

THE SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW.

VOL. XIV.—NO. 3.

OCTOBER, MDCCCLXI.

ARTICLE I.

THE BATTLE OF FORT SUMTER: ITS MYSTERY AND MIRACLE—GOD'S MASTERY AND MERCY.

When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it. And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it.—Deut. 20 : 10, 12. Also, 2 Chron. 32 : 5-8; Ps. 22 : 7-9; Is. 25 : 11, 12; Num. 31 : 49; Is. 29 : 8, 4.

We have been called together to the sanctuary—the house of prayer, of promise, and of God's presence and powerful interposition—originally by the generally expressed sentiments of this community, and more recently by the unanimous voice of our Southern Congress, and the proclamation of the President of the Confederate States, and our own Government. Never was there a louder appeal, and never a more imperious necessity. We have been coerced into a war. It is a religious, and yet an irreligious and anti-Christian, war. We have crossed swords with the Northern confederacy over the Bible. We have met each other face to face at the same altar, invoked fire from heaven on each other, and appealed to the God of battles, to whom belongeth vengeance, to avenge us against our adversaries. The fearful guilt and amenability to the righteous judg-

VOL. XIV., NO. III.—47

ARTICLE V.

THE PERSONALITY OF GOD, AS AFFECTING
SCIENCE AND RELIGION.

Simonides, the poet, when questioned by Hiero, the king, concerning the nature of God, demanded a day for consideration. The question being repeated at the expiration of the time, he begged to be allowed two days longer, and after having frequently evaded an answer, by still prolonging the period of deliberation, the king at length demanded the reason of this strange procedure. Simonides, who was a philosopher as well as a poet, gave the pregnant reply, that the longer he thought upon the subject, the greater was the difficulty of a satisfactory answer. Obscurities multiplied to reflection. "Behold, God is great," says Job, "and we know Him not, neither can the number of His years be searched out." The inscription upon the altar at Athens, which furnished Paul with a text for his memorable sermon on Mars Hill, contains a confession of ignorance, which can never cease to be true until God ceases to be infinite, and we the creatures of a day. He must ever be, not only the unknown, but the unknowable God. "Canst thou, by searching, find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea."

In striking contrast with these representations of antiquity we have a modern statement, that the very essence of God is comprehensibility—that it is His nature to be known, and that only in so far as He is intelligible, can He be said to have real existence.

To explain how such contradictory conclusions have been arrived at, we must understand the problem which, from the dawn of speculation, philosophy has set herself to solve, and the methods by which she has conducted the investigation. The point has been, to unfold the mystery of the universe—to tell whence it came, and how it has been produced. Being in itself and being in its laws—the causes and principles of all existing things, the great master of ancient speculation makes to be the end and aim of that science which he dignifies as wisdom. It is clear that, in every inquiry into causes and principles, the final answer must be, God. He is preëminently the Being from whom all other beings spring, and the constitution of the universe must be referred to Him as the ground and measure of its existence. In this general answer, which resolves every thing at last into God, every philosophy which deserves the name, whether in ancient or modern times, has concurred. They all end in Him. But when they undertake to answer the further question, what He is, and how all things centre in Him, they come to different results, according to their different views of the nature of the universe, and its relation to its first principle, or cause.

According to Aristotle, those who first philosophized on the subject, directed their attention to the principle of things, defining a principle as that of which all things are, out of which they are first generated, and into which they are at last corrupted, the essence remaining, though changed in its affections. What this essence was, this nature of things, whether one or many, the philosophers were not agreed. The language employed by Aristotle in recounting early opinions, and the subsequent history of philosophy, suggest different views of the nature of the universe. 1. It may be regarded as an organic whole, similar to the body of an animal or the structure of a plant; and, then, as the law of its being would be simply that of development, we could easily explain its phenomena, if we could only

seize upon the germ, from which it was gradually unfolded. The inquiry, in this aspect, is into the *αρχή*, the seminal principle, and its law of manifestation and of growth. Given this principle, in itself and in its law of operation, and the problem of the universe is solved. You find God, who is at once the commencement and the complement of being.

2. Or the universe may be regarded as a complex whole, a unity made by composition and mixture, consisting of parts entirely distinct in themselves, and held together by some species of cohesion. In this aspect the problem is, what are the elements of which it is compounded, and how are they sustained in union and combination? The answer here might be atheistic or not, according as the doctrine of efficient causes was excluded or rejected. The ancient arguments for Theism proceeded, for the most part, upon this conception of the universe, and postulated the necessity of a designing mind and a controlling Providence upon the arrangements of matter. The universe was a vast and complicated machine, which required mind to construct it, and mind to regulate its movements. Or, 3. The universe may be regarded as absolutely an unit, a single being, whose essence or nature determines its phenomena, as if by logical necessity. There is a something which is the substratum of all properties—in which they inhere, and from which they are derived, as qualities are dependent upon substance, and when this essence, which is synonymous with being, has been discovered, we have found God. He is the essence of all things. They are only manifestations or properties of His infinite substance. This, it is needless to add, is the most ancient form of the philosophy of the absolute.

Modern schools of philosophy have pursued essentially the same tracks in explaining the mysteries of being. The most striking difference is, not in relation to the problem to be solved, but in relation to the point from which the investigation takes its departure. Ancient speculation

fastened on the objective and material, and its principles and causes were primarily, as Aristotle remarks, in the species of matter. Modern speculation begins with consciousness, and, confounding thought with existence, reality with knowledge, has made the laws of thought the regulative and constitutive principles of being. God is nothing but the complement of primitive cognitions—the collection of those fundamental ideas which are involved in every act of spontaneous consciousness, and whose nature it is, not only to be intelligible, but to furnish the conditions of the intelligibility of every thing besides. The characteristic of all the systems, whether ancient or modern, which makes God figure at the head of their various theories, as cause, principle, or law, and which resolve all phenomena into manifestation, combination, or development, is the stern necessity to which they reduce every thing. Pantheism and Positivism, how much soever they may differ in other respects, unite in the denial of a personal God. They consequently exclude, with equal rigor, the possibility of morals and religion, and shift the grounds of the certainty of science. It is the personal God, whose name we regard with awe and veneration, whose throne is encircled with clouds and darkness, and who must for ever be the unknown God. He is the great mystery which, once admitted, throws light upon every thing but the depths of His own being. He is the Infinite One who, transcending all the categories of thought, and mocking the limits of all finite science, can only be adored as a Being past finding out. He is the God whom human nature has spontaneously acknowledged. It is a corrupt philosophy, not the dictates of humanity—a spirit of bold and presumptuous speculation, and not the instinctive voice of the human spirit—that has replaced Him with a law, a principle, or an element. So radical and all-pervading is this truth of the personality of God, so essential

to all the dearest interests of man, that we propose to make it the subject of a more distinct consideration.

I. It may be well to begin by explaining what is involved in the notion of a *personal God*. What is it, in other words, to be a person?

A definition of a simple and primitive belief is not to be expected. We may describe the occasions on which it is elicited in consciousness, or the conditions on which it is realized, but the thing itself is incapable of being represented in thought. We have, for example, a belief of power and of substance, and we can detail the circumstances under which the belief is felt; but power and substance, we are incompetent to define; they are, to us, the unknown causes of effects which we experience. So it is with person; what it is in itself, what constitutes and distinguishes it, we can not comprehend—but there are conditions on which the belief of it, as the unknown and inexplicable cause of obvious phenomena, is developed in consciousness. These conditions, as the necessary adjuncts of the natural and spontaneous belief, we are able to apprehend.

1. The first circumstance which distinguishes this notion, is that of individuality. The notion is developed only under the antithesis of some thing different from itself, which takes place in every act of consciousness. Every instance of knowledge is the affirmation of a self, on the one hand, and a some thing which is not self, on the other. There is the subject knowing, and the object known. A man believes his own existence, only in believing the existence of somewhat that is distinct from himself. He affirms his personality, in contrast with another and a different reality. When, therefore, we assert the personality of God, we mean to affirm that He is distinct from other beings, and from other objects. We mean to affirm that He is not the universe, either in its matter or form, its seminal principle or final development.

He is essentially separate from it. His substance is in no sense the substance of the things that we see. He might have existed, and through a past eternity did exist, without them. They are objects to Him as a subject—no more parts of His own being than the material world is a part of ourselves. This notion of individuality is essential to every conception of the Deity, which enables him to use the pronoun I. An absolute Being can not be a person. The God of Pantheism can not say, "I will," or "I know"—and the notion of such a being ever reaching the stage of what the absolute philosophers call self-consciousness, is a flagrant contradiction in terms. When subject and object are identified, there can be no consciousness, no knowledge. When they are carried up to indifference, the result is personal extinction.

2. But, though individuality is a necessary adjunct of the notion of person, it is not always a necessary sign of its existence. There may be individuals that are not persons. The trees which we see around us, the plants and animals that cover the surface of the globe, are all individuals, but they are not persons. There are other conditions essential to the developement of the notion; these may be reduced to two—intelligence and will—or intelligence and conscience. Self is affirmed only in consciousness, and consciousness is the property only of intelligence. A being that can not reflect, and attribute its thoughts or impressions to itself, that can not say, "I think," "I feel," "I believe," can not be regarded as a person. It is probable that the brute has no reflective consciousness. He has present states, but does not distinguish, in the spontaneous feeling, the antithesis of subject and object. This is, possibly, the condition of infancy, also. But the dignity and full significancy of the notion of person, are developed in the sphere of morals—in which man is regarded as the subject of rights, and the responsible author of his own actions—to be a person, is to be one who can

regulate his motions according to a law, and who feels that there are certain things which he can justly claim as his own. He who can say, "I have a right," evinces himself, in the highest sense, to be a true and proper person. Hence, as morals are conversant only about voluntary states and acts, the doctrine has become common, that personality is seated exclusively in the will—but this narrow and restricted view puts asunder what God has joined together. Intelligence and responsibility can never be divorced, and though it is in the sphere of duties and of rights that the importance of self becomes most conspicuous, yet the simplest act of knowledge can not possibly take place without the recognition of it.

3. Another thing, equally essential to self-hood, is the feeling of absolute simplicity. It can not be divided, or separated into parts. Consciousness is an unit—responsibility is an unit. Every person is not only separate from every other being, but is incapable of discription in himself.

When, therefore, we maintain the personality of God, we mean distinctly to affirm that He is an absolutely simple intelligence, possessed of consciousness and will, who acts from purpose, and from choice, and is not to be confounded with any of the creatures of His hand. He is not a blind fatality; not a necessary principle; not a necessary law. He has every attribute which we recognize in ourselves as beings of reason and of will. It is preëminently in our personality, and the qualities which perfect and adorn it, that the image of God consists, in which man was originally formed, and this is the immense chasm betwixt us and the other creatures that inhabit this globe.

The plant has life and sensibility—the brute is capable of perception and motion, and exhibits, perhaps, some rude traces of dawning intelligence. But neither plants nor brutes have any thing approximating to the feeling of self-consciousness. Neither can rise to the affirmation of

a self, and neither is the subject of rights or duties. But to man it belongs to say, "I," "Me," and in this respect he resembles the God that made him. But, while the essence of the Divine image consists in the property of personality, the perfection of that image consists in the knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, which invest a person with all its dignity and excellence. All retain the essence—none but the redeemed have now the qualities that adorn. It is still true that God has set His eternal canon against murder, because the life which is violently taken away is the property of him who, as a person, still resembles his Maker, and has rights which can not, with impunity, be disregarded. Take away from man his personality, and the destruction of a human being would be no more serious a thing than the slaughter of a beast. It is the sanctity which is thrown around a person, as the reflection of the Divine glory, that makes it so awful a thing to be a man. He who can say, "Myself," is immeasurably nearer to God than any other form of being. He is not only from God, but like Him. Not only carries impressions of the Divine character, as the sun, the moon, and the stars, but carries in his bosom resemblances of the Divine attributes. We are not only His creatures, but His offspring, and, regulating our thoughts of Him by the analogies of our own nature, "we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device." We should rise to the conception of His majesty, as of one that made the world, and all things therein—of one who, as Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands.

This statement of the conditions under which the notion of personality is realized, will correct the error into which the ignorant and unreflecting are apt to fall, of confounding it with figure, or material shape. We apply the term person so constantly to our bodies, that there is an imperceptible tendency to make the possession of a body essen-

tial to personal existence. But a little consideration will convince us that our bodies belong to us, but are not ourselves. We use them, and act through them, and by means of them. They are organs and instruments, but have not a single characteristic of personality. It is not the eye that sees, but the man that sees by means of the eye; it is not the ear that hears, but the man that hears through the instrumentality of the ear; it is not the leg or the foot that walks, but the man that walks by their help. These organs may be destroyed, and yet the power of vision, of hearing, of motion, remain in full integrity. They can not be exercised, for the want of the proper appliances, but they are there, and, could similar organs be replaced, could be easily called into action. In affirming, therefore, a personal, we are not affirming a material, God, bounded by any outline of figure or shape, or circumscribed to any space. We affirm a spirit—who is essentially self-conscious—whose essence is knowledge, holiness, power, and life—a spirit infinite, eternal, unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth. We affirm the existence of that great Being who sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in. That great Being, who, dwelling in glory and light inaccessible—the King eternal, immortal, invisible—permits us to behold the skirts of His robe in the analogies of finite personalities. We can catch a glimpse of Him, but we can not see Him, and the overpowering force of that glimpse causes us to fall back in ourselves, exhausted and wearied under the mighty idea of God. He alone is great—He only doeth wondrous things.

II. The difference is immense between the admission and rejection of such a being in every department of thought and of action. Speculation, equally with practice, changes its character according to the nature of the Divinity that terminates its inquiries. Upon the hypothesis of Pan-

theism, or any hypothesis which construes God into a logical, physical, or metaphysical necessity, the relation of the finite to the infinite can only proceed, as a great living writer has observed, upon the supposition of the immanent, or, more correctly speaking, of substantial identity. Given this pervading essence, this principle of being, and all things can be deduced from God with as rigorous certainty as the propositions of geometry from the definitions of the science. He being what He is, they must be what they are. He is necessary cause—they, necessary effect; He, necessary substance—they, its necessary affections. It is obvious that, upon this theory, all science must be *a priori* and deductive, and Spinoza was consulting the exigencies of his system full as much as the spirit of the age, in reducing his philosophy to the forms of mathematical demonstration. The case is very different upon the supposition of a personal God. There, the universe is the product of will. It is an effect which might or might not have been; its nature and constitution are alike contingent; all depends upon the choice, the purpose, the plans of the Creator. Philosophy becomes an inquiry into the designs of God, and these designs, as in every other case, must be determined by the appearances submitted to the scrutiny of experience. We have no data to determine beforehand what kind of a thing the world should be—what kinds of creatures it should contain—by what kind of physical laws it should be governed. We could not construct it from any principles upon which the understanding might seize. The simple circumstance that it and all its phenomena are contingent, puts it beyond the reach of philosophical anticipation, and establishes at once the method of induction as the only method of inquiry. Speculation, upon this hypothesis, is the reduction to unity of the facts of observation—the elimination of the laws which create and preserve the order which the will of God has established. Though the universe is a contingent effect,

it is not the offspring of caprice or arbitrary power. In ascribing it to a personal God, we ascribe it to a Being who is possessed of wisdom and knowledge, and whose will is always determined by the infinite perfections of His character. We may expect, therefore, to find a plan which is worthy of this august and glorious Being, and we can pronounce, with confidence, beforehand, that whatever is essentially contradictory to wisdom, goodness, and truth, can not enter into the scheme. But, when the question arises as to the concrete realities that shall positively be called into being, man can know, either in the world of matter or of mind, only what he has observed. In a personal being, you introduce the operation of a free cause—power becomes will, and the only necessity which is conceivable is that of acting from design. The whole problem of philosophy becomes changed—the absolute is resolved into a metaphysical absurdity—and a principle of existence apart from the omnipotent will of a creator, is a mere delusion. Hence the Scriptures recognize God in every thing: It is His almighty arm that sustains the fabric of the universe. He projected and keeps in their orbits those planets, suns, and adamantine spheres, wheeling unshaken through the void immense. It is His to create the sweet influences of the Pleiades, and to loose the bands of Orion. All things live, and move, and have their being, in Him. But not in Him, as part and parcel of His own existence—not as the properties or developments of His nature—but as the products of His will, which are absolutely nothing without that will. God's purpose: this is the only principle of being which the Bible recognizes. The counsel of His will: this is the goal of philosophy—the last point which science is capable of reaching. All our inquiries end at last in the confession: "Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Thy sight. For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things; to whom be glory for ever! Amen."

We regret that we have not time to enter more at length into this discussion, and to show how the deductive and inductive methods of philosophy are essentially dependent upon the admission or rejection of the personality of God. Many who are enamoured with what appears to them to be a very profound and earnest philosophy of life, are not aware that the very spirit in which that philosophy is born is at war with the first principles of Theism. They do not see that any theory which involves a necessary principle of the world, excludes contingency, and, consequently, the operation of all will. It is clear, too, that this principle, if it exists, must be sought in consciousness. As thought, upon the hypothesis in question, must be the reflection of existence, and as we ourselves are a species of microcosm, we must look into the depths of our own souls for those great, controlling elements which determine the existence of every thing around us. We shall surely be able to find those fundamental and unquestionable data, stored away in the recesses of our minds, which shall contain the absolute explanation of every thing—those laws or primitive cognitions which belong to, and constitute, the Eternal Reason. We shall be able, in other words, to find the only God that can exist in ourselves. What Madame De Staël said of Fichte, that he announced the purpose of a future lecture in these atrocious words—“We shall proceed to make God”—is perfectly in keeping with the whole genius and temper of a speculation that expects to find any other nexus but that of a personal will between the finite and the infinite.

The question of a personal God might well be suspended upon the results, in science, to which its method of investigation has led. Bacon expounded the law, and since Bacon, what has not been accomplished? There is not a conquest in the world, of matter or of mind, which has not been won by the spirit of the inductive philosophy. It has explored every nook and corner of nature; it has

trusted to nothing but its eyes and ears, and those eternal laws of thought which constitute the forms of knowledge. It has found order, law, a plan; it has discovered design, the operations of intelligence and will, and penetrated beyond nature, to nature's God, as the author and finisher of all. It has seen and known. What, on the other hand, has Pantheism done? Nothing, absolutely nothing, but transmute into its own jargon the laws which induction has established. The empirical, indeed, it despises; but, unfortunately, the empirical is all that exists; and in despising that, it destroys the possibility of any real science of things. To sum up all that we would say in a few words, experimental philosophy is grounded in the hypothesis of a personal God. The Jehovah of the Bible is presupposed in the method of induction. The method of pure speculation is grounded in the hypothesis of a necessary cause, or principle, and identity of substance is presupposed in its methods of inquiry. The nexus between the finite and the infinite, in the one case, is will, and will alone; in the other, it is that of immanence, or in-being. The universe, according to one, is the product of Divine power; according to the other, it is God Himself, coming into sensible manifestation—the chicken hatched from the egg. The problem of philosophy, in one case, is to discover the plan of God, as gathered from the actual operations of His hands; according to the other, the very notion of a plan or design becomes an insoluble contradiction. According to the one, man knows nothing, until he has learned from observation and experiment; according to the other, he carries the elements of omniscience in his bosom. This is a faithful picture of the spirit and genius of the two systems. Judge them by their fruits.

III. The two systems are equally in contrast in their influence upon the whole department of moral obligation. According to the scheme of Theism, the relations betwixt God and man are those of a ruler and a subject—all intelli-

gent beings are under authority and government. They are placed in subjection to a law, which they are bound to obey—but which they are at liberty to disregard—and their happiness or misery is dependent upon their obedience or disobedience. The simplest, perhaps the most primitive, notion which we are able to form of the Father of Spirits, is, as Butler suggests, that of “a master, or governor. The fact of our case, which we find by experience, is, that He actually exercises dominion, or government, over us, at present, by rewarding and punishing us for our actions, in as strict and proper a sense of these words, and even in the same sense, as children, servants, subjects are rewarded and punished by those who govern them.” This is not so much, says the same great thinker, a deduction of reason as a matter of experience, that we are under His government in the same sense that we are under the government of civil magistrates. All this is obviously inconsistent with the theory of Pantheism. The ruler and the ruled must be distinct; and yet, upon the hypothesis in question, they are essentially the same, only under different manifestations, or in different stages of development. A law is a measure of conduct prescribed by a superior will, and the notions which underlie it are those of rightful authority, on the one hand, and the possibility of obedience or disobedience, on the other. Both these notions are discarded by Pantheism; and, as it deprives us of will, so it leaves us no other law but that of the necessary evolution of phenomena. It demands, on the one hand, an inviolable necessity, and, on the other, a rigid continuity. Obligation is the correlative of law, and rewards and punishments are the expressions of merit and demerit. But justice is utterly annihilated—reward, as distinct from mere pleasure—punishment, as distinct from mere annoyance or pain, becomes unmeaning. All moral differences in actions are contradictory and absurd, where the effect is a necessary manifestation, or an inevitable development. Sin, as moral

disorder or evil, can not be conceived; it becomes only one step in the stage of events—a contrast in individual life, or the history of the world, by which the balanced harmony of a complicated system is preserved. It is no more liable to blame than the bitterness of wormwood, or the filth of oil; and he who, by patient continuance in well doing, seeks for glory, honor, and immortality, is no more entitled to praise, or to eternal life, than sugar for being sweet, or milk nutritious. These are only parts and parcels of the grand world-process. Good and evil occupy the same position as light and darkness, or any other contrasts in nature. Sin, as a transgression of the law, deserving death, is a pure fiction. The system, therefore, in obliterating moral distinctions, and reducing the differences of right and wrong to the category of necessary contrasts, not only makes war upon the government of God, but aims a decisive blow at the government of man. It is in deadly hostility to the principles which hold society together, and impart to States their authority. Strike out justice and moral law, and society becomes the mere aggregation of individuals, and not their union by solemn and sacred ties, upon the basis of mutual rights and duties, and man ceases to be any thing but a higher class of beasts. Every being works out its destiny by the same resistless process. These conclusions could be verified by a copious appeal to the best and purest philosophers who have speculated upon morals in the spirit of Pantheism. The accomplished Schleiermacher could make no more of sin than Fichte or Hegel. The deepest convictions of conscience, the most earnest utterances of the soul, the sense of guilt and demerit, the ineffaceable impression of justice, he was obliged to explain away, in obedience to a system which, in the extinction of a personal God, had removed the centre around which alone these sentiments could find place. They are, indeed, memorials of a personal God, which never can be totally destroyed. We feel that we

are under law, that we are responsible for our actions, that we are capable of praise or blame. We feel that there is a right and a wrong in human conduct, and no sophistry can eradicate, in some of its manifestations, the sense of justice. So clear is the connection between God and our moral nature, that we can never get quit of the notion of Him as a ruler until we have suppressed the voice of our consciences. It is here, more than any where else, that we recognize the personality of the Supreme Being. We feel His existence, because we feel the pressure of His law, and have ominous forebodings of reward or punishment. Apart from the existence of a personal God, it is impossible to construct a consistent scheme of moral philosophy. We must stumble at the very threshold in explaining the great central fact of obligation. Turn it and twist it as you may, it always leads you to a superior will as the immediate ground of duty. Virtue never becomes law until it is enforced by authority. That will, to be sure, is determined by the nature of the person, and the ultimate ground of moral distinctions must be traced to the essential holiness of God. He can not but will what is right, and it is precisely the relation of right to this perfect and holy will that creates the obligation of the creature. From God all moral distinctions proceed, and to God they naturally and necessarily lead. Their very essence is destroyed the very moment you lay your hand upon His throne.

Here, then, the contrast between Pantheism and Theism is fundamental. It goes to the springs and measures of human action. Society, the State, the Family, every sphere into which the moral element enters, becomes, in the speculations of the Pantheist, a very different thing from what our natural sentiments lead us to apprehend, and from what is possible to be realized in experience. Man, in all his interests and relations, is a very different being, according as you view him in one aspect or the other; a moral subject under the government of God, or the prop-

erty and affection—the mere *modus*—of an all-pervading substance.

It is vain, therefore, to treat those speculations which strike at the personality of God as the harmless excursions of curiosity. True, the instincts of nature, in the ordinary tenor of life, are stronger, upon the whole, than these disastrous conclusions, but still they are not without their mischief in the humblest sphere, and on great occasions, when great interests are at stake, in periods of agitation and revolution, they may prompt to the most atrocious crimes. The Reign of Terror could never have been distinguished by its enormities, if God and retribution had not first been banished from the minds of its guilty agents. It is no light thing to make a mock at sin. He who trifles with the eternal distinctions of right and wrong, not only foregoes the blessedness of the next world, but introduces disorder and confusion in this. He is an enemy to earth, as well as to heaven. The belief of a superintending Providence is the guardian of society—the security of the State—the safeguard of the family. Its influence pervades every interest, and sanctifies every office of man; it ennobles his actions; sweetens his affections; animates his hopes; gives courage in the hour of danger; serenity in time of trouble, and victory in death. If there be a God, it is a great thing to be a man; if there be none, and men should universally act on the belief that there were none, we had rather be any thing than a member of the human race. Hell and earth would differ only in topography.

IV. But there is another aspect in which the two systems remain to be contrasted, and the immense importance of a personal God, such as nature and the Scriptures reveal, to be evinced.

Upon the hypothesis of Pantheism, religion becomes a contradiction in terms. What Howe long ago asserted of the scheme of Spinoza, is equally applicable to every system which abolishes the “Thou” of our prayers—that “though

he and his followers would cheat the world with names, and with a specious show of piety, it is as directly levelled against all religion as any, the most avowed, Atheism; for, as to religion, it is all one whether we make nothing to be God, or every thing; whether we allow of no God to be worshipped, or leave none to worship Him." But, apart from this consideration, which, of itself, is conclusive—apart from the circumstance that religion necessarily implies moral government, and is founded on the relations of a moral and intelligent agent to a supreme law-giver—piety is subverted by having no object upon which to fasten its regards. It consists essentially in affections, in fear, reverence, veneration, and love, which presuppose the existence of a person upon whom they can terminate. Its highest form is that of fellowship with God. It holds communion, a real, living intercourse, with the Father of our spirits. We speak to Him in the language of prayer, penitence, faith, thanksgiving, and praise; He speaks to us by those sensible communications of His grace, which make us feel at once that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. This free circulation of the affections and interchange of offices of love, is the very essence of spiritual religion. But when you remove a personal God, you destroy the only condition on which this state of things is possible. There is no being to love, no being to adore, no being either to swear by, or pray to; and all that remains of piety is a collection of blind impulses and cravings, which must create their object, and which in their developement, according to the law of suggestion, are, singularly enough, termed a life. The disciples of this school employ the language of genuine devotion, and seem to be intent upon a more full, vigorous, and earnest piety, than that which is fostered by symbols and creeds. Their hostility to the latter is pretended to be grounded upon an intense zeal for the Spirit. But when we come to look beneath these phrases, and inquire into

the life which is so warmly commended, we find nothing but the earnings of humanity—a pervading sense of emptiness and want—without reference to their moral character and tendencies, exalted into architects of God. It is the study of these wants, and the fabrication of a being, or a principle, or any thing that seems suggested by them, that constitutes the whole life of godliness. It is like leaving a hungry man, from the mere impulse of appetite, in the first place to conceive, and then to create, bread; or a thirsty man, from the mere craving of his thirst, to image, and then produce, water. A craving enables us to recognize the suitable object, when presented, but never to frame either the conception of it, or the reality, beforehand. If a man had never seen, or tasted, or heard of food, he might have starved to death without knowing what he wanted. The feebleness and dependence of the creature may prompt it to admit the self-sufficient and Almighty God, when once He is revealed. But without being made known upon other grounds, the sense of dependence, however intense and penetrating, could never have carried us farther than a *something* on which we were dependent.

But in religion it is universally true that all our longings are the results, and not the antecedents, of knowledge. It is what the mind knows that inspires its aspirations and affections. Religious instincts are the offspring of reason and truth, and not the blind feeling of nature. When we know God, and sin, and ourselves; when we understand the law, and our destiny, then comes a sense of guilt, a longing for pardon, a desire of holiness, and peace. It is light let into the soul—truth pointed by the Holy Spirit—that awakens every truly religious emotion. We feel because we believe; we do not believe because we feel. The eye affects the heart; it is not the heart that produces the eye.

Men in their unconverted state are compelled, from the dictates of conscience and the voice of reason, to recog-

nize a personal God; but only in those relations in which the guilty stand to a judge—they believe, and tremble. Hence their anxiety to suppress the conviction. They would gladly embrace some principle of beauty, or feminine pity, which would bless their persons, without paying attention to their crimes. They would gladly fall back upon some impersonal spirit of nature, smiling in the stars, or whispering in the breeze, about which they could indulge in soft and romantic sentiments, without being put upon the troublesome duties of penitence, faith, humiliation, and self-denial. They, therefore, can spare a personal God, because they have nothing to hope, and much to dread, from Him. But the truly Christian man is robbed of every thing, if you take away his Lord and Master. He has, indeed, lost a friend, and such a friend as no substitute can replace. When he is unable to cry, "Abba, Father," his spirit is burdened with intolerable anguish. The very life of his soul is extinguished.

The privilege of communion with God is the reward signalized in no system but that of the Gospel. The completeness of the notion is there developed, and the manner in which it may be realized in individual experience, definitely described. It reconciles man to God, and God to man, and institutes a fellowship which, though it may be occasionally disturbed, can never be broken off. The love which it enjoins and engenders, is the union of the soul with the Author of its being—not the absurd imagination of the mystic, of being absorbed and swallowed up in God—as a drop in the ocean. "There is nothing, therefore," says an able writer, "we should be more anxious to protect from every presumptuous attempt to disturb the holy boundary between God and the creature, than just the opinion of the imperishable nature of love which binds both together. Instead of the self-hood of the personal creature being destroyed in the perfection of its love to God, it is much rather thereby elevated to its

full truth, and revealed in its eternal significance, as the subject and object of a love between God and the creature. Then does man first of all come into the true possession of himself, when he gives himself to God; whoever loses his life, shall find it. What true love to God desires is, not at all abstract identity, not a resolution into the Divine Being, but perfect and undisturbed fellowship with God, just as is promised in the Scripture, as its highest end—not that it shall *become* God, but shall see God face to face." The result of any hypothesis which confounds them, it may be added, is the simple destruction of one, or of both. In this aspect, therefore, Pantheism is most fatal in its results; it contradicts every principle of our religious nature, and, in leaving us without God, leaves us without hope in the world. It lays an interdict upon all the piety of the heart, and cheats us with the delusive sentiments of a vain fancy. It gives us poetry for God.

V. The personality of God has, also, a decisive influence upon the question in relation to the credibility of revelation, in itself, and in its miraculous credentials, which is now so keenly agitated among Neologists and the orthodox. The rigid continuity of nature is assumed, because nature is only a blind manifestation of properties and attributes which belong to a necessary substance. But the very moment you postulate intelligence and will, and ascribe the constitution of the universe to a free cause, its order is altogether contingent, and whether it shall ever be disturbed or not, depends entirely upon the plans and purposes of that wisdom which presides over all. Temporary and occasional changes may contribute to the ultimate end to be achieved. Occasions may arise, from the operations of subordinate intelligences, which will render extraordinary interpositions the most effective instruments of good. Miracles certainly become possible, since He who made nature can control it; and they become credible, if circumstances should ever be such as to render them important.

As to revelation, it is antecedently credible, upon the supposition that God is a person, that He should hold intercourse with His intelligent creatures. Persons naturally seek union; society is the sphere in which this mysterious reality becomes fully and completely developed. All finite persons would be miserable if there were none to converse with, and every principle of morality, truth, justice, and benevolence, supposes the existence of a social economy. So intimate is the connection between society and personality, that, in our humble judgment, the infinite God could neither be holy nor blessed unless there was a foundation for society in the very essence of Deity. A God that was only a single person, would want that union without which the person would be imperfect. Solitude may be enjoyed for a while, but it is imprisonment and death if made permanent. Hence, there is a deep philosophy in the doctrine of the Trinity. The Triune God is an all-sufficient God—all-sufficient to Himself, and all-sufficient to His creatures. Before time began, or the stars were born, the Father rejoiced in the Son, and the Son rejoiced in the Father. There was the deepest union, and the most ineffable communion, and it was only to reflect their blessedness and glory that other persons, and other societies, were formed, whose laws and principles must be traced to the very bosom of the Deity.

God being a person, therefore, it is antecedently likely that He would condescend to hold communion with His creatures; and hence all nations, whether barbarous or civilized, have assumed it as an indisputable truth, that the Deity converses with man. Go where you will, there are altars, oracles, and priests. This general consent in the credibility of revelation, is the testimony of the race to an original feeling of the soul; a premonition, on the part of God, of what may be expected at His hands. The voice of nature is never a lie; and hence, given a personal God, we may confidently conclude that He will not be without

messages to those who are capable of intercourse with Him. He will delight in condescending to talk with His subjects. The instinct of personality for union will prompt it, benevolence will prompt it, goodness will prompt it, and wisdom will direct and regulate all. With humility and reverence be it spoken, but there may be a something in the bosom of the infinite God, arising from His personal relations to us, analogous to those feelings of tenderness and solicitude which a parent cherishes, and which impels him to pour forth on his children our words of parting counsel.



ARTICLE VI.

THE SCOTCH-IRISH, AND THEIR FIRST SETTLEMENTS ON THE TYGER RIVER AND OTHER NEIGHBORING PRECINCTS IN SOUTH CAROLINA.*

There is nothing more common to thoughtful and civilized man, than the disposition to inquire into the past, and to trace the race from which we sprang to its earliest beginnings. But whoever attempts it, whether he be plebeian or king, will find his ancestry lost in some barbarian tribe, springing from others as savage as itself, which fill that pre-historic period between Japheth, the son of Noah, and modern times. Even the chosen seed, whose line can be traced the farthest back, ends in a race of idolaters. And, proud as we justly are of our immediate ancestors,

* This article was delivered at Nazareth Church, Spartanburg District, S. C., on the 14th of September last, as a Centennial Discourse, in commemoration of the early settlement of the Scotch-Irish on the Tyger River. It was not intended as a complete history of the Churches of the Up-Country, being confined to one portion of it, and not including events subsequent to the Revolution.