real character of a Gospel. What he claims as his own—"that which makes the work individual"—is "the conception, the method, the digestion, the presentation, the order, the impression of the whole." In these respects he thinks he has rendered some service to the cause of theology, which, in common with Aristotle, he pronounces to be "the noblest of all sciences." As these are the points in reference to which he wishes his success or failure to be estimated, it is but fair to him that his critics should try him on his own chosen ground.

What, then, is "the conception" of the book? Surely not the definition of theology, which is neither new, nor even logically exact.* It is rather the great idea which enriches the whole plan and furnishes the model after which the whole work has been fashioned. This is both original and grand. Let us explain ourselves. Theological truth may be contemplated absolutely, as it is in itself; relatively, as it is in its effects; and elenctically, in its contrasts to error. In the first case, it is merely a matter of thought; in the second, of experience; and in the third, of strife. The result in the first case, is a doctrine; in the second, a life; in the third a victory. In the first case, the mind speculates; in the second it feels; in the third it refutes.

*What we mean is, that it is too narrow. "The knowledge of God unto *salvation*" defines only the religion of a sinner, or what Owen calls, *evangelic theology*, and cannot, without an unwarrantable extension of the terms, be made to embrace the religion of the unfallen. Calvin's gives theology a wider sense, comprehending both the religion of nature and the religion of grace. It is, in his view, that knowledge of God which is productive of piety. *Neque enim Deum, proprie loquendo, cognosci dicemus, ubi nulla est religio, nec pietas.* Lib. 1, c. 2, § 1. Theology, considered as a body of speculative truth, may very properly be defined, as the science of true religion.

The first, Dr. B. calls *objective* theology.* We should prefer to style it *abstractive* or *absolute*, as indicating more precisely the absence of relations. The second, he entitles *subjective*. We should prefer the epithet *concrete*, as definitely expressing the kind of relation meant. The third, he denominates *relative*. We prefer the old name, *polemic* or *critical*, as more exactly defining the kind of relation which is contemplated. These three aspects embrace the whole system of theoretical theology, and upon the principle that the science of contraries is one, and that truth is better understood in itself by being understood in its contrasts, controversial and didactic Divinity are in most treatises combined. The peculiarity of Dr. B.'s method is that he has separated them; and not only separated them, but separated the consideration of the truth in itself, from the consideration of it in its effects. The "conception" or idea which suggested this departure from the ordinary method was the intense conviction of the grandeur and glory of the Divine system contemplated simply as an object of speculation. The author felt that it ought to be presented in its

*We cannot altogether approve of the selection of the terms, *objective* and *subjective*, to denote different parts of a scientific treatise. Science is subjective, only when considered as the actual possession of the mind that knows; it indicates a habit, and a habit under the formal notion of inhering in some subject, or person. It is mine or yours, and subjective only as inhering in you or me. The very moment you represent it in thought, it becomes to the thinker *objective*, though as existing in the person who has it, it is still subjective. If even the possessor should make it a matter of reflection it becomes to him, in this relation, objective. The thing known or the thing thought, whether it be material, or a mode of mind, is always the object; the mind knowing and under the formal relation of knowing, is always the subject. Hence theology subjectively considered, or the knowledge of God subjectively considered, can mean nothing, in strict propriety of speech, but the personal piety of each individual therein considered as the property of his own soul. It is subjective only as it exists *in him*. To a third person who speculates upon it and examines its laws and operations, it is surely objective. Every scientific treatise, therefore, must deal with its topics, even when they are mental states and conditions, *objectively*. There is no way of *considering* the knowledge of God, but by objectifying it. And this accords precisely with the usage of the terms among theological writers. By *objective theology* they mean Divine truth systematically exhibited. By *subjective theology*, holy habits and dispositions considered as in the souls of the faithful. The first they also call abstract, and the second concrete—to convey the idea that, in the one case, truth was contemplated apart from its inhesion; in the other, in connection with its inhesion, or under the notion of its inhesion in the subject. We give an example from Turretin and a reference to Owen:

Theologia supernaturalis consideratur, vel *systematicè* prout notat compagem doctrinæ salutariæ de Deo et rebus divinis ex Scriptura expressæ, per modum disciplinæ alicujus in sua præcepta certa methodo dispositæ, quæ est *abstractiva et objectiva* dicitur; vel *habitualiter*, et per modum habitus in intellectu residentis, et *concretiva et subjectiva* vocatur. Loc. Prim., Quaest. 2, § 8.

Cf. Owen's Theologoumena, Lib. 1 c. 3.

To this may be added the remark of Sir William Hamilton: "An art or science is said to be *objective*, when considered simply as a system of speculative truths or practical rules, but without respect of any actual possessor; *subjective* when considered as a habit of knowledge, or a dexterity inherent in the mind, either vaguely of any, or precisely of this or that possessor." Reid, p. 808, note. We think the terms *abstract* and *concrete*, though usually employed synonymously with subjective and objective, as less liable to be misunderstood.

own majestic proportions, that there should be nothing to withdraw the gaze of the spectator from the splendid temple. There should be no contrast of a rude hut or dingy walls offending the eye—the temple should speak for itself. Contrasts here would diminish instead of increasing the effect—they would distract the attention and dissipate the impression. Dr. B. has undertaken to rear the temple of Divine truth—to place it, like the splendid edifice of Solomon upon a lofty eminence, and to leave it alone to proclaim the glory of the mind which conceived it and in which its noble image dwelt from eternity. He would have it stand before us in colossal majesty, and as each pillar, capital, wall and stone were surveyed, and as the overpowering impression of the whole structure was taken in, he would have no other direction given to those who questioned whether this were a building of God, but *look around*. The thing speaks for itself. It is a monument of an infinite mind which nothing but wilful blindness can fail to read. This is the conception. The Gospel is its own witness. And to present the Gospel so as to make each proposition vindicate itself by its own inherent excellence and its relative place and importance in the whole system—is the best argument for the divine origin of Christianity. Each part is a testimony to Divine wisdom, and the united whole a conspicuous illustration of Divine glory. Dr. B. has accordingly endeavoured to catch the image from the glass of the Divine word, to collect the scattered rays, and to present them in a picture of Divine and ineffable effulgence. He has assumed that truth must justify itself, that it must stand in its own light and that the best way to be impressed and enamoured with it, is to look at it. As the daughter of God, her high and heavenly lineage is traced in her features. Her looks certify her truth. *Vera incessu patuit Dea*. This conception in itself is not new, it is of the very essence of true faith. But to make it the regulative principle of a theological system is peculiar to Dr. B. To fashion his whole course of instruction so as to present in simple and just proportions the whole body of Divine truth; to leave that truth to its own inherent power of self-vindication; to make it a spectacle or rather an image of transcendent beauty and glory, the very reflection of the perfections of God, to be gazed at with admiration, devotion and awe; this never entered into the mind of any system-maker before. The conception, in this form, is beyond all controversy, original. With others, it has entered as an element of devotion, or a topic of sermons. With Dr. B. it is the life and soul of a scientific method—the last man, from whom, according to the popular estimate of his character, such a result might have been anticipated. The hero of an hundred fields, with the wounds and bruises and scars of the conflict scattered thick over his person, ever ready, like the war-horse in Job, to snuff the breeze of battle, could hardly

have been expected to delight in the calm visions of peaceful contemplation. The thing does him infinite honour. It shows where his heart is ; and whatever may have been the surmises of enemies, it puts beyond doubt, that his polemics have been the reflection of an earnest faith—that his rest in the truth, his abiding and satisfying sense of its preciousness, have been the secrets of his zeal in its defence. He has not fought for sect or distinction ; he has fought for the glory of God. He had a treasure in the house, and therefore, defended it with might and main. There is a polemic who fights for glory or for party ; such a combatant knows nothing of the spirit of the gospel. There is another polemic, who fights only for the honour of his God and his Saviour ; this man only witnesses a good confession, and treads in the footsteps of Jesus and the martyrs. We cannot forbear to add that Dr. B.'s theological method is a proof, in another aspect of the matter, of the singleness, intensity and earnestness of his character. What he does, he does with his might. Where he loves, he loves with his whole soul ; when he hates, he hates with equal cordiality ; and when he fights, he wants a clear field and nothing to do but fight. He has arranged his system so as to concentrate his energies upon each department—to do but one thing at a time and to do it heartily and well. In the first part he gives himself to meditation and contemplates truth with undisturbed and admiring gaze ; in the second, he gives himself to action, and girds up the loins of his mind for the Divine life ; in the third, he buckles on his armour and has an ear for nothing but the trump of war. His method is the picture of the man ; and his book, in another sense than that of Milton, is "the precious life blood of a master spirit," and "preserves, as in a vial, the purest efficacy and extraction of that living intellect that bred it." We doubt whether a mind like that of Dr. B., so single and intense, could have written successfully on any other plan.

The topics, we have seen, which he considers as making up the science of theology are God, Man, and the Mediator—in this division differing, in form more than in substance, from those who, like Calvin, refer every thing to only two heads, God and Man. The order in which he has arranged his topics is, so far as we know, wholly original. If it did not bear such evident traces of having sprung from the author's own cogitations, we might be tempted to suspect that he had borrowed the hint from one or two passages in Calvin's Institutes. The clue to his plan is the method of the Spirit in the production of faith. He has copied in his systematic exposition of Divine knowledge the Divine procedure in imparting it. As the Spirit first convinces us of our sin and misery and shuts us up to despair as to any human grounds for relief, so Dr. B. begins with a survey of man in his individual and social relations, and demonstrates that his ruin is

universal and irremediable. As the Spirit revives us by enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ and inspires us with hope from the revelation of the Cross, so Dr. B. next proceeds to consider the Mediator in His Person, States, Offices, and wonderful Work; and shows that the provisions of grace are amply adequate and more than adequate to repair the ruins of the fall. And as in Christ we know God in the only sense in which He can be a God to us, or the soul can rest in the contemplation of His excellencies, so Dr. B. makes the Divine character, perfections and glory the culminating point of his scheme. He begins with Man and ends with God to whom he is conducted through the Mediator. To each of these subjects, a book is devoted. Then, in another book, all the sources of our knowledge of God are consecutively considered, and the treatise closes with a fifth book which brings us back to the point from which we started, and encounters in the light of the whole preceding discussion those great problems of religion which grow out of the relations of the finite and infinite and which have ever baffled and must continue to baffle the capacities of a creature to comprehend. The order being that of experimental religion and the design to present truth in its integrity and in its own self-evidencing light, all that constitutes the *precognita* of theology in other systems is here omitted with the exception of two short digressions at the close of the first book on the Being of God and the Immortality of Man. It may appear a little singular, at first sight, that in a work professedly unfolding the knowledge of God, His very Existence should be treated as a collateral and incidental point—that the fundamental topic upon which most theologians lay out their strength should enter at all only as an *obiter dictum*. This apparently anomalous procedure may be explained in two ways. First, the method of the book requires that all controversies should be remitted to the third part; the Atheistic among the rest. What the child of God believes and knows, and as he believes and knows, in its symmetry and dependence is the exclusive subject of the first part. In the next place, no science is required to prove—it accepts, its principles. God's existence is as much an intuition to the spiritual man as the existence of matter to the natural philosopher. The physical inquirer, begins with the assumption that matter is. The theologian, in the same way, is at liberty to begin with the doctrine that God is. The question of His existence belongs to Ontology or to Metaphysics and not to Theology. It is a question which can only be asked by those who are strangers to spiritual perception, and who recognize no other cognition of God but that which is analogous to our cognition of other substances and their properties. There are no doubt satisfactory proofs of the being and perfections of God upon ontological grounds, but these proofs give rise to philosophical opinion—not to Divine knowledge.

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The only knowledge, however, which enters into theology, is that which is produced by the illumination of the spirit and has all the certainty, and force of sense. "The understanding here is something else besides the intellectual powers of the soul, it is the Spirit." Religion has, as Owen observes,* its demonstrations as the Mathematics and Dialectics have theirs, but the demonstrations of religion are spiritual and mighty, and as far removed from those of human wisdom as the heavens are from the earth. It should never be forgotten that theology is not a science of the natural, nor even of the moral knowledge of God. It is not a science of speculative cognition at all. It is the science of a true and loving faith. It is the science of that form of knowledge which produces love, reverence, trust, hope, and fear; which contains the seeds of every holy exercise and habit; which understands what is meant by the glory of God and rejoices in Him as the full, satisfying, everlasting portion of the soul. It is the science of the Divine life in the soul of man. Undertaking to exhibit the data of such a science, which is virtually denied the very moment its principles are not assumed as authenticating themselves, Dr. B. would have contradicted the whole purpose of his book, had he turned the questions of a Divine theology into the forms of a human philosophy. Still, as grace presupposes nature, and spiritual perception, natural apprehension, the great questions of ontology as far as they relate to the existence of God should find a place in the polemical department, so that the unbeliever may be left without excuse.

Our readers are, perhaps, all familiar with the splendid passage in Foster's essays, in which he attempts to show that, without being possessed of omniscience and omnipresence himself, it is impossible for the atheist to reach the height of knowing that there is no God. The rhetoric of the passage we have always admired, but the logic appears to us so transparently fallacious that we confess that we have been not a little surprised at Dr. B.'s partial adoption of the argument. The simple truth that there are other existences beside ourselves, "draws immediately after it," Dr. B. maintains, "the utter impossibility of establishing the truth of atheism. Because as there are existences besides myself, and exterior to myself, I must explore the whole universe and I must be sure that I have explored it all, before it is possible for me to know that one of the existences exterior to myself, some of which have been proved to be eternal, may not be God."—[p. 48.] Surely from the terms of the definition, if God is not every where, He is no where—and if I have fully explored any part of the universe and find that he is not there, I may have the absolute certainty that, whoever or whatever may exist in other portions of it, an

*Theologoumena, Lib. 1, c. 2. Cf. Lib. 6, c. 8.

omnipresent Being does not. Again, we are unable to perceive why, if it were true, that there is no God, it would be a truth, which a man could not know, as Foster maintains, without knowing all things. Dr. B. simply affirms that in its own nature this does "not admit of being established or even ascertained by such creatures as we are." If an absolute commencement of existence and the independence of the finite were in themselves true, (which is the same as saying that there is no God), and could be apprehended as realized in any object whatever; if any thing could be known to begin without being created; this would be a complete demonstration that God, in the sense of the universal, all-pervading cause, does not exist. It would completely set aside the Jehovah of the Bible. If we can *know* any one finite thing to be independent, we can know that such a Being as our God is not in the heavens. If by creatures "such as we are" Dr. B. means creatures with our intuitions and beliefs, his proposition is true. Such creatures cannot realize in thought the finite as independent or self-existent; cannot, in other words, even think the possibility of atheism. It is not, however, that they must know all things in order not to know God; it is rather that they know nothing without knowing God—the Divine existence being as much the condition of cognition as the condition of existence.

Theology being the spiritual knowledge of God, and all the topics it embraces being only so many streams which empty into this ocean, Dr. B. has concentrated his energies upon the third book which is devoted to the nature, perfections and glory of the Supreme Being. The design is to give the sum of what we actually know, and this is done in answer to two questions, Who is God? and What is God? that is, by a consideration of His names and His essence. He begins with the Names, and after explaining the grounds of their multiplicity and variety, unfolds those aspects of the Divine nature and perfections which they respectively involve. He then proceeds to the Essence of God, as manifested, 1st. in the mode of His existence, under which head the Scripture doctrine of the Trinity is carefully evolved, the Personality, Deity and Work of the Holy Ghost receiving especial and minute attention; and 2d. in the Attributes of God, the classification of which has engaged Dr. B.'s most earnest and patient labours. He has spared no pains to make his division exhaustive and complete. The central ideas are those of Being, Personal Spirit and Absolute Perfection. Personal Spirit branches out into two subdivisions, according as the notion of Intelligence or the notion of Rectitude predominates. We have, accordingly, five classes of attributes. 1. Those founded on the notion of Being—such as simplicity, infinity, independence, eternity—these the author calls Primary Attributes. 2. Those founded on the notion of Personal Spirit which implies intellect, will and power—these the author calls Essential

attributes. 3. Those founded on that aspect of Personal existence in which intelligence predominates, in which the distinction between the true and the false determines the nature of the perfection—these the author calls Natural attributes. 4. Those in which Will or Rectitude is the predominant idea, in which the perfection is determined by the distinction betwixt the good and the bad—These the author calls Moral attributes. 5. And finally we have another class of properties which are founded on the notion of absolute perfection—the *ens realissimum* or *ens perfectissimum*—these he calls Consummate attributes. Around, therefore, the three central conceptions of Being, Spirit, Most Perfect Being, we have five circles of light and beauty constantly and eternally revolving; two being, as in Ezekiel's vision, wheels within wheels. Given the notion of God simply as being: and you have eternity, immutability, infinity, omnipresence and independence: Given God as a Spirit: you have intelligence, will, power; branching on the side of intelligence into infinite knowledge and wisdom—on the side of will, into holiness, justice, goodness and truth. Given God as a Most Perfect Being: and you have really and eminently all that is beautiful and glorious and blessed in every creature and condition, concentrated infinitely and supremely in Him, the all-sufficient good, the plenitude of being, the fullness of excellence, the all in all. We think it but justice to the author that, in relation to this important portion of his work he should be permitted to speak for himself:

II.—1. The perfections of God are considered and treated in a separate manner, and are classified, only out of the necessity on our part, that we may, in this manner, contemplate God himself, more intelligibly. They are not, in fact, parts of God, nor faculties of God; but they are God himself. When we mean to say that he knows all things, we express that idea by calling him Omniscient: when we mean to say that he can do all things, we express that idea by calling him Omnipotent: and as both of these facts are true universally, necessarily and inherently in God, we express that idea by saying, these are Perfections or Attributes of God. And so of all his other Perfections.

2. Now as God is manifest in all things, it is impossible even to conjecture in how many ways and upon how many objects, he might, or does, make his Perfections known. In effect every divine Perfection is infinite: and the number of Perfections in an infinite being is also infinite—since he is subject to no limitation, and the aspects in which he is capable of manifesting himself are illimitable. As every thing he does, has for its foundation something that he is, and as every thing that he is, can be conceived of in various relations to every thing else, that he is: the Perfections which in any particular aspect of his being can be shown to belong to him, are apparently boundless. Throughout his blessed Word, the ascriptions of infinite perfections to him, scarcely admit of being numbered. In any systematic treatment of the subject, therefore, what is wanted is, not a vain attempt to enumerate the divine perfections, and give names to them; but the discovery and clear state-

ment of a method by which such of them as are known to us may be classified and contemplated by our finite understanding, in a manner consistent with its own nature and modes of obtaining knowledge.

3. There are certain Perfections of God which may be contemplated as qualifying his very being, as well as his other perfections ; conditions, if I may so express myself, without which God, cannot be said to have a being, or any other perfection. Such as these—to wit : that he is Simple, Infinite, Independent, Self-existent, Necessary, Eternal, Incorporeal, Immaterial, Immense, Incomprehensible, having life in himself. These, and the like, I would place in the first class, and call them the Primary Attributes ; meaning thereby to express the idea, that these Attributes cannot be separated from our conception of the true God ; but that as soon as we say, that such a being exists at all, we must necessarily imply, that these, and all such things are true concerning him ; because, such a being as he is, cannot exist except upon these conditions—as inseparable from his existence.

4. There are other perfections of God, which are necessarily implied, in the mode of his being, as an Infinite Spirit : perfections, without which we cannot conceive of his being a Spirit, at all ; nor conceive, if he is a Spirit, that he either lives, or imparts life—or that he exerts any of his Primary Attributes. As he is a Spirit, and as he must conceive all that he does, he must have an Intellect : and as he is a Spirit, and as he does conceive and act, he must have a Will : and possessing an Intellect and Will, and acting at all—he must possess Power commensurate with his nature and acts. These I would place in the second class, and call Essential Attributes of God ; intending thereby to express the idea that God, as he is not only God simply considered—but as he is God the infinite, eternal and unchangeable Spirit, must be endowed with Intellect, Will and Power—in a manner corresponding with his being, and with his Primary Attributes. Now there are certain conditions to be predicated of the Essential Attributes of God, which express more distinctly the nature and extent of these perfections themselves ; or which open to us, if we prefer to consider it so, additional perfections of God ; and these can be viewed more distinctly, by considering them as related in a manner, more or less direct, to these Essential Attributes. They are such as the following, to wit :

(a) As connected with the divine Intellect :—That, amongst God's Essential Perfections—are, a perfect Intuition of himself, and of all things else ; that he is omniscient, having an unsearchable, incomprehensible and eternal insight of all that ever did, will or could be ;—that he is the Fountain of all Possibilities, and all Ideas, and therefore of all Truth ; and that, from all eternity ; and by an act of his illimitable Intelligence ; so that it is not possible that he should err.

(b) As connected with the divine will : That, amongst the Essential Perfections of God are, such as these, to wit : That his will is infinitely free, pure and active ; that, spontaneously, by one act, and from eternity, in view of all things existing in his infinite understanding, his most perfect will determines all things ; that seeing all motives, all possibilities, all ends and means, the determinations of his will are complete, immutable and most sure ; that nothing is possible except as he wills it, and that any thing he wills is certain ; and that he wills every thing, not one by one, but all as a part of the boundless scheme which he proposes and the glorious ends he designs.

(c) As connected with the divine power: That God does and can do, whatever does not in itself involve a contradiction; that his Power is of every kind, and extends to every object, and acts in every form and unto every end, and that throughout the universe, and through eternity; so that no appreciable resistance can be conceived of, to him; and that no exertion or effort can be conceived of as being made by him; he is omnipotent.

5. There arises a third ground of distinction amongst the Attributes of God, as advancing from the primary conception of him merely as an Infinite and Self-existent being—we pass onward through the consideration of him as an Infinite Spirit, and arrive at the view of him, in which he is to be contemplated as an Infinite Spirit, under a particular aspect; namely, under the aspect of possessing the perfections of that boundless knowledge and wisdom, which have relation to that special distinction which we call True and False. While it is certain that a spirit must possess Intelligence, and an Infinite Spirit must possess infinite Intelligence; yet the special relevancy of a particular kind of Knowledge and the special Wisdom connected therewith, to a special aspect of his being, and to our special relations to him; begets a complete, and to us transcendently important distinction amongst the Perfections of God. Here it is founded, as I have observed, on the distinction of the *true* and *false*: in the next class upon the distinction of *Good* and *Evil*. The Perfections of the former kind, I would place in the Third Class, and call them the Natural Attributes of God; partly, as expressing the nearest approximation of the nature of God to that of the creature. Since of all spiritual things knowledge and wisdom are those in which the creature—which perceives the eternal and ineffaceable distinction between the true and the false, is naturally and universally most capable of growing. And partly, as expressing a distinction—more slight, between them and the class immediately preceding, and more marked between them and the class immediately following.

6. In like manner when we conceive of this All-knowing and All-wise Spirit, which fills immensity, as taking notice of that distinction we express by the words *good* and *evil*; and as being actuated by such affections as Love and Aversion; and conceive of such qualities as Goodness and Mercy, or Anger and Wrath, as attending their exercise; and then conceive of these being all ordered in Justice, Truth and Long-suffering; it is manifest that a view of him is obtained, different from any hitherto presented. I would therefore establish a Fourth Class, and refer to it such Perfections as Holiness, Goodness, Graciousness, Love, Mercifulness, Long-suffering, Justice, Truth and the like; and call them the Moral Attributes of God. Meaning thereby such perfections as we find some trace of in our moral nature, and which all point to that eternal and ineffaceable distinction between good and evil, already suggested.

7. And finally, we cannot avoid perceiving that there are other conceptions of God, which cannot be contemplated without exhibiting him to us, in a manner different from any suggested, in the four preceding classes. For there are views of him which necessarily embrace every thing; which necessarily show him to us in the completeness of all his Perfections. I would, therefore, establish a Fifth Class, and refer to it what I will call the Infinite Actuality of God, that is, the ceaseless movement of his Infinite Life; also his Infinite supremacy, that is the consummate dominion of that

Infinite Life of God ; also his Omnipresence, his All-sufficiency, his Infinite Fulness or Infinitude, his consummate Perfection, his absolute Oneness and his unutterable Blessedness. And, as expressive of the particular ground of distinction in these Perfections, I would call them Consummate Attributes of God.

According to this method we are enabled to contemplate God successively, 1. As he is an Infinite being and endowed with the proper perfections thereof: 2. As he is an infinite Spirit, and endowed with the proper perfections thereof: 3. As being both, and endowed with all perfections that belong to both, considered with reference to the eternal and ineffaceable distinction between true and false, which is the fundamental distinction with which our own rational faculties are conversant: 4. As being endowed with all perfections, considered with reference to the eternal and ineffaceable distinction between good and evil, which is the fundamental distinction with which our moral faculties are conversant: 5. As being endowed with all perfections which underlie, which embrace, or which result from the union of all the preceding perfections. And so the classes of his perfections would necessarily be: 1. Those called Primary Attributes, that is, such as belong to an Infinite and Self-existent being, simply considered: 2. Essential Attributes, that is, those belonging to such a being considered essentially as an infinite Spirit: 3. Natural Attributes, that is, such as appertain to an Infinite Spirit considered naturally rather than morally or essentially: 4. Moral Attributes, that is, such as appertain to such a being, considered morally, rather than naturally or essentially: 5. Consummate Attributes, that is, such as appertain to such a being considered completely and absolutely. To the development of these conceptions, and the demonstration of the Infinite Perfections of God as thus classified, the five following chapters will be devoted. [pp. 262-6.]

Were we to venture a criticism upon this elaborate and careful classification of the Divine Attributes, we would suggest that the consideration of Spirit in its Personal unity, as involving intellect and will, might be dispensed with, and that the enumeration should proceed at once to its obvious subdivisions. Nothing would be lost, by this arrangement, to the completeness of the catalogue, while much would be gained in the improvement of the nomenclature. Primary is certainly an unfortunate epithet to apply to the attributes of God, as it carries the intimation that some are secondary and subordinate. Natural is not the directest antithesis to moral. Essential and Natural are likely to be confounded. By the omission proposed, what the author calls Primary attributes, he might denominate *Essential*—a word evidently appropriate to express the properties of a being, in which existence and essence coincide. The second class of attributes founded, on the conception of Spirit as intelligent, might then be called *Intellectual*. The third, founded on the conception of Spirit as moral, might retain its present name. We should then have Essential, Intellectual, Moral and Consummate—and we are inclined to think that there is not a single perfection enumerated by the author, or capable of being conceived by the human mind, which may not be reduced to

one of these four heads. Omnipotence may strike some as an exception. Accustomed to regard it as the simple energy of God's will, directed by intelligence, they can find no place for it, unless the capital idea of the Unity of Spirit is retained as a ground of division. But the truth is, it belongs to the Consummate perfections of God, and the conception of it becomes not only grand but glorious, when it is contemplated as the fulness of God expressing itself in act—not only as a combination of intelligence and will, but a combination of intelligence, goodness and will—an energy of the Divine Life.

In the fourth book, which is devoted to a survey of all the sources of our knowledge of God, that is, of all the manifestations which God has made of Himself to man, the author has been most signally successful. Some portions of it we have read with feelings approaching to rapture. The theme is a grand one. Creation, Providence, Redemption, God's Works of Nature and Grace—these are the mighty theatres in which the Divine actor is presented. And surely it is a task of no common magnitude to write a drama, the plot of which shall be the unfolding, upon a scale worthy of His glory, of that awful and august Being whose prerogative it is, while essentially light, to dwell in thick darkness! Dr. B. felt the inspiration of the theme, and he who can rise from the contemplation of the picture he has drawn without a deeper sense of the majesty, sublimity, wisdom and goodness of God, without an impression of the Divine glory which gives a new lustre to the objects of nature, and a richer significance to the history of man; he that can study the seven chapters of this book and not be penetrated with the profoundest gratitude that he has been made capable of such conceptions as are successively brought before him, is insensible to all that is beautiful in poetry, lovely in art, and divine in truth. The legitimate effect would seem to be, to make us blind to every thing but God. We should see Him in the stars, hear Him in the winds, catch His smile in the calm serenity of the sky, and in the gayety of the fields discern the dim reflection of His goodness. Every dumb thing should become gifted with a tongue to proclaim its Maker's name. In the light of these discussions, nature becomes an august temple which God dwells in and irradiates with His light; all created things, a vast congregation of worshippers, and the glory of God, as it shines over all and upon all, is the burden of that mighty chorus of praise and doxology, which is ever sounding in the ears of the Almighty from all above and all below. Who does not rejoice that such a God reigns? Who does not glory in this, that he knows, and is capable of knowing such a being? What meaningless things are we, and the sun and moon and stars, if supreme intelligence and love are banished from the world? It is theology which puts life into natural science. Laws and phenomena are absolutely dead

things, if viewed only in themselves. They are mysterious hieroglyphics traced upon a wall or a monument, which exhibit marks of intelligence and design, but which human ingenuity has not yet deciphered. The key is wanted to unlock their secrets. That key to nature is the knowledge of God. That makes the senseless symbol pregnant with meaning, the dead image instinct with life. The obscure characters of the heavens and the earth become radiant with light, and what to the eye of ignorance and unbelief was an incomprehensible scrawl—like a page of the *Paradise Lost* to a fly or a worm—become immortal scenes in the epic of eternal truth and Providence. No wonder the whole congregation rose when Massillon pronounced those sublime words, God alone is great. And of all beings the blindest is that burlesque upon his species who can dwell in a world that is full of the Divine riches, where God surrounds him at every step, and permeates with his influence every department of being, and yet he cannot see Him. He may congratulate himself upon his wisdom, but it is the wisdom of the dog which sees only bright points in the firmament, or green spots on the globe. The incapacity of the brute for science is precisely analogous to the incapacity of the fool for theology—and astronomy and botany are not more simply and really explanations of the bright points and green spots, to the natural philosopher, than the glory of God is the secret of these sciences to the man of spiritual discernment.

Dr. B. begins this book by a very precise expression of opinion in relation to the great problem of modern Philosophy—Are the infinite and absolute positive affirmations of intelligence, or are they simply negative and contradictory extremes of all positive thought? The question is, not whether we can comprehend the infinite, though that extravagance has been maintained, but whether we can *know*, that the infinite exists, as really and as truly as we know that the finite exists. Is it, in other words, an original datum of consciousness, manifested in every cognition of the limited and conditioned? Dr. B. maintains that it is. He concurs with the great body of Divines in asserting to our conceptions of the infinite and absolute a positive and substantive value, involving the apprehension of existence, but not the comprehension of the things in themselves. His conclusion is exactly that of Cousin in the latest form in which he expressed his doctrine, though not that of Cousin in the form in which it was so successfully combated by Sir Wm. Hamilton. We have always thought that, in this celebrated controversy, both parties were wrong and both were right. Cousin was wrong in vindicating to reason an absolute comprehension of the God-head; and Sir Wm.'s refutation of this doctrine is triumphant and complete. Sir William was wrong in denying the reality of the infinite to be a positive affirmation of intelligence and resolving the belief of it into an impotence of

mind to realize either of two contradictory extremes, though according to the laws of thought, one had to be accepted as necessary. Cousin was wrong in maintaining that the relations of the finite and infinite were eternal, necessary, and fully intelligible; Sir William wrong in maintaining that they were wholly and completely unknown. Cousin arrogated too much; Sir William too little to intelligence. The tendency of philosophy with the one was to deny all ignorance; the tendency with the other to deny all knowledge. The truth here, as in most other cases, is in the middle—*in medio tutissimus ibis*. Partial knowledge and Partial ignorance are the mingled inheritance of man. Of the infinite we know that it is, though we know not what it is. God is as essentially incomprehensible, as he is inevitably apprehensible. In the pithy words of Charnock who herein expresses the deep conviction of the church of God in all ages: "Though God be so inaccessible, that we cannot know Him perfectly, yet He is so much in the light that we cannot be wholly ignorant of Him. As he cannot be comprehended in his essence, He cannot be unknown in His existence; 'tis as easy by reason to understand that He is, as it is difficult to know what He is."

The conception of God, as the Absolute, in the sense of the fulness and perfection of being to which nothing can be added and from which nothing can be taken; the totality, eminently or really, of all existence—the conception of God as the Infinite, in the sense of an exemption from all restrictions and limitations either upon His essence or perfections; infinite because absolute and absolute because infinite—this conception has not only ever been a positive and regulative principle of the human mind, but is an irresistible affirmation of the human reason. Even those who have denied to it, as Kant did, an objective reality have been constrained to admit its subjective necessity. To say that God is wholly unknown and wholly incapable of being known is to annihilate the possibility of religion. The wholly inconceivable is relatively to us the wholly non-existent. When we say that the infinite cannot be comprehended we mean much more than that our conceptions of it are inadequate and defective; we mean wholly to exclude it, as it exists in itself, from the domain of science. Its existence is an original and primary belief; its properties and relations, beyond partial manifestations in the region of the finite, transcend the sphere of Logic. Sir William Hamilton and Kant have shown, beyond the possibility of refutation, that nothing but contradiction emerges, when we apply the laws of finite thought to what is confessedly beyond them. To bring the infinite within the sphere of the understanding is to limit, to define it; to think it as a term of syllogism is to condition it. It becomes one among many. Hence Boethius* was, in our judgment, right—Aristotle before him was

*Quod autem ratione mentis circumdari non potest, nullius scientiæ sine concluditur; quare infinitorum scientiæ nulla est.

right, in pronouncing a science of the infinite to be impossible. It implies a contradiction in terms. This principle, too much overlooked by divines, is pregnant with most important results in its bearing upon theological systems. It shows where we can reason and explain; and where we can only pause and adore. In every question which touches the immediate connection of the infinite with the finite, and the solution of which depends upon the comprehension of the infinite, as a definite thing, it is intuitively obvious, that the solution must be impossible; and every system which attempts the solution only degrades God to the form and stature of a man. There is in theology a region which must be left to the dominion of faith; it can never be entered with the torch of Logic. And most fundamental errors proceed from a disregard of this significant fact and are only abortive efforts to define the indefinable. The Socinian hopes by searching to find out God, and because he cannot think the Trinity according to the laws of Logic, he denies its existence. The Arminian vainly seeks to penetrate the depths of an infinite understanding, and because predestination and free will, in finite relations, do not consist, he extends his conclusion beyond the legitimate contents of his premises. He forgets that the same reason which intuitively gives us man's freedom, intuitively gives us God's prescience; and that the contradiction between them emerges only when professing to think them as they are in God, we really think them as they would be in man. Upon no other ground than a total denial of any logical comprehension, and therefore, of any science of the infinite, can the harmony of faith and reason be maintained. Whenever we directly touch the infinite, we must expect to encounter mystery, and a religion which has no mysteries is simply a religion that has no God. Dr. B. has devoted a chapter of surpassing beauty and interest to this whole subject. These conflicts betwixt faith and reason, or rather faith and our faculties of comparison, he calls the Paradoxes of the Gospel. He shows that they "are all to be found located along that line, in which the infinite and the finite, the Divine and the human elements in religion, at once unite and are separated, and therefore, all belong, not so much to a separate consideration of any particular part of religion, as to a general estimate of religion as a system." He further adds, what harmonizes with all that we have said, "that the only method of their solution, is the application to them of a simple evangelism, and a thorough philosophy combined; for the lack of which, on the one side, or the other, there is sometimes found so much extravagance, and at other times, so much shallowness, in the mode in which the most important truth is stated."—[p. 522.] Dr. B. fully appreciates the high and awful problems with which the soul of the believer has to grapple and recognizes a Divine wisdom in faith which mocks the efforts of an earth-born philosophy. There

are things to be believed and adored, whose glory departs the very moment you compress them to the dimensions of any finite forms of thought. They spurn the bandages of logic. As well wrap a giant in the swaddling clothes of infancy as these mysteries in the terms of argument. Man has nobler functions than to deduce and comprehend. Faith is before knowledge and resumes its jurisdiction when knowledge ceases. Comprehension, after all, is a very narrow territory, bounded on all sides by an illimitable region of mystery, a region from which we emerge into the light of knowledge by faith, and when knowledge fails, we fall back upon the guidance of faith again. As pertinent to this subject the following passage from Dr. B. cannot fail to engage the attention and awaken the interest of the reader :

4. We often speak of the difficulties of religion as presented in the works of infidels and heretics. But they are not worthy to be so much as once thought of, when placed by the side of the difficulties which the soul of the true believer has mastered. Satan does not reveal his strength to his willing followers. The spirit which rests in the shallow doubts which outlie the wide frontiers of divine truth, never approaches the real problems over which the heart agonizes, and before which the intellect recoils. If the inward struggles of any earnest Christian spirit in the progressive development of its divine life, were distinctly recorded, so that they could be carefully considered by others ; they would show nothing more clearly than the utter insignificance and hollowness, the pitiable ignorance and baseness, of the common pretexts of unbelievers. These great spiritual battles are fought around and within these citadels—these strongholds of God, in each of which is intrenched one of these great Gospel Paradoxes. And if our eyes were opened so that we could see at one glance the whole vanguard of the church militant, we should behold encamped around, or lodged within these very battlements, the chief captains of the army of the Lord ; some safely and serenely reposing on the bosom of Christ, having won the great victory ; some discomfited, yet still renewedly girding themselves for the life battle ; some calmly watching and pondering, till the signal falls for the new onset ; some in the very heat and desperate grapple of the imminent deadly breach ! Who can pass his eye, even in thought, around their glorious ranks, without wonder, and love, and joy ; without perceiving under a new aspect, the high communion of the redeemed of God—in this form of their union with and in Christ !

5. It is a fatal error to imagine that we can gain any thing, either in the power or the distinctness of our spiritual experience, by avoiding these sublime meditations. And it is another error not less fatal, to suppose that the Gospel is commended to the soul of man, by our poor attempts to lower the terms of these grand paradoxes, on one side or the other, or on both. The difficulty is not created by the Gospel : it lies in the infinite nature of the case—and in the eternal nexus wherein God stands related to his own universe. As I have intimated before, so much of the difficulty as can be solved at all, can be solved only through the most intense application of the plan of Salvation, to the most profound realities of the case ; a result to which all superficial philosophy and all shallow evangelism, unitedly or separately,

are utterly incompetent. Open them, as bottomless chasms across the pathway to eternity : pile them up, as impassable mountains in the way toward the New Jerusalem : and then you will not only tell the whole truth—but you will so tell it that the soul of man can both understand and believe it. It is after that, only, we can know—or that we care to know, how these mountains can be brought low, these vallies be filled, these rough places be made smooth, these crooked ones become straight, and a highway be made for the Lord and for his redeemed !

6. And after all it is not by means of the logical faculty, that man escapes perdition. Our faith does not stand in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God. It is with the heart that man believeth unto righteousness. It is not merely—nay, it is not even chiefly—upon what we call our reason that the power of God's grace manifests itself in the new creation ; and so it is not mainly, much less merely, by means of philosophy—no matter how pure and deep, that God can be fully comprehended, much less embraced.—[pp. 522-4.]

It is not our purpose to follow Dr. B. through the detailed consideration of the sources of our knowledge of God. These are Creation, Providence, Redemption, Man himself, and the Sacred Scriptures. As Dr. B. enumerates them, "God may be known as manifested in His works, God the Creator ; He may be known as manifested in His dominion and reign, the God of Providence ; He may be known as manifested in human nature, the Word made flesh ; He may be known as manifested in the New Creation, God the Spirit ; He may be known as manifested in Revelation, the God of the Sacred Scriptures ; He may be known as manifested in the Conscious Existence of man, God the Maker and Renewer of the human soul."—[p. 330.] To each of these topics a chapter is devoted.

Up to this point the work has been mainly inductive—it has followed up successive streams of observation and of fact until they disembogued into the fulness of God. It commenced with a survey of man, as consciousness and universal experience testify that he is. It then contemplated the revealed economy in reference to the recovery and redemption of our race, the inquiry still turning only upon facts. The particulars thus collected are all generalized into those manifestations of God which constitute the sum and substance of our knowledge of His name. Having inductively reached the conclusions of the third book, the fourth recapitulates all the fields of observation which lie before us and verifies the results which we have successively attained. Induction having by an ascending series conducted us to God, we then, descend, in the way of what Dr. B. calls deduction, through the creation, primitive state and subsequent fall of man, to the condition in which we found him at the opening of the first book. His present ruin and misery are vindicated in the light of the principles previously established, "mortal existence and divine

truth are brought face to face," and the great problem of human destiny as it relates to individuals and the race calmly encountered. The questions discussed are among the most intricate that can occupy the mind of man. They cover the whole field of moral government in its essential and fundamental doctrines and in the gracious modifications which it has assumed towards our race. Primeval innocence, the Covenant of Works, the Entrance of Sin, the Fall of the Species, Election and Redemption—this is the scale of descending inquiry which is measured in the book before us—these the momentous questions upon which we must bring to bear all that we know of God. These weighty topics are dispatched in about sixty pages—a clear proof that the author, in rigid adherence to his method, has remitted the whole philosophy of the questions, to his third part. He has confined himself mainly to a connected exhibition of scripture facts and doctrines, with a reference here and there to the moral and psychological laws which are supposed to underlie them. The covenant of works, in its general features and specific provisions, he has ably presented, except that the precise nature of the change in man's relations to God, contemplated in the promise is not expressly mentioned. That change was from a servant to a son. Adoption is the crowning blessing of both covenants—the rich prize offered to our race in the garden and secured to believers on the cross. Under the law of nature man was a subject and God a ruler. The Covenant of Works was an interposition of grace by means of which man might become a child and God a father, and the filial relation supersede that of simple and naked law. This glorious adoption, which makes paternal love and goodness, instead of our own merits, the measure of our expectations and security—this priceless blessing which Adam failed to secure, is what Christ has won for us.

We could have wished that Dr. B. had dwelt more largely on the nature of sin—and particularly the first sin—as involving essentially the notion of apostacy. If he had shown that, as a subjective state, it was a falling away from God, and contained seminally the elements of every species of transgression; that it was, in truth, the universal principle of sin, the malignity of Adam's guilt and the righteousness of God's judgment would have been more vividly impressed. These notions are implied, but they are not brought out with the prominence and emphasis that their importance deserves. Indeed the whole question concerning the rise of sin in the mind of Adam, how a holy creature *could* sin—the beginning and the steps of the process—is not fairly and fully encountered. We are told that man, as a creature, was necessarily fallible—but Dr. B. is too good a logician not to know that *a posse ad esse non valet consequentia*. To say that man was created so that he might sin is not to say that he would

sin. And when he has sinned, it is no explanation of the fact to say that he could sin. A man builds a house—to tell us that he could build it is not to tell us why he built it. The pinch of the question is, how Adam came to use his power to sin? He was able to stand or able to fall. Why did he choose the latter rather than the former? Freedom of will enters here only to connect responsibility with the act, to give it moral significance and value, but not to give the grounds of it. Dr. B. proceeds to enumerate the elements of wickedness which entered into Adam's first disobedience—"unbelief, inordinate desire of forbidden knowledge, presumptuous aspirations after equality with God, the pride of the eye, the lust of the appetite, the inordinate mutual devotion of loving hearts, credulity under skilful temptation"—but the question is, how these elements ever got possession of a heart created in the image of God, and delighting in spiritual conformity with His law? We wish that Dr. B. had given more attention to this profoundly interesting question; that he had resolutely undertaken to solve the phenomenon of the origin of sin in a holy being, or to show, upon philosophical grounds, that it is incapable of solution. Had he with his evangelical views grappled with it, as Bishop Butler has done, he might have favoured us with more satisfactory results. That he has not done so is simply an omission, and an omission, perhaps, incidental to the nature of his plan.

It is with unfeigned reluctance that we differ from the author upon any subject. We have such profound respect for his judgment, that whenever our opinions have not been in accordance with his, we have felt that the presumption was against us, and that modesty and caution became us until we had thoroughly reviewed the grounds of our conclusions. Dr. B. is no rash thinker, and because he is no rash thinker, we specially regret that we cannot concur with him in his views of hereditary depravity and imputed sin. We understand Dr. B. to teach, that the native character of man is determined by the natural, and not by the federal, relations of Adam; that we are born sinners, because Adam our father was a sinner, and begat us under the law that like must propagate like. We understand him further as teaching, that inherent corruption of nature is prior, in the order of thought, to the guilt of Adam's first sin, so that unless we were born sinners we could not be involved in his curse.* In direct

*The passages to which we refer are the following:

4. I have shown in the previous chapter, when expressly considering the Covenant of Works, that the whole family of man was necessarily and was expressly embraced in its stipulations—and must, as the case might be, receive its reward, or incur its penalty. Treating now of the penalty alone, it may be proper, before proceeding to the statement of the exact manner in which it was incurred by Adam, to point out

contradiction to these statements, the truth to us seems to be, that the moral character of the race is determined by the federal, and not by the natural relations of Adam, and that inherent depravity is the judicial result, and not the formal ground, of the imputation of his sin. Natural headship, in our judgment, does nothing more than define the extent of federal representation. It answers the question, Who were included in the covenant? Those descending from Adam by ordinary generation. But apart from the idea of trusteeship, or federal headship, Adam, it appears to us, would have been no more than any other parent. There is nothing in the single circumstance of being first in a series to change the character of the relation, and no reason, therefore, why a first father, considered exclusively as a father, should have any more effect upon his issue than a second or third. The law of like begetting like is altogether inapplicable to the transmission of sin. That law contemplates the perpetuation of the species and not the propagation of accidental differences. Every kind generates beings of the same kind, but there is no law which secures the reproduction of

precisely the grounds upon which, under the case as it stood, that penalty must embrace all his ordinary posterity in the same ruin which overtook him. There are two great facts, both of them clear and transcendent, which unitedly control the case. The first is, that Adam was the natural head and common progenitor of his race. The human family is not only of one blood, as has been proved in another place, but the blood of Adam is that one blood. The whole Scriptures are subverted, and human life is the grossest of all enigmas, if this be not true. If it be true, nothing is more inevitable than that whatever change may have been produced on the whole nature of Adam by his Fall—of which I shall speak presently—before the existence of any of his issue, must have been propagated through all succeeding generations. If there is any thing perfectly assured to us, it is the steadfastness of the order of nature, in the perpetual reproduction of all things after their own kind. If the fall produced no change on the nature of Adam, it could produce none on the nature of his descendants. If it did produce any change upon his nature, it was his nature thus changed, and not the form of his nature before his fall, which his posterity must inherit.—[pp. 487-8.]

(a) Its first element is the guilt of Adam's first sin. By which is meant that on account of our natural and covenanted relations with Adam, we are considered and treated precisely as we would have been, if each one of us had personally done what Adam did. The guilt of Adam's first sin is imputed to his posterity. There is doubtless a wide difference between imputed sin, and inherent sin. We however have both—and that naturally; and it tends only to error to attempt to explicate either of them in disregard of the other, or to separate what God has indissolubly united, namely, our double relation to Adam. It is infinitely certain, that God would never make a legal fiction a pretext to punish as sinners, dependent and helpless creatures who were actually innocent. The imputation of our sins to Christ, affords no pretext for such a statement; because that was done by the express consent of Christ, and was, in every respect, the most stupendous proof of divine grace. Nor is the righteousness of Christ ever imputed for justification, except to the elect: nor ever received except by faith, which is a grace of the Spirit peculiar to the renewed soul. In like manner the sin of Adam is imputed to us, but never irrespective of our nature and its inherent sin. That is, we must not attempt to separate Adam's federal from his natural headship—by the union of which he is the *Root* of the human race: since we have not a particle of reason to believe that the former would have existed without the latter. Nay, Christ to become our federal head, had to take our nature.—[pp. 498-9.]

individual peculiarities. Now sin and holiness are accidents of the soul. They do not pertain to its essence, they do not determine the species man. The law of propagation, therefore, in itself considered, leaves these accidents to the influence of other causes. If Adam had not been a covenant head, we make no question that his posterity would all have been born in holiness, from the operation of the same cause by which he was created upright. But he having been a covenant head and having sinned and fallen, they are begotten, under a judicial sentence, which determines their moral state. They were born under the law of sin and death. We are aware that the doctrine of Dr. B. is the doctrine of Calvin, and that the Chapter in our Confession of Faith, of the Fall of Man, of Sin and of the Punishment thereof, may be interpreted in the same sense—but the teaching of the catechisms we take to be clearly and unambiguously on our side. There the imputation of guilt is direct and immediate and the true explanation of the degraded condition of the race.

The thirty-third chapter, which is one of uncommon solemnity and pathos, first contemplates the human race, as a collective whole, and takes a survey of the dealings of God for its restoration and recovery until the restitution of all things. It then descends to the destiny of individuals, and considers their career in the light of the Divine decrees, and concludes the certain salvation of the elect and the certain perdition of the reprobate—both to the infinite glory of God. The whole history of the species whether as a race or as individuals, is thus brought under review. The stream is followed from the bosom of God until it is lost in the fathomless depths of Eternity. From man in the first part of the book, we took our departure and found ourselves conducted to the knowledge of God; from God we took our departure a second time, and find our resting place the endless issues of an immortal and changeless existence. Here the work properly stops. The last chapter which we have already noticed, is not so much a part of the systematic knowledge, as a philosophical explanation of the necessary limits within which that knowledge is restrained.

And, now, having completed a general view of the whole treatise, we are, in some measure, prepared to form an opinion of the author's success in attaining the objects he aimed at, "that all confusion should be escaped, that all dislocation of truth should be avoided, that clear statements should become really convincing proofs, that the grand proportion of faith should reign without distortion, that the sublime science of God should emerge distinctly from the chaos of endless disputations, and that the unction of a glorious gospel should pervade the whole."—[p. 14.] We think it may be safely said that he has realized his own ideal, as far as it could possibly be done. He has collected with

loving industry, the scattered members of the mangled body of truth. He has joined bone to bone and limb to limb. He has brought up flesh and blood upon it. And as the image stands before us, in loveliness and beauty, we are obliged to confess its Divine original, and can almost perceive the Spirit of God enter into it and impregnate it with Divine life. The unction of the book is above all praise. The author believes with the heart. Faith with him is knowledge and knowledge is love. The doctrines of the Gospel are not treated as cold and barren speculations. They are sublime and glorious realities, the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. They are not matters about which the disputers of this world may wrangle and harangue, their existence depending upon the preponderance of probabilities and their power standing in the wisdom of men. They are things to be perceived, certified by their own light, and authenticating their own being. Their power is the power of God. Dr. B. is never afraid of the truth. He never minces or prevaricates, nor handles the doctrines of grace, to use the comparison of Rowland Hill, like an ass mumbling a thistle. On the contrary he reminds us of Cecil's inimitable description of Cadogan, who "seemed more like a man talking of what he saw, what he felt and what he kept firm hold of, than of what he had heard or read." Dr. B., like him, follows with no wary step, the teachings of Divine Revelation; knowing its foundations, "he stands upon it, as on the everlasting hills." He fills his reader with that same holy sympathy which Cadogan is said to have propagated from the unction of his own soul, until he almost entranced his hearers, and "left them like Elisha, after the mantle was cast upon him wondering what had so strangely carried him away from the plough and the oxen." We know of no book, ancient or modern, always excepting the Divine compositions of John Howe, which can compare in spiritual pathos with the work before us: The author has succeeded in his wish—"the unction of a glorious Gospel pervades the whole."

The peculiarities of Dr. B.'s teaching are, as we have seen, the separation of dogmatic from polemic theology, and the concatenation of the truths of religion upon the principle of ascent and descent, or induction and deduction. He aims to present them as a whole, and in joining them together, he follows the line of experimental religion until it leads him to God, and then the line of the Divine counsels and operations, until our history as a race and as individuals is closed in eternity. The question now recurs, and it is one which vitally concerns the interests of theological instruction in this country—Should these peculiarities be copied? Is it best to teach the truth apart from its contrasts with error? And is it consistent with our conceptions of science to follow the order of actual discovery or actual development? We confess

that we are skeptical on both points. Systematic divinity is an exposition of the truth as the Church of God holds it—an exposition of it in its dependencies and relations. The faith of the church, as a body of doctrine, distinctly apprehended and realized to reflection, is the product of many and protracted controversies, and all the creeds of Christendom, with the exception perhaps of that which goes by the name of the Apostles, are at once a confession of the truth and a protest against error. The terms in which the most important doctrines of Christianity are stated have been studiously selected—sometimes even invented—because of their implicit denial of some form of heresy and falsehood. We do not mean that the doctrine took its rise from these controversies, or that the people of God then first discovered it, as lying in his word. Nothing is of faith which is not in the bible, and godliness from the beginning has been the moulding of the soul in the type of the word. But there is a marked difference betwixt the spontaneous and reflective exercises of the mind. It is possible to know implicitly without knowing explicitly—possible to feel the power of an article and be controlled by its influence, without being able to represent in precise and definite expressions what is inwardly acknowledged. Heresy, in contradicting the spontaneous life of the church, led to reflection upon the roots and grounds of that life. Reflection elicited the truth in the clear light of consciousness. And to preserve it, thus distinctly and precisely seized, as a lasting inheritance to all time, it was embalmed in language which derived much of its point from its relation to existing controversies. We do not believe that any one ever becomes explicitly conscious of what is meant by the word Trinity, three persons in one God, until his attention has been turned to the Arian and Sabellian heresies. He apprehends enough for devotion, but the full faith even of his own soul he is able articulately to state only in its contrasts to error. It requires, indeed, a very intense power of abstraction, the very highest exercise of genius, to take the truth which exists full and entire as a habit of the mind and represent it, in its integrity, to consciousness, as an object of thought. All the aberrations of philosophy are only confessions of the difficulty which the human mind encounters in seizing and objectifying its own habitudes. As theological instruction aims at the head as well as the heart, we are inclined to think, that a steadier and firmer grasp is given of the truth by distinguishing it in the very process of teaching from every species of lie. The lie is itself an impulse to reflection. It contradicts our inner life, and we are enabled more readily to lay hold upon what God has impressed on us by His Spirit. We see the word in relations of which we had not previously been apprized. A new light is imparted to it. This is the method of the New Testament. Paul, like the builders at Jerusalem, with one

hand always wrought in the work and with the other held a weapon; and John is as particular to warn against false Christs as to commend the love and grace and mercy of the true one. It seems to us that the same law, which in a theological system, would exclude polemics from the sphere of positive teaching, would admit, in a moral system, the consideration of vices to a different part of the system from that which treats of virtues. The science of contraries is one. We suspect that Dr. B. will find, from experience, that his third part will be the part in which he is most successful in making skilful theologians. He may edify more in the first, he will teach more in the third. The first part may be more impressive, the third will be more precise and accurate. The first may strike by the grandeur of the whole, the third will interest by the clearness of the details. The first will be more subservient to devotion, the third to intellectual apprehension. Still we cannot regret that Dr. B. has produced the book under review. The qualities of his mind have ensured to his method a success in his hands which it were vain to expect from a humbler source. None of the disciples can imitate the master, and if our Seminaries should undertake to introduce this mode of teaching, as the general plan, the result would soon show, that we must either have a Dr. Breckinridge in each one of them, or send out any thing but accurate Divines.

As to the principle upon which Dr. B. has concatenated the various topics of theology, it is a natural corollary from the total exclusion of polemics. We can conceive of no order in which the doctrines of spiritual religion, considered in their positive aspects, could be more impressively presented. It is the order of the development of the Divine life. But if theology is to be reduced to the forms of a reflective science, and the truth to be unfolded in its contrasts with error, it is very desirable that some method should be adopted—a thing that has never been done yet, not even by those who have made the most confident pretensions to it—that shall reduce to unity all the doctrines of religion. There must be a ground of unity somewhere, for truth is one as well as connected. This unity must be sought in the doctrines themselves, and not in their accidents and adjuncts. It is easy to connect Divine truths by the idea of the Covenants; by the correlation of disease and remedy, the fall and redemption; or by the order of the Divine decrees as manifested in creation and providence; or by the idea of the Mediator, or the incarnation; but to connect them is not to unite them. We want a corner stone which holds the whole building together. We want some central principle which embraces equally the religion of nature and the religion of grace. Until some such central principle is developed in its all-comprehensive relations, we are obliged to have a two-fold

theology, as we have a two-fold religion—a Covenant of Works and a Covenant of Grace—with no bridge between them.

It seems to us—and we make the suggestion with all proper diffidence—that such a principle is found in the great doctrine of justification, which, in more respects than one deserves the commendation of Calvin, “*præcipuum esse sustinendæ religionis cardinem.*—[Inst. Lib. 3. Cap. 11, §1.] The only systems of religion which God has ever revealed to man consist of the answers which Divine Wisdom has given to the question, How shall a subject of moral government be justified? When that subject is considered simply as a creature, in a state of innocence, and blessed with the image of God, the answer is the religion of nature; if that subject is considered as a fallen being, as a sinner, the answer is the religion of grace. All the provisions of either covenant are subordinated to the idea of justification. They are directed to it as their immediate end, and find their respective places in the system according to their tendency to contribute to its accomplishment. This is the centre around which every other doctrine revolves, and none can be understood fully and adequately apart from their relations to it. Let us consider this matter a little more distinctly.

Justification, it should first be remarked, is not an original or essential principle of moral government. That implies nothing more than the relations of a ruler and a subject through the medium of moral law. It contemplates no change of state and proposes no alternative but uniform obedience or death. Each man is looked upon simply as an individual, a moral unit, whose responsibility terminates upon himself alone, and whose trial is co-extensive with the whole career of the immortality of his being. The law, as such, can never raise him beyond the condition of a servant. It can never relax the contingency of his life. It can never put him beyond the reach of death. Do, and while you do, and as long as you do, you live, is the only language which it can employ. It knows no state of final rewards. Under it there may be perpetual innocence, but there never can be justification. If the relations of law are the only ones which are essential to moral government—and that is obviously the case—it is clear that justification is a superadded element, a provision of infinite goodness and love, which modifies essentially the condition and prospects of man. The case seems to be this: God has never been willing to sustain only legal relations to His moral and intelligent creatures. While the very law of their being, as creatures absolutely dependent upon His will, puts them necessarily in this state, His love has always proposed to raise them higher, to bring them nearer to Himself, to make them children and heirs. He has always proposed a fundamental change in their attitude towards Him, and that change has consisted in the adoption of

sons—in the substitution of filial for legal ties. Instead of an empire of subjects, Infinite Goodness has aimed at a vast family of holy, loving, obedient children. To be admitted into God's family is to be confirmed in holiness, to have life put beyond the reach of contingency, to be forever like the Lord. It is to be entitled to higher and richer and more glorious joys than any legal obedience could ever aspire to obtain. The doctrine of justification has been engrafted upon the fundamental principles of moral government, in order to provide the way by which a being that exists necessarily at first in a legal, may be promoted to a filial relation. It is the expedient of heaven for making a servant a son. Now that there may be justification, probation must be limited as to time. Probation must be ended before the subject can be pronounced righteous, or entitled to the reward. What an act of goodness is this! Each man might have been put on an endless trial. Life might, forever, have been at hazard. In the actual provisions for justification which God has applied to our race, the trial has not only been limited as to time, but concentrated as to persons. One stood for all—another provision, rightly understood, of infinite goodness. Hence Federal Headship; and those who cavil at the representative character of Adam, would do well to remember, that they had no right to any limited trial at all, and if God chose to limit it in one respect, He not only had a right to limit it in any other, but that the probability is that if it had not been limited in both respects, all would have fallen, and fallen without hope forever. Every provision of the Covenant of Works is, therefore, a provision of spontaneous grace. But it is equally obvious that all these arrangements have been instituted to realize the idea of justification.

The same result takes place in reference to the religion of grace. The question now is, How shall a sinner be just with God? And the answer to that question in consistency with the essential principles of moral government and the requisitions of the broken Covenant of Works, necessitates all the provisions of the Covenant of Grace. They are all directed to this as their immediate end, that God may be just, and at the same time, justify those who are without works. Hence the incarnation; hence the mysterious and wonderful person of the Saviour; hence his amazing humiliation, his life of poverty, sorrow and self-denial, his death of agony and shame; hence his glorious resurrection and ascension, and his coming at the last day to judge the quick and the dead. All the facts of his history and mediation depend upon God's purpose to justify sinners through his name. And as justification is the ground or basis of adoption, the sinner who is justified becomes at once a son, and is entitled to the blessing of indefectible holiness, He becomes an heir, and has an indefeasible right to the heavenly inheritance. His life, that is,

his holiness, becomes as certain to him as Adam's life would have been to his posterity, if he had kept his first estate. Hence justification necessitates the whole work of the Spirit in the renovation and sanctification of the heart—converts the present life into a discipline in which our sins are treated as faults to be corrected, and not as crimes to be punished—and ensures the perseverance of the Saints, the resurrection of the body from the grave at the last day, and the full and complete preparation of the whole man for his eternal weight of glory. Well, therefore, may justification be called the article of a standing or falling church—it is the key to all of God's dealings with man!

This rapid sketch sufficiently indicates the grounds on which we regard justification as the dogmatic principle which reduces to scientific unity the whole doctrine of religion. It is common to both covenants, and it is evidently the regulative idea of both. It presupposes the fundamental conceptions of moral government, of law, of personal and individual responsibility. It implies that the legal cannot give way to the filial relation without a trial of the creature. To establish such a trial it modifies probation, imposes limitations both as to time and persons, and introduces the notion of Federal Representation. After the fall it presides over the economy of grace and determines the nature and extent of every provision which this stupendous scheme involves. It is the bow which spans the whole hemisphere of grace. As the law of method in theological treatises, it certainly seems to be exhaustive and complete. It has also the advantage of cutting up by the roots false systems of Divinity. They cannot be reduced upon it. It throws off Arminianism, Pelagianism and every theology which leaves life contingent and resolves acceptance into mere pardon. It throws off all such schemes as foreign to its own spirit. It plants the feet of the saints upon a rock, and in itself and its adjuncts it may well be styled the glorious Gospel of the blessed God.