

THE
PRINCETON REVIEW.

APRIL, 1858.

No. II.

ARTICLE I.—*Weissagung und Erfüllung im Alten und im Neuen Testamente.* Ein theologischer versuch von Dr. J. CHR. K. HOFMANN, Prof. Theol. in Erlangen. 8vo. pp. 362 and 386.

THIS work, which was published rather more than thirteen years ago, has been several times referred to in our columns. But its influence upon the opinions of an important class of continental scholars has been such, that we shall render, we doubt not, an acceptable service to our readers by presenting them with a summary of its contents. It should be distinctly stated in advance, that with whatever faults these volumes may be chargeable, they are free from all complicity with the principles or results of a sceptical criticism, which is upon proper occasions scored in a very wholesome way. Hofmann's aspirations after novelty have taken quite a different turn from this. The literal truth of the sacred narrative is everywhere adhered to, as opposed to all mythical conceits and legendary exaggerations. The integrity and genuineness of all the inspired writings, and in all their parts, are strenuously asserted, and the date to which unvarying tradition assigns them is unhesitatingly received. When even such men as Kurtz and Delitzsch have yielded to the torrent, it is deserving of commendatory mention that Hofmann should stand firm. While

which the will obeys in all its free acts. We greatly rejoice in the amount of truth which the volume so clearly sets forth. That the author should have tried to reconcile this with some phrases and ideas which are the outgrowth of another system long dominant in the sphere of his life and culture, and for which its abettors claim the dignity and authority of first truths, is not surprising.

ART. VI.—*The Providential Government of God.*

A LARGE proportion of the heresies by which the Church has been corrupted, in respect to the nature of man, and the remedy which his ruin demands, have originated from error on the subject of second causes;—either in the denial of causation to the creatures, or the recognition of such a force in the nature of moral agents—such a power of will and action—as is independent of God, and uncontrollable by his power and sovereignty. In respect to second causes, four several theories have obtained more or less currency. Some deny them any efficiency whatever, and make the laws of nature to be nothing but the uniform modes of divine operation; so that God is not only the first, but the only cause. The opposite extreme is held by others, who look upon the universe as a machine, from the natural operation of which all things take place, without the interposition of the Creator; who continues for ever an inactive spectator of the fated process. Another opinion is, that the powers of nature are ordinarily left to their own operation; but that on special occasions the Creator interposes, as in miracles. The fourth, and as we believe, the scriptural doctrine, is, that whilst the creatures are endowed with a real efficiency and true causation, they are at the same time under the constant and universal control of God;—that he, “the Creator of all things, doth uphold, direct, dispose, and govern all creatures, actions and things, from the greatest even to the least, by his most wise and holy providence, according

to his infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of his own will, to the praise of the glory of his wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy.”

Substances and their phenomena constitute the whole sum of things that exist. A substance is an existence, which is invested with certain properties or powers. In other words, it is an efficient cause, of which the phenomena which attach to it are the effects. The word substance, designates the being or existence of which those powers are predicated; and cause, the powers converted into forces—the substance in action. The possession of powers is essential to the very existence of a substance; and they are thus essential, not as sustaining an outside relation to it, but they reside in the very substance itself, as elements of it, without which its existence is not conceivable. The powers thus residing in substances, are derived originally from God, sustained each instant by his power, and controlled by his sovereign will; yet have they a real existence, which is distinct from the omnipotence of God; and an activity which is their own, and not the agency of the Creator.

These powers give to each several substance its peculiar character, and constitute it a motive force—a machine, so to speak—adapted to perform given functions, to occupy a specific place, and hold specific relations to the combination of the whole. This remark holds good alike in regard to animate and inanimate nature, the minute as well as the great. An atom, for instance, is endowed with gravitation, as certainly as the earth or the sun. It is also characterized by certain other affinities or attractions, with kindred repulsions; the effect of which is, that it refuses to combine with certain substances, and in certain relations; and at the same time seeks combination in different relations, and with other bodies. Thus the elements constituting a mass of fuel, which at an ordinary temperature adhere with the tenacity of hickory, or the hardness of anthracite, when subjected to the influence of heat, so repel each other as to dissolve the entire mass. Thus are all material substances composed of particles held together by mutual attractions, resulting in every variety of texture, and every degree of solidity, from the rarity of the gases to the density of gold.

An interesting example of the fact which we wish to illustrate, is presented in the process of the assimilation of food. An ox feeds on grass or corn. The mass of food is thrown into the stomach; and so wonderfully has the Creator formed that living machine, that, with its auxiliary organs, rejecting what is unsuitable, it separates the rest, and recombines it in the necessary forms, conveying the requisite elements, and elaborating them into horns to cover the head, or hoofs to protect the feet; to other parts, as required, are borne the elements of bone, and combined in the ivory texture of the teeth, or the porous and yielding structure of the ribs. Nutriment is thus ministered to every part, and elaborated into flesh and sinew, horn and hair or scales, constituting, in some animals, a covering firm as steel; in others, soft as silk. It thus appears that the animal organization exerts a force to lay hold of the food, when deposited in the stomach, and apply the requisite elements to the nutrition of the body; and that the elementary atoms have natures susceptible to the influences thus exerted, and endowed with attractions to hold them in proper combination in the animal frame.

Illustrations to the same effect might be multiplied without limit. What has been presented is sufficient to justify the statement already made, that each material substance is a motive power, endowed with a capacity of putting forth and propagating influences and forces upon others; and in like manner susceptible to influences propagated from them. The only knowledge we can have of any substance is in the form of a list of the attributes of efficiency possessed by it. Of its essence we can know nothing, except that it is endowed with these. Let the reader test this suggestion upon any substance—this work, for example. It has length, breadth, and thickness; that is, it exerts resistance to pressure, in three directions; it throws off the coloured rays of light in a manner which makes a specific impression on the organs of vision, which we express by saying that it is visible, and of a given colour; it mutually attracts and is drawn toward the earth, which we indicate by ascribing to it weight. Thus, we would know absolutely nothing of the existence of any substance, but for the influences it exerts, the effects it produces; and of the substances which

are thus discovered to us, our acquaintance is strictly limited to a knowledge of those attributes of efficiency which constitute them causes—sources of propagated effects. When, therefore, it is said that God made a given substance, we must not suppose that the creature thus announced, may or can be viewed irrespective of these its active principles. On the contrary, even the idea of such a creation can be conceived in no other sense, than as the production of an essence clothed with such and such principles of efficient relation to others. These principles, or powers of nature, may by position and combination assume an exceedingly complex character. Yet are they still to be reduced to the principle above stated. Thus, when it is said that God at the creation clothed the earth with grass and trees, we are not to conceive of the trees, for example, as mere branching and leafy pillars; but as substances containing in themselves, in determinate energy, a principle of growth; a capacity of shedding and renewing their foliage at stated times; and, among still many other attributes, a power of producing a seed, each after its kind; which in given circumstances shall germinate and develope to maturity other trees after the kind of the parent; and so on continually.

The following remarks of McCosh on the nature of the relation of cause and effect, are precisely to the present purpose.

“ ‘Every effect has a cause,’ is the aphorism. But what do we mean by an effect? If we analyze it, it will always be found to imply a change, or something new. Dr. Brown admits that an unformed mass could not of itself have suggested the idea of a cause; and that there must be something uncaused. But let this mass be seen springing into being, or let it be seen assuming a new form, and the idea of a cause is at once suggested. We must limit the general maxim accordingly. When we say that every effect has a cause, we do not mean that every existing thing has an antecedent, invariable or necessary. There is a change implied, in the very conception of effect; it is something effected; something new; something which did not exist before, or, put in a new state. Whenever such a phenomenon is brought under cognizance, the mind rises intuitively to the belief in a cause.

“ Having endeavoured to limit and define what is meant by

an effect, let us now attempt to determine what is meant by a cause. Looking as before at existing things, we find substances with their several properties. Dr. Brown has endeavoured to show that substance is nothing but 'the co-existence of certain qualities.' Into this curious speculation we do not feel ourselves called to enter. We assume the existence of substances, material and spiritual, possessing their several properties, or if any prefer the statement, composed of their several properties, cohering together. Now a cause is always to be found in some existing thing, or in a substance, spiritual or material, simple or compound. In producing its effects that substance produces a new substance, or a change upon some existing substance; and we are led to the conclusion, that existing things, in producing new existences, or changes on old existences, act according to certain definite rules, which it is the business of experience to discover. The same existing thing in the same state, is always followed by the same change in that existing thing, or in some other existing thing. The same existing substance in the same state, is thus always followed by the same change; and *vice versa*, the change always presupposes the same preëxisting substance. When we discover what are the precise changes or productions resulting from a given substance, we call this a property of the substance; and we know that this substance, in the given state, will ever produce this change, or exercise this quality. It is the office of observation and experience to discover the properties of objects.

"We are now in circumstances to define more accurately the ideas contained in the words cause and effect. There is the idea of universal sequence; but there is something more definite. Dr. Brown challenges those who affirm that there is something more than invariable antecedence and consequence, to say what it is. We answer the call, and affirm that in a cause there is *a substance acting according to a definite rule*. Again, in every effect there is a change, or a new object."

"Dr. Brown has shown, beyond the possibility of a refutation, that in the production of changes there is truly nothing but the substances that change and are changed. Mix them as we please, 'the substances that exist in a train of phenomena are

still, and must always be, the whole constituents of the train.' But he has not shown as fully as he might, how much is implied in these substances. The German metaphysicians are right, in affirming that power is implied in our very idea of substance; and Dr. Brown, in one passage admits, though casually, the same thing, when he says, 'all this regularity of succession is assumed in our very notion of substance as existing.' These philosophers might have further affirmed that there is power in the very nature of a substance, as well as in our idea of it. This power, these properties of substances, are permanently in them, and ready to be exercised at all times. With the exception of those who deny the existence of an external world, all admit that properties are of an abiding nature, and constantly resident in the substance. We thus arrive at a power in nature, constant and permanent, and ever ready to be exercised. We cannot, perhaps, speak of a cause as existing, when not exercised; but we can most assuredly speak of a power abiding, whether exercised or not—that power abiding in every substance that comes under our notice, and in the very nature of the substance itself, as it is implied in the very idea of substance."*

The great mind of Augustine saw the intimate relation of this subject to the doctrines of religion, and speaks thus justly upon it:—"The whole of this ordinary course of nature has certain natural laws of its own, according to which even the spirit of life, which is a created substance, has its specific appetites, but bounded in a certain way, which even the corrupted will cannot pass. And the elements of this material world have a definite power and quality—what each one can or cannot do, and what can or cannot be done respecting each. From these, as the primordial sources, all things which are generated take each in its turn their origin and growth, and the limits and modifications of their respective kinds. Hence it happens that pulse is not produced from wheat, nor wheat from pulse; man from beast, nor beast from man. But besides this natural movement, and course of things, the power of the Creator hath in itself a capacity to do concerning all these otherwise than

* McCosh on the Divine Government, p. 97.

their own (*quasi seminales rationes*) natural powers can do. Yet neither can that which he has implanted in them relative to these powers, be exercised independently of him, nor yet does he assert his omnipotence by the exercise of an intrusive arbitrary force, but by the power of wisdom; and concerning each particular thing, in his own time, he does that which he had before created in it a capacity to have done. It is therefore a different mode of things by which this plant germinates so, and that in a different way; this time of life is prolific, and that is not; a man can speak and an animal cannot. The (*rationes*) efficient causes of these and the like modes of operation are not only in God, but are also by him implanted and concentered in the things he has made. But that wood cut from off the earth, dry, polished, without any root, without earth or water, should suddenly flourish and bear fruit; that a woman, barren in youth, should have a child in old age; that an ass should speak; and whatever there is of this kind, he gave it indeed to the natures he created, that these things might take place with them. So that he does not with them, what in creating them he had made impossible to be done with them; since he is not more powerful than himself. But he constituted things in a distinctive manner; so that they should not have these phenomena in the natural course of things, but in that way for which they were thus so created, that their nature should be fully subject to a more powerful will. God, therefore, has in himself the hidden causes of certain acts, which causes he has not implanted in the things he has made; and these causes he puts in operation, not in that work of providence by which he creates natures as they are, but in that by which he manages after his pleasure the things which according to his pleasure he made. And here is the grace by which sinners are saved. For as it respects nature, depraved by its own corrupted will, it has in itself no return, except by God's grace, whereby it is aided and restored. Nor need men despair by reason of that saying, Prov. ii. 19, 'None who walk in it shall return.' For it was spoken of the burden of their iniquity, in order that whoever returns should attribute his return, not to himself, but to the grace of God; 'not of works, lest any should boast.' Therefore the apostle speaks of the

mystery of this grace as hidden—not in this world, in which are hidden the causal reasons of all things which arise naturally, as Levi was hid in the loins of Abraham—but in God, who created all things. Eph. iii. 9.”*

This eminently clear and discriminating statement accords with the common sense and with the Scriptures. Men intuitively recognize power as a permanent and inseparable characteristic of all created substances. They perceive in them severally, forces, which in action constitute them the causes of the varied phenomena of nature. In vain the dreams of theorists, and the oppositions of acute and subtle metaphysics, against this fundamental fact. The consciousness of the philosopher himself revolts from the folly of his conclusions; and his soul instinctively receives and acts upon the truth, which his theory denies. In fact, the rejection of the truth of which we speak, is only consistent with a universal and atheistic scepticism. For its evidence is precisely the same upon which we recognize the existence of a great First Cause, an eternal God—the evidence of intuition—the last and highest form of evidence to which appeal can be made—that of the Creator’s attestation, written with his own finger on the human heart.

It would seem that the Scriptures so unequivocally attribute efficient causation to the creatures, that no one who has a reverence for the sacred volume could for a moment doubt it. Thus—to confine ourselves to the narrative of the creation—what can be more explicit on this point, than the language of Genesis i. 11, 12? “And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit-tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after its kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed is in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good.” In what plainer terms could it be stated, that God bestowed upon the earth a power of fertility, which was an efficient cause of the vegetation that followed? And so of the power of fructification, attributed to the grass, herbs, and trees, after their kind. If it should be said, that the language is merely expressive of

* Augustine De Genesi ad Literam. IX. 17, 18.

the appearance of things, let it be considered, that such expressions would convey no meaning whatever to us, but for that ineffaceable intuition of cause and effect which God has implanted in our minds; that we are in this place addressed as we are endowed with this intuition; and that the language makes direct appeal to this principle, and under its guidance can be understood in but one way. We need not dwell in detail on the other statements of this chapter, each one of which is subject to similar remark. We will cite a single example: "And God said, Let us make man, in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God, created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion." Is this language reconcilable with the idea that man is a mere puppet, assuming postures, and going through a set of fated actions at the mere will of his Creator, operating on him from behind the screen? Was there no real power conveyed, when he was told to subdue the earth, and have dominion? Is not a generative causation attributed to him, when the creative Word says, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth"? In this language, addressed to the first pair, in the instant of their creation, before their introduction to the garden, was indicated and confirmed a fruitful energy of nature—a propagative power—by virtue of which, flowing from them through the generations of the race, every human being receives existence. God rested the seventh day from all his works. "The works were finished from the foundation of the world."—Heb. iv. 3. How is it consistent with this, to suppose the existence of each plant, animal, and man, now in turn to call into requisition the same creative power which originated the first?

But whilst we assert the investiture of the creatures with a true and real causation—an efficiency which is proper to them, apart from God's immediate agency, and which has a distinct operation of its own—on the other hand, the creation is con-

structed with such wisdom and forecaste, and so upheld and controlled by the immediate power and providential government of God, that nothing can fall out but in precise accordance with his will.

That the phenomena of nature are features in the plan of God—elements in the harmonious scheme of his government—is unquestionable. He at the first certainly knew the whole energy of the various forces which he set in his works, and anticipated and designed all the results; and this, not only as those forces are viewed simply, and apart from each other, but in their complex and multifarious combinations, which all were ordained by him. If the feeble powers of man can determine the time, place, and extent of every eclipse of sun, moon, or planet, for thousands of years to come, how much more did the Creator know the whole future of the powers of nature; which, having created, he must fully comprehend. We hence conclude that the results which flow with unfailing certainty from the causes to which God thus intelligently gave origin, were as truly comprehended in the original plan, as were the several forces which work out those ultimate results.

A striking illustration to our purpose occurs in the solar system. It had been observed by astronomers that the general symmetry of that system was marred by an extraordinary vacancy intervening between Mars and Jupiter, which apparently should have been filled by an additional planet. On the first day of the present century a planet was discovered, revolving in that space, but too small to satisfy the law of the case. That discovery was soon followed by others; until no less than fifty asteroids have been found to revolve in the vacancy;* and—what is true of no other bodies in the solar system, except the comets—all these, though taking different courses in their revolutions round the sun, still cross a common track. The result is little short of demonstration, that they once constituted a single planet, revolving in the path, which they all twice cross in their annual course; and that by some tremendous catastrophe, it was rent to pieces, and the fragments hurled abroad. Facts familiar to science render it probable

* Since this article was written, the discovery of a fifty-first is announced.

that events as extraordinary have occurred in the heavens even under the astronomer's eye. Luminaries which once shone with a steady brightness, have been seen gradually, for years, to acquire an increasing glare, until they rivalled the brightest stars; then by degrees to decline with changing colour, and go out in utter darkness! Thus, we are assured, must this world at length be burned up. Upon the supposition that the asteroids are the scattered fragments of a planet, rent asunder by some convulsion, it must be admitted that the Creator knew as well what effect would result, when he originated the forces engaged, as he does now; and that in creating and setting the forces in motion, he designed from the first, this, no less than the other effects which have resulted. A machinist is not always to be held as having designed all the effects which follow the construction of his engine. Either he may be ignorant of the forces which are employed, or others may be introduced which he did not design. But if he knew precisely the proportion and relation of all the forces concerned, and designed the machine to be used precisely as it was, it is apparent that any result which follows must have been included in the design. So of God;—generating himself all the forces in the universe, and therefore knowing perfectly all their relations—the conclusion is inevitable, that in laying the train, he intended the explosion which occurred. Thus, then, all natural events, as they are the effects of causes wisely originated by God, are elements in the operation of his hand—features of his perfect plan.

But the Creator has not limited himself, in the administration of his government, to the original disposition of causes, in harmonious adaptation to his purposes. On the contrary, this entire system of nature, in all the variety of its parts, in all their forces and functions, and the adaptations which everywhere abound, was constructed for the express purpose of constituting the creatures fitting instruments, through whom and upon whom the Creator himself might work; instead of being in and of themselves the adequate causes of the contemplated results. In one department of the divine government, this is so manifest, that no one who accepts the Scriptures as the word of God can fail instantly to admit it. The intercourse of God

with man has always been conducted by a continual series of immediate divine interpositions. The whole plan of salvation—the incarnation and work of the Son of God, and the mission and operations of the Holy Spirit, both in his ordinary influences, and in his renewing and sanctifying agency—all these are examples of such interpositions, entirely distinct from the original adaptations of nature. The miracles to which the Bible bears witness, constitute formal and emphatic pledges, that God has not surrendered the universe to the government of mere natural laws; although these are all established by him, in perfect fitness for their offices; but that he himself is ever present, ever active, swaying a providential sceptre over his creatures.

On this subject the language of McCosh is certainly unguarded, and if we are not mistaken as to what he means to teach, we think his doctrine clearly erroneous. Through several sections of his work on "The Divine Government," he discusses the connection of God with his works, and the manner in which he accomplishes the particular purposes of his will. In these discussions there is much said in respect to the universal and particular providence of God, to which we most cordially assent; and in some places he seems to assert all that we are disposed to require. Thus, at the close of the discussion on The Connection of God with his works, he says: "We are satisfied if the old Epicurean view of Deity, inactive and unconcerned, be discarded, and it be acknowledged that God is ever active, and ever benevolent in his activity; ever benevolent, and active in his benevolence; and in all places, and at all times, the guardian and governor of all his creatures, and the judge of all their actions."* He alludes, too, with a just indignation to the philosophy of Pope. And yet, when we come to inquire into the precise theory which he himself inculcates, we cannot see wherein it is materially different from that which he reprobates.

"Think we, like some weak prince, the eternal Cause,
 Prone for his favourites to reverse his laws;
 Shall burning Etna, if a sage requires,
 Forget to thunder, and recall her fires;

* McCosh, p. 158.

On air or sea new motions be imprest,
Oh blameless Bethel, to relieve thy breast;
When the loose mountain trembles from on high,
Shall gravitation cease if you go by;”*

“We expect not the Eternal to change his laws,” says McCosh; “but it is because they have been so skilfully arranged, that they do not need to be changed; and arranged, too, in order to accomplish all and each of his purposes. . . . Should these individuals not be rushing recklessly against the known laws of Heaven, or should it be the will of God to preserve them, provision will be found to be made for their escape; and that, not through the powers of nature disobeying their own laws, but through other powers in nature opportunely presenting themselves, to stop, to turn aside, or otherwise to modify their operation. The volcano may burst, the tempest may rage, and the cliff may fall in an instant before or after the time when they might have been followed by such fatal consequences; some passing impulse of feeling may have hurried the individual away; or some other power of nature may have hastened to shelter and defend him; and all by a special arrangement intended by God from the very beginning. It is by means of these prearranged adjustments that God can make general laws accomplish individual ends.”†

Again: “By means of this preëstablished harmony, God can accomplish not only his general, but his individual purposes, and at the time and in the way intended by him. As entertaining this view of the perfection of the original constitution of all things, we see no advantage in calling in special interpositions of God acting without physical causes—always excepting the miracles employed to attest divine revelation. But speaking of the ordinary providence of God, we believe that the fitting of the various parts of the machinery is so nice, that there is no need of any interference with it. We believe in an original disposition of all things; we believe that in this disposition there is provided an interposition of one thing in reference to another, so as to produce the individual effect which God contemplates; but we are not required by philosophy or

* Pope's *Essay on Man*, v. 121–128.

† McCosh, p. 184.

religion to acknowledge that there is subsequent interposition by God with the original dispositions and interpositions which he hath instituted. 'This is, in fact, the great miracle of Providence, that no miracles are needed to accomplish his purposes.' "—*Leibnitz*.*

In reference to the answer to prayer, he brings forward and rejects the supposition of Chalmers, that God may interpose among the physical agents, beyond the limit to which human sagacity can trace the operation of law. His own solution he thus states: "How is it that God sends us the bounties of his providence?—how is it that he supplies the many physical wants of his creatures?—how is it that he encourages industry?—how is it that he arrests the plots of wickedness?—how is it that he punishes in this life, notorious offenders against his law? The answer is, By the skilful prearrangements of his providence, whereby the needful events fall out at the very time and in the very way required. When the question is asked—How does God answer prayer? we give the very same reply:—It is by the preordained appointment of God, when he settled the constitution of the world, and set all its parts in order."†

The doctrine of "preëstablished harmony" was the invention of Leibnitz. It originated from the denial of the possibility of mind and matter mutually influencing each other. Hence he supposed the soul to be incapable of acquiring any information through the bodily senses; or that the body is at all influenced or controlled by the powers of the soul. But the soul and body are mutually adapted to each other, in such a way, that while the body, under the operation of merely physical causes, enacts its part in the drama of life, the soul evolves from within a series of states and a continuous consciousness which precisely correspond with the cotemporaneous states and condition of the body,—a panorama being, as it were, unfolded within, to the recognition of the intellect, *pari passu* with the development of the corresponding phenomena in the body and external nature. In this respect man is a microcosm—the harmony thus instituted between body and soul

* McCosh, p. 190.

† *Ibid.*, p. 233.

being typical of what is universal throughout the creation. Thus men “perceive what passes without them, by what passes within them, answering to the things without; in virtue of the harmony which God has preëstablished, by the most beautiful and the most admirable of all his productions; whereby every simple substance is by its nature, if one may so say, a concentration and a living mirror of the universe, according to its point of view.”* This theory was, in the then condition of science and philosophy, a monument of the learning and ability of its illustrious author, who carefully guards against the error into which McCosh has fallen. It being objected to his doctrine, that it would bring the whole economy of grace, the mysteries of revelation, the incarnation and work of the Son of God, the influences of the Holy Spirit, and the special interventions of the Father, within the province of natural laws, and the instrumentality of second causes, Leibnitz replies, that “God, by supernatural influences, supplies natural defects; and so succours the soul by his grace, that it accomplishes what by natural powers it could not do. Since, then, God from the beginning purposed to bestow these special favours upon his creatures, he made things so that in the natural world all results should so present themselves as to correspond with these effects in the kingdom of grace. And wherever the forces with which the creatures are invested are not sufficient to this, he provides by miracle that which may serve to keep up the parallel; the operations which belong to the kingdom of grace being included in the nexus of things, not excluded from it.”† In another place he remarks, that “when God works miracles, he does not do it in order to supply the wants of nature, but those of grace.”‡ These positions, however they fall short of the whole truth on the subject, are much less exceptionable than those of McCosh. The one provides a margin of indefinite extent for the interposition of the hand of

* Leibnitz, in his Letters to Clarke, p. 241.

† Leibnitii Tentamina Theodicææ, Part I. § 64, note. Of miracles he distinguishes two classes, viz. such wonders as are wrought by the ministration of angels; and miracles proper, to which nothing short of omnipotence is adequate. Correspondence with Clarke, p. 113.

‡ Correspondence with Clarke, p. 3.

God. The other limits it to the single case of attesting revelation.

We confess this view is to us very meagre and unsatisfactory. When carefully examined it does not seem to differ essentially from the philosophy of deism, unless it be in recognizing a more complex disposition of the powers of nature at the first, and a more special regard for each particular result of that complex organization. What we regard as the radical error of this theory is in respect to the specific office to which creation was constructed. It is assumed that such is that office that the admission of the hand of God, in the exercise of an immediate agency, would imply a discovery of imperfection in the structure of nature. "The fitting of the various parts of the machinery is so nice, that there is no need of any interference with it." A class of miracles is indeed excepted, but all else is subjected to the exclusive disposition of second causes. But if the nature of the system be such, that the interposition of God's immediate agency would imply a defect in it, the assumption is as fatal to the admission of any sort of miracle, as of any other interposition whatever.

In fact, if we are to understand the phrase "divine revelation" in any such restricted sense as the argument of our author requires, the suggestion that the sole or chief office of miraculous interpositions is to attest particular communications from God, implies an exceedingly defective conception of their true significance. Whilst it is a fact that miracles have served to attest divine revelations, it is equally true and of as great significance, that to the greater part of the human family the order is reversed, and it is the Scriptures which attest the miracles. Many indeed of the most sublime and signal miracles which the world has ever witnessed, were wrought ages before the oldest book of Scripture was written; and whatever purpose they may have served in attesting communications from God to the contemporary populations of the earth, they could not, in the nature of the case, fulfil such an office, to the subsequent generations; to whom they have been made known, through the revelation of the Holy Spirit. Such—to omit all that respects the immediate family of Adam—was the translation of Enoch—the deluge—the confusion of tongues—the

destruction of the cities of the plain—and the various miraculous events in the lives of the patriarchs. So far from filling the subordinate office of mere attestation to particular revelations, miracles constitute, in and of themselves, a revelation the most interesting and important, and which is fundamental to every other. They testify unequivocally to the very fact which our author denies—that the omnipotent God exercises a direct and personal providence over all his works; in which he employs second causes, when he sees good; but is always and altogether unrestricted by them;—and whether acting in them or aside from them, puts forth his own power in an influence which is intimate, immediate and all-pervasive. Such was the principle to which the youth David attributes his victory over Goliath. 1 Sam. xvii. 46. To it Joshua refers the wonders wrought for Israel in Egypt and the wilderness—“that all the people of the earth might know the hand of the Lord, that it is mighty.” Josh. iv. 24. Such was the plea of Hezekiah, in answer to which the angel of the Lord smote in the camp of the Assyrians, an hundred fourscore and five thousand—“O Lord our God, I beseech thee, save us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the Lord God, even thou only.” 2 Kings xix. 19. And for this purpose was the proud king of Babylon driven forth among the beasts;—“until thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.” Dan. iv. 32.

The original system and structure of nature was unquestionably perfect. But to what office? Certainly not to work out its own results, to the exclusion of the agency of its Author. Creation is not a great clock, wound up at the first, and then left to tell off its fated periods, minute and great; but a vast and complicated instrument, perfect in all its parts, symmetrical and harmonious in the multiform play of its various forces; each of which has an energy of its own; but all are inspected by the watchful eye, and ruled and guided by the immediate hand of the omnipresent Creator. By his agency, governing and controlling all those powers, and modifying the motions by his omnipotent will, in a way of perfect harmony with the structure of the several parts, and order of the whole—all is made

to conform, in a system of manifold wisdom and goodness, to the accomplishment of his purposes of grace and glory. "Of him, and through him, and to him are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen." Rom. xi. 36.

Viewed in any other light, miracles are altogether anomalous; conveying the unworthy imputation that the Creator has been reduced by unforeseen contingencies, to the alternative of failure in his designs, or of turning aside the actual tendency of events by violence, and forcing them into such channels as will suit his plans. Hence the infidel's false and insidious definition of a miracle—"a violation of the laws of nature." On the contrary, when we view the whole scheme of creation and providence, as framed with the one object of providing instruments, in the use of which the Creator may actively reveal the glory of his various attributes, all such unworthy conceptions vanish. The laws of nature show themselves fully adapted to accomplish the part for which they were designed—flowing on in undisturbed current to the final consummation; whilst, gliding harmoniously into their channel, and mingling in the common tide, special providences and miracles occur, to give a voice to all, and testify in living tones to the hearts of men, that He whom sun, moon, and stars proclaim, is not the Fate of Epicurus, rolling on in undeviating course, crushing all beneath its iron wheel—no blind abstraction enthroned in heartless severance from human cares and sympathies; but a living, active, personal providence, the lord and life of all; and though unapprehended by sense, still very near to every one of us. Creation, viewed apart, presents a noble form—a structure, the contemplation of which is suited to exalt the soul, filling its expanding capacities with sublime and amazing conceptions. But still, it is, like some piece from the chisel of a Phidias, a study of delight to the artist; but marble, cold and lifeless, mocking the expectant ear with its silence, and tiring the eager eye with its lofty but unchanging look. But as we gaze in trembling awe—as with beating hearts we behold the tremendous train rolling on for ever and for ever, in headlong, resistless, hopeless career—as we begin to hear the ensnaring whispers of atheistic unbelief, and ask ourselves whether creation itself be not a living thing, a very God, we are recalled from such false and fatal specula-

tions. There is a sudden pause, without confusion or jar! The sun, which, from the birthday of man, had continually swept across the heavens, in his seemingly fated and unending course, rests from his career on Gibeon; and the moon, in the valley of Ajalon. We behold again, whilst insatiate death sees his bars of steel burst asunder, and his victims set free. Foul diseases fly the touch of sharers of flesh; and even the insensate elements listen, and obey their voice! As we witness these things, and observe their occasion, nature to our ears acquires speech; the lifeless marble becomes warm with vital heat, and in sublimest and soul-moving accents, her voice proclaims, that the God who made all things, governs all things still, and can even condescend to man;—that his gracious providence is active in our low affairs; that “this God is our God for ever and ever, and will be our guide even unto death.”

So, in the communication to us of the Scriptures; in the incarnation and work of Christ; in the controlling, the renewing and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit—in all these have we illustrations of the habitual and immediate intervention of God with his works, as constituting a clearly marked and most conspicuous feature of his government. These cannot therefore be inconsistent with, but constitute a cardinal element in, the original plan—a feature in its perfection.

Further, we may not forget that there are other created powers in the universe, beside laws and physical causes. The angels—“Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth, to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?” Heb. i. 14. On the other hand—Satan and his angels—“The prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.” Eph. ii. 2. These all are agencies most potent, and produce effects most important, not only moral but physical, as is seen in the afflictions of Job, (Job i. 12, 16, 19,) and the temptation of the Son of God. Mat. iv. 5, 8. And above all these is the Spirit of God, ruling over the powers of men and devils; making their wrath to praise him, and restraining the remainder thereof; working in men’s hearts—the righteous and the wicked—both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

So completely has this method of immediate interposition characterized the whole history of the government of the world,

that so far as man is concerned, there are absolutely no results which first and last flow from the pure and unmixed operation of second causes. In one form or other the agency of God's own hand has entered into and modifies everything. There is no event of which we may not truly say, in this special sense, "this is the finger of God."

Nor may we limit the sovereignty of God to the modes of intervention which have been already named. These attest that he does not stand an idle spectator, but actively interposes his immediate agency in the government of his creation. And the Scriptures abundantly testify that these are but examples and illustrations of the whole policy of his administration;—that he is no more really present in his sovereign power, in those amazing displays of omnipotence and majesty, in the presence of which the earth trembles, and the mountains are shaken, than in that ordinary providence, by which "he worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." Eph. i. 11. In fact, no doctrine is more constantly and emphatically taught in the Scriptures, than that of a particular providence, exercised by the immediate hand of God. "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered." Matt. x. 29, 30. "I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil; I the Lord do all these things." Isa. xlv. 7. "O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising; thou understandest my thought afar off; thou passest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me." Psalm cxxxix. 1-5. "He giveth to all, life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation. For in him we live and move and have our being." Acts xvii. 25-27. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them." Psalm xxxiv. 7. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." Psalm xlvi. 1.

Such are the assurances on which faith relies—the pledges to which prayer appeals. To say that such places only mean to teach that the frame of nature was so constructed at the beginning, as mechanically to work out provision for the case of the afflicted, is to deny the express terms of the assurances often repeated, and attested by the Spirit in the believer's heart. It is to mock his hunger with ashes. Not mere escape does he want. Not mere conscious security does he seek. But he seeks covert in the bosom of a present God—a living, active, loving protector. Such a refuge the Holy Spirit offers in the word. Such a refuge the Comforter within persuades him to expect. The alternative is the atheism of contradicting these testimonies—or the admission that God does exert a constant and immediate agency in all events—a special and sovereign providence over all things.

McCosh has well observed, that the system of God's government is so ordered, that whilst in certain departments the whole arrangement is regular and unvarying, and the results therefore easily anticipated; on the other hand, there are departments in which the causes that operate are so numerous and inscrutable, and their action so complex, that all appears fortuitous; and the precise results are beyond the utmost human penetration to anticipate. This uncertainty is more especially exhibited in those departments which bear the closest relation to man. The design of this feature, McCosh supposes to be, to render man more dependent on the providence of God.* Whilst we acquiesce in this interpretation, we take a much higher view of the providence upon which man is thus dependent, than does our author.

In viewing the subjects of the providential government, all are naturally resolved into two elements—the one comprehending the whole material system, the worlds, and the lower orders of creation, which, in all its extent, constitutes the stage and its furniture, upon which the scenes of divine providence are enacted, rather than the proper subjects of that providence. The general characteristics here, are uniformity and permanence. The other element comprehends the moral universe,

* McCosh, pp. 170, 240.

constituting the subjects of God's government, the objects for whom, in subserviency to the divine glory, the material system was created. The moral system, again, is subdivided into the two classes of men in the flesh, and disembodied spirits, human and angelic. In the general government of the material system, the reign of mere natural law would seem to be undisturbed and universal, except at points where the system is implicated in more or less intimate connection with the intellectual and moral world. The great masses belonging to this system are uniform in their motions, and their phenomena unvarying through successive cycles. In the animal kingdom too, this uniformity is marked; although, placed as they are at the portals of the moral world, endowed with a measure of intelligence, which constitutes them harbingers of the higher system, and related to man in an intimate subordination to his authority, and identity in his relations to God's government, they realize something of the vicissitude which is characteristic of his condition. But the instant we enter the moral world, we find ourselves surrounded by evidences of a dispensation operating upon entirely other principles. The difference in the system of government is as essential and as great, as is that between the nature of the unconscious clod and of the seraphic intelligence. In the one world the bond of allegiance to the Creator's throne is that of physical laws, and through these is the government of that system dispensed. In the other, the bond is that of moral law, addressed to the reason, attested by conscience, and claiming the allegiance of the will. The government in this system is conducted by the agency of Jehovah, in a manner which is continually more and more intimate and immediate, as we ascend the scale of moral being. Whilst men in their native state, apostate from God, are left in a great measure slaves to earth's vicissitudes, and the to them uncertain operation of nature's physical laws, the child of God constantly realizes increasing evidence of the habitual interposition of God in his behalf; and anticipates with joy the time when he will be emancipated altogether from the bondage of physical causes, in the immediate presence of Him, of whom he exultingly cries, "All my springs are in thee!" and experience for ever the dispensa-

tion of infinite love, from the immediate hands of infinite Wisdom and Power.

The field of inquiry at which we have thus glanced, would richly repay an extended survey. We can only at present suggest the conclusions bearing upon our present subject, which seem to flow alike from all the facts that are accessible, and from the whole tenor of the Scriptures. These are,—that the two spheres of divine operation, the physical and the moral, are to be carefully distinguished from each other, in searching out the manner of God's government;—that the principle of administration, in the one, is by physical causes; in the other, by immediate dispensation;—that whilst in the mere material universe the operation of physical causes seems to be universal and exclusive, and in the world of spirits the divine administration is immediate, our world, as the abode of spirits clothed in flesh, and fallen, is the scene of a complicated dispensation, in which the ordinary operation of physical causes, and mediate instrumentality, is modified by continual interpositions of the divine hand—interpositions growing in frequency and demonstration, in proportion as he who is their subject draws nearer, and is qualified for the realm of light in God's immediate presence. We would, therefore, modify the statement above quoted, as to the final cause of the growing complexity and inscrutability of the operation of second causes, which is observable as we approach the immediate sphere of man's existence; and regard this, as designed indeed to induce an entire dependence upon God's providential hand; but as a condition of things necessarily incident to such a mixed dispensation as that under which man is at present governed.

In regard to the manner of the ordinary dispensation of this providential government, in its details, there are several things to be observed, at which we can but glance.

1. God is everywhere and immediately present among his creatures, "upholding all things by the word of his power." Heb. i. 3. Two opposite ideas are here to be avoided; to wit—the attributing of independent existence to the creatures; and the supposition that their necessary dependence militates against the reality of a continuous existence and identity in them. The supposition of a delegated self-existence is a contradiction in

terms; and hence of necessity, the creatures must be dependent each instant, upon the power of the Creator, for the instant's continuance in being. Not only so, but the finite being, the springs of whose continued existence were in itself, would seem to be endowed with power to put off that existence. How gladly would the devils plunge into the gulf of annihilation! But they for ever live, because the omnipotent God, in justice, for ever says to them—Live, to endure the curse! On the other hand, the existence which is thus momentarily enjoyed at the will of Omnipotence, is not the result of a succession of new creative acts. Logically the two ideas—that of a continued existence sustained by God, and that of a perpetual series of new and transient creations, of the same form and character, and sustaining the same relations—are altogether distinct, and cannot by any process be reduced to identity. Morally the latter breaks up all ties of relation between the creatures, and of them toward God; and reduces the universe to an unreal phantasm. Scripturally this conception has no countenance, but is utterly ignored; and, on the contrary, God's upholding power, sustaining the creatures in a really continuous existence, is constantly asserted. This upholding agency has regard both to the material and spiritual creation, every part of which alike has its being in God. The following points have more immediate respect to man.

2. In all men the Holy Spirit exerts a continually restraining energy, so as to keep their corruptions, as well as all their powers, within the bounds which he has appointed, for his own holy purposes. Man having so departed from God, as to be altogether disinclined to reverence or love him, or to obey his laws, all bonds of moral restraint are broken; and the only reason why men, thus lost to holy motives, are not rivals in wickedness to the lost inhabitants of hell, is that God in mercy, by his providence and Spirit, puts a restraint upon their native corruptions; allowing them to flow out so far as may serve to accomplish his holy purposes; but otherwise holding them under his omnipotent restraint. Hence the language of the Psalmist: "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain." Psalm lxxvi. 10. In this fact we have the key to Paul's statement, that "whom he will he

hardeneth." Rom. ix. 18. By relaxing the bonds, and allowing corruption to flow, he permits the heart to grow hard, and the conscience to become seared.

3. Even where there is not an absolute restraint put upon the corruptions, the natural impulses and dispositions of men, they are so limited that they may take no other than that direction which will fulfil the divine purposes. Thus in the case of the hostility of the brethren of Joseph, they were restrained from putting him to death, but left to sell him into Egypt; so bringing to pass the very thing which they were endeavouring to prevent; so that Joseph truly says, "It was not you that sent me hither, but God." Gen. xlv. 8. The rulers of Israel were thus restrained in regard to the murder of the Son of God, so that they who were continually breaking out into factions, and imbruing their hands in blood,—they who but a short time after stoned Stephen, come to Pilate, and urge the execution of Christ by the governor, with the plea that it was not lawful for them to put any man to death. But this came to pass that the Scriptures might be fulfilled, that thus it should be;—his body must be lifted up from the earth as a curse, and his blood must flow as a sacrifice; two circumstances which did not meet in any Jewish mode of execution. The feature of the divine administration here pointed out, solves the difficulty that is sometimes apprehended in such places as that of Peter: "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." Acts ii. 23. God gave not nor stimulated wrong dispositions in the actors in that atrocious scene; nor did he give a bare permission; "but such as had joined with it, a most wise and powerful bounding, and otherwise ordering and governing of them, in a manifold dispensation, to his own holy ends, yet so as the sinfulness thereof proceeded only from the creature, and not from God."

4. A controlling influence of a somewhat different kind is illustrated in the sixth chapter of the book of Esther. Sleep is withheld from the king, and his wakeful thoughts are led to the records of his reign; the reading of which gives occasion to the honouring of Mordecai, and the defeat of all the plans of Haman. Essentially similar in its nature was the influence

exerted on the minds of Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar, inducing their prophetic dreams, which were interpreted by Joseph and Daniel. Thus it is evident that God can and does exert a direct influence over the minds of men, even the ungodly, inducing thoughts suited to the accomplishing of his purposes. "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will." Prov. xxi. 1.

5. On the other hand, in all holy exercises and right actions, the immediate power of the Holy Spirit is active, creating right affections, and leading and impelling his people to do such things as are in accordance with God's holy will; so that whilst on the one hand, the liberty of the agent is not taken away, but he is freed from his previous bondage to corruption and sin, and by the exercise of his natural faculties, "worketh out his own salvation with fear and trembling;" on the other hand, as to the real efficiency and power, "it is God that worketh in him, both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Phil. ii. 12, 13. It is to this, especially, that the apostle James refers, when—declaring that we are not tempted of God, but of our own corruptions—he on the contrary adds, that "Every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights." James i. 17.

6. Besides these modes of operation in the ordinary providence of God, who shall forbid, that in many ways, untraceable by us, but adoringly witnessed by blessed spirits, the immediate power of God should interpose in human affairs? We are persuaded that the whole analogy of his government, and the tone of the entire Scriptures, lead directly to this conclusion. We are confident that we express but the common experience and the common sentiment of his people—those with whom is "the secret of the Lord"—in declaring our conviction, that in multitudes of instances they are indebted to a fatherly care, and an almighty hand, which, concealed from carnal observation, but recognized by faith, dispenses blessings, which the natural action of second causes would never have conveyed.

The government of God, thus variously administered, is universal in its dominion, and constant in its exercise—it has respect to the most minute, as well as the greatest results; and is absolute in its sway. It is not a mere influence, but a

power. On the one hand, omnipotent to arrest the sun in its course; to loose the fountains of waters; or to command the sea back to its appointed place;—on the other, it with equal sovereignty rules the will of men and devils. To assert man's will to be of such a nature as to be necessarily independent of God, is to say, that he, in making it for his own purposes, placed it beyond his own power. To say that it cannot be subject to an effectual control, without destroying its moral agency, is to pretend to have fathomed all its depths, and measured the whole extent and nature of its relations to the creative hand;—it is to assume that there cannot be in the soul any susceptibilities, accessible even to the power of its Maker, outside the sphere of its self-conscious activity—which is most absurd. To deny that God can rule the creature he has made as it is, endowed with attributes bestowed by him, is to limit God—which is atheism.

In short, the universe was framed to reveal the very truth concerning the nature of that God who is everywhere and ever present, the sovereign of all, essentially active, and infinitely wise, kind and good. This it does, not by presenting him, once active in creation, and then for ever quiescent;—once sovereign in decreeing the order of creation, and the events of providence, and then for ever an inactive spectator;—once present with his creatures, in giving them existence and attributes, and then for ever withdrawn within himself;—once, in the beginning, exhausting the stores of his beneficence, and then for ever ceasing to bestow. Such is not the God of the Bible, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Worker whom nature proclaims. The creatures were formed with two objects, to be witnesses of the divine glory, and to be subjects in whom it should have display. As finite, they could not apprehend the glory of God, or perceive his activity, except as displayed upon finite things. Hence, in this aspect of it, the creation; presenting, on the one hand, an expanse vast enough, alike in physical and moral dimensions, to exhaust the loftiest created powers; and on the other, in its details, stooping to the reach of the meanest capacity. Again, in but two ways could our infirmity trace the working, and in it, the glory of God, in the universe thus created—as he works *through* the creatures, that is,

by the mediation of second causes, and as he acts *upon* them, by his own immediate power. The uniformity of the one mode of operation is requisite alike to the happiness of the creatures, and the revelation of the wisdom and unchangeableness of the Creator. The speciality of the other is as necessary and important, both to the creatures, and to the revelation of the living God. By this mode is it made known that it is God, and not nature, that ruleth; and that everywhere and in all things, he is—the ever present, ever active, ever sovereign and gracious God. Said the Saviour, “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.” John v. 17. The attempt to ignore his immediate agency in the orderings of special providences, out of respect to the orderly working of the laws of nature, is as unphilosophical and unscriptural, as is the denial of second causes, and the reference of all things to God, as not only the first, but the only cause. “God in his ordinary providence maketh use of means, yet is free to work without, above, and against them, at his pleasure.” In all it is the same God. In all he works with equal and absolute sovereignty. In all he is most holy and good. In all there is the most perfect harmony, and concurrence to the wise and holy designs. In the interpositions of his own hand he does no violence to the laws and order of nature, which he himself has ordained. In the procession of second causes and ordinary providence, he does not preclude, but anticipate and provide for the immediate exertions of his power. In each are unfolded alike the harmonious elements of the perfect plan, which, formed in the beginning, shall be displayed in the amazing glory of the whole results, at the consummation of all things, to the unspeakable blessedness of his saints, and the infinite honour of their wonderful God.