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ART. I.—*The Bible its own Witness and Interpreter.*

A NEW philosophy, which has been frequently exposed on the pages of this Review, has invaded the Christian Church both in Britain and America, within the last thirty or forty years. Foremost among its ushers is Coleridge, whose views on the fundamental subjects of Inspiration, the Fall, and the Atonement, were so distorted by his philosophy, that by no alchemy of charity can we make them part or parcel of the Christian scheme. His philosophy was confessedly derived from Schelling.

Since Coleridge wrote and talked, this phase of metaphysical thought has been gradually extending itself through the domain of the Church. It is impossible to define the limits of its influence. It has, more than all other forces combined, created the "Broad Church" party of the Establishment of England, numbering about thirty-five hundred of its clergy,* and adorned with the names of such men as Arnold, Hare, Conybeare, Maurice, Jowett, Baden Powell, &c. It has effected an entrance into the Free Scotch Church; and while it has called

* Edinburg Review, Oct. 1853, article on Church Parties.

As Thomas Shannon, Jr.
Pastor, in Edinburg Review

which has been decided, after a full and careful examination, by our whole church, and by such large majorities, may be considered as settled, and that it will not be made a subject of further agitation."

The question, therefore, which theory of the eldership is the Presbyterian system, according to the deliberate and almost unanimous judgment of our church, against the ablest opposition, and during three successive years of agitation, is no longer an open question, nor one of doubtful disputation. The positions here affirmed have to this day never been assailed. If the new theory of the protestors is the Presbyterian system, let the *proof* be given.

In another and closing article we will examine the grounds assumed as the basis of the new theory, and after proving that it has no foundation in Scripture, exhibit its tendency to destroy Presbyterianism, the ministry, the eldership, and the deaconship.

ART. IV.—*Reid's Collected Writings*. Preface, Notes, and Supplementary Dissertations by SIR WILLIAM HAMILTON, Bart., Professor of Logic and Metaphysics in the University of Edinburgh, &c. &c. Third edition. Edinburgh, 1852. (Referred to in the following article by *R.* and the page.)

Discussions on Philosophy, &c. By SIR WILLIAM HAMILTON, Bart., &c. &c. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1853. (Referred to by *Dis.* and the page.)

Lectures on Metaphysics and Logic. By SIR WILLIAM HAMILTON, Bart., &c. &c. Vol. I., Metaphysics. Boston: Gould & Lincoln, 1859. (Referred to by *Lect.* and the page.)

HAMILTON's doctrine of the Conditioned is a modification of Kant's Critique of the Reason. Kant's Critique is a development of the doctrine of Hume. To explain Hume, we wish to say a few words of Locke.

In the epistle to the reader which Locke prefixed to his Essay on the Understanding, he says, "five or six friends

meeting at my chamber, and discoursing on a subject very remote from this, found themselves quickly at a stand, by the difficulties that rose on every side. After we had a while puzzled ourselves, without coming any nearer a resolution of those doubts which perplexed us, it came into my thoughts that we took a wrong course; and that before we set ourselves upon inquiries of that nature, it was necessary to examine our own abilities, and see what objects our understandings were, or were not fitted to deal with." Accordingly he announces that it was a purpose to "take a survey of our own understandings, examine our own powers, and see to what things they were adapted," which gave rise to the *Essay concerning the Understanding*. He concludes that we have two fountains of experience—external sensible objects and ourselves. Besides the power of observing objects (ideas) simply, we also observe them as modes (qualities), and as having certain relations—cause and effect, identity and diversity, time, place, power, proportion, social relations, moral relations, and an infinity of others. Ideas in these relations constituting complex ideas, or the relations themselves as abstractions, having been experienced, may afterwards themselves become objects of thought, or ideas; but no ideas are innate. Relations may be perceived intuitively, demonstratively, or by sensation. The distinction now familiar under the names Subjective and Objective was not much in Locke's mind: his opinions of ideas in this respect are vague and vacillating, but it seems certain that he did not distinctly and fixedly perceive that the action of the mind is in any case such as to presuppose an implicit possession of any truth prior to experience; the pure capacity of perceiving a relation was a sufficient account of the subjective part of the process;—it never involved a prior conception of the relation. The practical result was, as he intended, that his followers looked to experience as the only source of knowledge, and considered the mind not as a closed book, but as blank paper. The following are his opinions on those subjects which are specially treated in the doctrine of the Conditioned. He thinks the ideas of space and eternity are an indefinite repetition of ideas of perceived extension and time: we have "ever growing ideas" of quantity, but not an idea of an infinitely grown quantity. Our idea of infinity

is from the endless "addibility" of number: an infinite quantity can have only a negative idea. "The great and *inextricable difficulties* which perpetually involve all discourses concerning infinity, whether of space, duration, or divisibility, have been the certain marks of a defect in our ideas of infinity, and the disproportion the nature thereof has to the comprehension of our narrow faculties;" and he instances at great length the same puzzles which Hamilton brings forward. God is incomprehensibly infinite. (*Essay* ii., xvi., xvii.) We have no clear idea of substance. Power and cause are known both by sensation and reflection. (ii., xxiii.) The existence of things is to be known only by experience. (iv., iii., 31.)

Hume held similar views in general to these of Locke, but started the opinion that some of the supposed relations of objects are only relations of ideas. Definitely holding that our ideas are states of mind, he says, "there is a kind of pre-established harmony between the course of nature and the succession of our ideas; and though the power and forces by which the former is governed be wholly unknown to us; yet our thoughts and conceptions have still, we find, gone on in the same train with the other works of nature." (*Essays*, 2, 64.) The relation of cause and effect especially engaged his attention, as that on which all reasonings concerning matters of fact are founded, that by which alone we can go beyond the evidence of our memory and senses. He examines in detail the information from the outward senses, and that from the operation of our own minds, and, Hamilton says, has decided the opinion of philosophers that the idea of power or necessary connection is not derived from either of these sources. Whence is it then? Hume says that when we have several times had ideas in succession where there is a change in the object, the one idea draws the other after it by an instinct or "mechanical tendency," so that when we see the first, we feel that the other is coming, and this instinctive subjective connection of the ideas is the original from which we conceive the causal connection between the objects which the ideas represent. All inferences from effect to cause, or cause to effect, must proceed from experience of connection between their ideas. As we never have had experience of the making of worlds, for example, we

cannot infer their cause. The inference must be doubtful in every case, and scepticism is the legitimate philosophy.

Reid, believing that we know external objects as they are, affirms that we have original instinctive beliefs which assure us indubitably of general necessary objective truths, causation being one.

Kant, on the contrary, held by the doctrine that we know only our own states of mind directly; it was therefore consistent for him to hold that relations are also primarily subjective. Started in this track by the study of Hume, he generalized and developed Hume's doctrine of causation into the principle that whatever appears as necessary to us, must be given *a priori* by the mind itself,—and must be a form of mind,—a law of thought and not a law of things. Applying this principle to all our thinking, he found that space and time are forms of sensuous thinking and not external realities; all we know by intuition contains nothing more than phenomena—relations. Substance and cause are categories of the understanding, or forms in which the understanding produces conceptions. The laws of nature are only the laws of our perception, and have no objective validity. The ideas of absolute substance (the free ego), of an absolute totality of phenomena (the universe), of a Supreme Being which is the one all-sufficient cause, cannot be proved to have objective reality; they are to be used solely in systematizing our judgments, and when we apply them directly to experience, or assert their objective existence, series of judgments are produced which terminate in contradictory results.* These contradictions, which Kant calls antinomies of the pure reason, prove that reason is here out of her sphere.

Kant's negations are thus more thoroughgoing than Hume's. But he stands on the ground of critique instead of scepticism. He has examined all the powers of the mind, and having ascertained their limits and their illusions, is now in no danger

* 1. The world has a beginning in time and limits in space. . . . It has not.

2. Every thing is simple or composed of simple parts. . . . Nothing simple exists.

3. A free causality is necessary to account for the phenomena of the world. . . . There is no freedom.

4. There exists an absolutely necessary being. . . . There does not, &c.
These are briefly the four antinomies of Kant.

of error, or doubt. As one who understands the laws of optics, and how the natural illusions of sight result from them, is no longer embarrassed by these illusions, so Kant knowing when and how we must have the illusions,—ideas of God, and freedom, and the world, uses his faculties, notwithstanding, with perfect confidence within their proper domain of the phenomenal, and knows the illusions as illusions. He is in no danger of throwing his inkstand at the Devil.

It is plain that no philosopher could advance from the ground of Kant without offering a new solution of his antinomies. Three have been offered, for it has been generally thought that for reason to positively affirm contradictions on the most vital subjects of human thought, is going beyond the limits of an allowable liberty in illusion, and entirely destroys her character for truth.

The first we mention is Hegel's. His doctrine is that the law of contradiction is not a law of being. Time is the key to this enigma. Contradictories may be true; one now, the other afterwards. Finite existences move on in time, oscillating from one pole to its contradictory, and making progress in their development only by perpetual tacking. Their nature therefore must involve contradictions. And absolute being combines in itself all possibilities of all time.

A second solution, which is the obvious one, is, that reason does not affirm any contradictions, that Kant's show of making it do so, arises from the peculiarities of his system, and is a proof that his system is false.

The third is the solution of Hamilton, who, standing in general on the ground of Kant, admits that the laws of thought necessarily lead to contradictions, and affirms that non-contradiction is a law both of thought and being; but who will not stand upon the ground of critique, yet thinks to clear reason of falsehood by showing that the laws of thought involved (e. g. causation) are consequences of the imbecility of the mind, and not positive affirmations of intelligence; so that the mind is weak but not false; and who claims that he is thus enabled without self-contradiction to advance beyond the limits of positive thought, and affirm that one, and one only of the inconceivable contradictories must be true in fact. Before entering on the discussion of Hamilton's peculiar doctrines, a few remarks

must be made on what seems to be a kind of axiom with him, as with Kant,—that all our knowledge is relative. What he means by relative has been a matter of discussion, because his general statements about our knowledge by perception are naturally taken to mean that we know the primary qualities of matter as they are in themselves, and it has therefore been said that by *relative* he must mean *partial*. In our last number we showed the true relations of his doctrine of perception. Moreover he distinctly says, “I have frequently asserted, that in perception we are conscious of the external object immediately and in itself. . . . To know a thing in itself or immediately, is an expression I use merely in contrast to the knowledge of a thing in a representation or mediately. . . . Our knowledge is only of the relative.” (*R.* 866.) Again he says: “Absolute is used in two senses: 1°. as opposed to the partial; and 2°. as opposed to the relative. Our knowledge is not of the absolute, and therefore only of the partial and relative,” (*Lect.* 99.) He means by relative then something different from *partial*. He means (1) that the only objects of our knowledge are phenomena, and that these are always a relation between two substances, and never expressive of the simple existence or unmixed quality of one substance (*Lect.* 97.) We do not know substance, either matter or mind, at all. He means (2) that every phenomenon known to us is known only under the special conditions of our faculties; it must be of a peculiar kind, so as to come within their scope; and (3) it cannot be known in its native purity without addition, but only under various modifications determined by the faculties themselves, (*Lect.* 104.) The only doubt that can fairly arise is, whether he will admit that we can in any case separate the subjective from the objective element, so as to come at pure objective fact even in regard to relations. Without undertaking to decide whether he had any consistent opinion on this point, we make the following remarks on the general subject.

1°. Our knowledge of external objects in the concrete is always mixed, but easily analyzed. Perception of extension is not a phenomenon expressing the result of interaction between mind and matter; but an intuition which mirrors

purely the state of the object. So Reid says that "there appears no reason for asserting that, in perception, either the object acts upon the mind or the mind upon the object;" "to be perceived, implies neither action nor quality in the object perceived;" "every body knows that to think of an object, and to act upon it are very different things." (*R.* 301.) This draws two notes from Hamilton, who appears to differ, though as is too often the case, his remarks, while making a show of confuting Reid, are really addressed to the precision of his language.

2°. It does not seem to be an accurate statement that we perceive only phenomena and not substance. In using the senses, the object on which thought fastens is the substance. I see a tree. I feel a pen. I see or feel the thing as having certain qualities, and not the qualities as residing in the unknown. Is perception confined to the thinking an unknown external correlative of a sensation, as a quality, leaving out altogether the intuitions which give us extension, motion, force, substance? These intuitions are the true perceptions, and their objects stand in consciousness as the ground-work to be dressed up in phenomena by sensation. Hamilton illustrates at great length the statement, that however many additional senses we might have, we should still learn nothing of matter in itself. That is true enough. We do not want senses for that purpose, but sense, intuition. What is meant by knowing a thing as it is in itself? Do we not know a geometrical circle as it is in itself? We know its innermost nature, and that in such a form that we can deduce all its properties and relations from it. Such a knowledge of matter as that would seem to be knowing it in itself. But such a knowledge is readily conceived. We now have theories of atomic constitution and organization, which explain many of the phenomena; and it is by no means an impossible advance in science, that a theory be found which shall explain with mathematical precision everything that we know about matter, and enable us to predict the future, just as we do now the movements under the law of attraction: and it is easy to conceive that, just as now on the suggestion of sensations, we have intuitive perceptions of extension and force: we might have an intuitive perception of the innermost nature of the

atoms, distinguish the point of origin of force, the polarity, the arrangement; so that like some arithmetical prodigy, who intuitively knows the nature of numbers, and understands their results in the most complicated combinations, we might tell with mathematical precision the precise nature (as intelligent or unintelligent), the organization, action and interaction of all the forces in a given mass of matter. Sensations give us the relation of matter to us, but the intuitive perceptions give us knowledge of matter as it is in itself, permanent, extension-occupying substance; exactly as it would be if we did not perceive it—exactly as it is when we do not perceive it. This knowledge is partial indeed, but pure.

3°. As to our knowledge of mind. It does not appear that the distinction of subject and object in consciousness of self is at all like the phenomenal relations of two masses of matter. On the contrary, consciousness assures us that the same indivisible unit is both subject and object; that we know this unit as it is in itself—a person; that we know our mental states exactly as they are; and that we have power over them; and that they have a positive quality as right and wrong. Consciousness is not a distorting lens, it is clear light; conscience is not a liar, nor a prejudiced witness, it is “the voice of God.” In regard to all these points we have knowledge, partial indeed, but pure.

4°. Size does not prevent knowledge from being pure, or continued existence. The purity of our knowledge of extension, for example, is not affected by the fact that we have not examined all extension, nor by the fact that we did not know it a century ago. What we do know we may know purely, though there is much more to know, and though it may change in an instant. Any inability to follow through and complete a knowledge of the infinite does not render less pure the knowledge which we do attain. The infinite God acts in finite relations; the knowledge of him which we have from these acts is not less pure, because we do not know all.

The fundamental principle of Hamilton’s own doctrine of the conditioned may be stated as follows in his own words. All that is conceivable in thought lies in the conditioned interval between two unconditioned contradictory extremes or poles, viz. the absolute and the infinite; each of which is altogether incon-

ceivable, but of which, according to the law of excluded middle, one must be true, though, according to the law of non-contradiction, both cannot, (*Lect.* 526, 527, 530. *Dis.* 22. 581.) The most important doctrines supposed to be involved in this law, so far as appears, are these. (1) We can know only phenomena, and phenomena of the finite. We can have only a relative knowledge of ourselves, or of any thing else, (*Dis.* 60. 574.) (2) It demonstrates that there is existence which is inconceivable. (*Dis.* 22. 586; *Lect.* 528.) (3) It demonstrates that space and time are forms of mind, "laws of thought and not laws of things." (*Dis.* 572.) (4) Several of the fundamental laws of thought, e. g. that of cause and effect, and that of substance and phenomenon, are not positive affirmations of intelligence, but only results of our inability to think the unconditioned. (*Dis.* 575; *Lect.* 532.) Free-agency is an inconceivable fact; a created free-agent, it seems, impossible. (*Dis.* 586+; *Lect.* 556+.) Creation adds nothing to existence. (*Dis.* 583; *Lect.* 553.) (5) God is nothing; an infinite God, nihil cogitabile; an infinite and absolute God, it seems, nihil purum, impossible. (*Dis.* 21, 22, 567.) A principle enforced by the great name of Hamilton, which is supposed to involve such truths, or errors, may well be marked, as it is in the margin of his lectures—"grand law of thought," and demands a thorough study. Our first effort should be to find out exactly what it means. "Conceivable in thought," "conditioned and unconditioned," "interval between," "contradictory extremes or poles," "absolute" and "infinite," all need close scrutiny. But the only method which we have found practicable in the absence of satisfactory definitions and illustrations, is to examine his applications of the law, and his reasonings upon them. We premise, however, a few words on contradictories. Hamilton introduces the subject to his class thus. "The highest of all logical laws, in other words, the supreme law of thought, is what is called the principle of contradiction, or more correctly the principle of non-contradiction. It is this: a thing cannot be and not be at the same time. Alpha est, Alpha non est, are propositions which cannot both be true at once. A second fundamental law of thought, or rather the principle of contradiction viewed in a certain aspect, is called the principle of Excluded Middle, or, more fully the principle of Excluded Middle between two

Contradictories. A thing either is or it is not,—aut est Alpha aut non est; there is no medium, one must be true, both cannot.” (*Lect.* 526.) Then follows the grand law. But in order that it may be seen how “absolute” and “infinite” are the contradictories in the law, we will state the sense of the term in another way. Two predicates are contradictories when to affirm the one and to deny the other are the same thing; *green* and *not-green* are such. It is the same thing to deny that any thing is *green* and to affirm that it is *not-green*. True contradictory predicates may be predicated of any thing nameable, and in every case one must be true and the other false; they divide the nameable—including all things real, impossible, thinkable, unthinkable, whatever a word can stand for—into two mutually exclusive classes, one of which is marked by a positive quality, the other includes all the rest of the nameable. Virtue is *green* or *not-green*. A round-square is *green* or *not-green*. The first of each of these contradictories is false, the second is true: but the second affirms nothing, except that the subject (virtue: round-square) belongs somewhere else among *nameables* than among green objects. It affirms nothing as to its existence, or qualities.

A second sense of contradictories, or opposites, is two mutually exclusive predicates which together embrace the whole of a genus, and nothing more. If such are predicated of any subject belonging to the genus, one must be true and the other false; but if they are predicated of any thing out of that genus, they will both be false. We may divide visible objects into coloured and black, and say that grass as visible must be coloured or black; but virtue is neither coloured nor black. If infinite and absolute do not include every thing nameable, but are only subdivisions of the unconditioned, then they cannot be predicated as contradictories of any thing that is conditioned.

If *infinite* and *absolute* are true contradictories, to *lie between them* must mean, to be the Excluded Middle between them, that is, to be impossible. The grand law will then enounce that all which is conceivable is impossible, and all which is possible is inconceivable. From this stand point it would be easy to grasp the sense of Hamilton’s maxim, “the knowledge of nothing is the principle or result of all true philosophy.” Hamilton certainly dallied with this thought; he

pronounces motion to involve a contradiction (*Lect.* 530), time to involve a contradiction, (*Dis.* 571), a free act to be inconceivable, yet known. (*Dis.* 587.)

If *infinite* and *absolute* are only contradictory subdivisions of the unconditioned, as Hamilton seems to say, (*Dis.* 21.) to *lie between them* means that all we can know under any relation (space, time, degree) is not enough to assure us whether there exists under that relation an absolute whole or an infinite extent. However far we may carry our knowledge, the object of knowledge still lies indefinite between a whole and infinity, we do not know which it is. That the law in this sense amounts to nothing will appear as we proceed.

We are now ready to examine the first statement; namely, that the grand law demonstrates that there is existence which is inconceivable. The demonstration is as follows. We cannot positively conceive an absolute whole; that is, a whole so great that we cannot conceive it as a part of some greater whole; on the other hand, we cannot positively conceive an infinite whole, for this could only be done by the infinite synthesis in thought of finite wholes, which would require an infinite time for its accomplishment. But an absolute whole and an infinite whole are contradictories, and as such, on the principles of contradiction and Excluded Middle, which are laws of objective existence, one of them must be true, must exist. There must therefore be existence which is inconceivable. (*Dis.* 20—22.) In answer to this,

1°. Infinite and absolute are not true contradictories. It is not the same thing to affirm that 20 is an infinite number, and to deny that 20 is so great that we cannot conceive it as a part of a greater whole. They do not include all the nameable. Indeed, Hamilton describes them as species of which the Unconditioned is the genus. (*Dis.* 21.) If predicated of anything out of the genus they are both false.

2°. Supposing absolute and infinite to be mutually exclusive species including the whole genus Unconditioned, so that we can say of any Unconditioned object that it must be either absolute or infinite, does that prove that any unconditioned object exists? Let *round-square* be a genus, of which *green* and *not-green* are species; does the fact that the specific names are contradictories prove that round-squares exist? Contra-

dictory predicates can be affirmed of nothing just as easily as of something. No skill in logic can deduce the existence of Alpha from "Alpha est aut non est," or the existence of the Unconditioned from "the Unconditioned must be absolute or not." Let Hamiltonians explain by what new process any one can imagine that it can be done.

But 3°. Absolute and infinite in Hamilton's sense do not include all the unconditioned. He says in a note added to the original article, "*Absolutum* means *finished, perfected, completed*; in which sense the Absolute will be what is out of relation, &c., as finished, perfect, complete, total; in this acceptance I exclusively use it." It is thus distinguished from what is "aloof from relation, condition," &c. (*Dis.* 21.) Here the Unconditioned is conditioned to be made up of a progressive quantitative series; it is not complete, but *completed*. We quote further, "We tire ourselves either in adding to or taking from. Some, more reasonably, call the thing unfinished—*infinite*; others, less rationally, call it finished—*absolute*. (*Dis.* 28.) Absolute and infinite are species then only of such unconditioned objects as are made up of parts or progressive series; here is quietly begged by suffixing a *d* to *complete*, the portentous assumption that all our thinking, and it seems all existence thinkable and unthinkable, is of objects made up by a quantitative addition. This is still further illustrated by an appendix to the lectures, headed "Contradictions proving the psychological theory of the Conditioned," which consists of a collection of those puzzles with which teachers of mathematics try to clear up the ideas of beginners upon the infinite series. We quote the following: "An infinite number of quantities must make up either an infinite or a finite whole. I. The former.—But an inch a minute, a degree contain each an infinite number of quantities; therefore, an inch, a minute, a degree are each infinite wholes; which is absurd. II. The latter.—An infinite number of quantities would thus make up a finite quantity; which is equally absurd." Again: "A quantity, say a foot, has an infinity of parts. Any part of this quantity, say an inch, has also an infinity. But one infinity is not larger than another. Therefore, an inch is equal to a foot." (*Lect.* 682, 683).

There are two very different meanings of *infinite*, which

we shall have to refer to often as we proceed; (1) that which is so great that nothing can be added to it or supposed to be added; (2) a quantity which is supposed to be increased beyond any determinate limits. It is by confounding these two meanings, and taking for granted that what is true of an infinite in the second sense must also be true of an infinite in the first sense; that any appearance of contradiction can be drawn from the doctrine of mathematical infinites. That it should seem absurd to any one that an infinite number of infinitely small quantities equal a finite quantity, indicates a sad lack of mathematical training. But what is the drift of bringing forward these puzzles as contradictions? It cannot be to illustrate Hegel's position that contradictions to thought are truths in fact. Is it that we cannot know the infinites of mathematicians, and that any attempt to deal with the infinite series involves us in contradictions? That the calculus is not to be trusted, and Berkeley was right in holding it up to contempt as grasping altogether beyond the reach of man's wit? Such would seem the purpose which would accord best with the other applications of this grand law of the Conditioned. This is plain, that Hamilton will admit no other infinite than one made up of parts, and this shows us how he was led into the supposition that the existence of the inconceivable could be demonstrated; he assumes the existence of the unconditioned, in the known existence of conditioned parts. This will be plainer as we pursue our examination. There can be no pretence then that the law demonstrates the existence of anything not made up of parts. On the contrary, if its claims were admitted, it would prove that all the unconditioned must be so made up, a position which gives little satisfaction in regard to an infinite God. But we have shown that its claims are baseless. We pass on to the next doctrine.

Secondly; space is a form of mind, a law of thought and not a law of things. (*Dis.* 572.) Hamilton's course of thought is this. Space is an *a priori* form of imagination; this implies that we make a mental picture of it, not as a copy of anything, but prior to any perception of extension. We do this by "thinking out from a centre," and "carrying the circumference of the sphere" onward and onward indefinitely. Space in conception is necessarily spherical. It is also black. If we

try to carry it to infinity, no one effort will do it; and as we cannot do it at once by one infinite act, it would require an eternity of successive finite efforts—an endless series of imaginings beyond imaginings. The very attempt is contradictory. Infinite space is inconceivable. (*Lect.* 386, 387, 402.) We cannot however, in this process, ever complete a whole beyond which we can imagine no further space. “It contradicts the supposition of space as a necessary notion; for if we could imagine space as a terminated sphere, and that sphere not itself enclosed in a surrounding space, we should not be obliged to think everything in space; and, on the contrary, if we did imagine this terminated sphere as itself in space, in that case we should not have actually conceived all space as a bounded whole.” Absolute space is inconceivable. (*Lect.* 527.) But, applying the grand law, one of these two inconceivable contradictories must be true. Space must be either absolute, or infinite. Real space, therefore, is inconceivable. Space as conceived being an excluded middle, is impossible. There cannot be any space such as we conceive; it is only a form of mind, a law of thought and not a law of things. On this we remark:

1°. The statement of facts does not agree with consciousness. We stated in our last number briefly the common-sense doctrine of perception and conception, and their relations to space.* Space is perceived, or known as an external object, and is the field wherein we both perceive and conceive all other extended objects. That we know space as an external object in perception, extending indefinitely beyond all material objects perceived, we think plain. Conception or imagination is not so simple. The language used about it generally implies that in imagination our phantasms of extended objects are mental states, unextended themselves, and involving the existence of no extension; of course that the accompanying space is also a mental picture, and unextended. In opposition to this view, we believe that in every true phantasm of a material object there is a perception of space; and that the process of conception or phantasy consists in distinguishing some points of

* For conception, see p. 295, note, where after “1st” should be inserted “perception of space, 2d.”

this true extension by imaginary qualities—copies of perceived qualities of objects. Certain it is that the process just described exists. To drop the reviewer's *we* for a moment, and ramble in personal experience, I look up from my paper and describe a triangle on the walls of my room in phantasy. It is pretty nearly equilateral, and the sides are about a foot long. I see each line and angle in perceived space, and it as truly involves real extension, as a painted figure of the same size. So far as I can judge, all my phantasms are similar. I can think, of course, by words and associations without this phantasy-work. With the eyes open, the field of phantasy is co-extensive with that of perception, if I choose; but with them closed it is very small. The early sun wakes me these charming spring mornings. I open my eyes on the casement. When I close them, I see a glimmering square. By comparing its size with that of the window from which it is copied, I easily tell how far it is from the eyes. I can vary its distance, by varying the direction of the optical axes, probably; but it is never far, and yet I am sure that it is a little beyond my usual field of view. The whole stage on which I play my puppets is within the compass of a few inches. I demonstrate propositions, I muse on my friends in vivid dreams, I gaze in imagination beyond the farthest star, but diagrams, friends, stars are all pictures, and the pictures are close by me. When I view the stars, I imagine a bright point, and say to myself, This is Jupiter; another point, and say, This is Sirius; another, and as with a great effort, I say, This is the farthest star, but all the points are near me. It is as easy to visit stars as to view them. Space is all alike, and I have only to say to myself, This space shall represent the neighbourhood of the star, and I am there. I find that by my best effort I cannot, with closed eyes, extend the canvass of my pictures much beyond the reach of my fingers. In that small sphere astral systems move in phantasy. This is the same sphere in which Cheselden's patient saw objects with his newly-couched eyes. I doubt not he had long been in the habit of watching vague lights there.

If I read my consciousness aright, Hamilton deceives himself in supposing that he can swell out a spherical phantasm of space in his imagination. I can draw a circle in space, but not into any place where I do not perceive space before. I

can run out an arc with a pretty long radius, but not an arc that has all the space within it which I perceive. He mistakes describing figures in space, for producing space itself.

When he says we must imagine space a spherical figure, I fear he draws on his logic for his psychology. I find I cannot at all make myself the centre of a great sphere. I can run out a pretty good arc of a circle horizon-fashion, but the top of the sphere will flatten down. He says there can no reason be given for varying from the spherical form. No logical reason, perhaps, but the perpetual habit of seeing this flattened concave of blue sky has got the better of any logical necessity I ever was under of imagining myself in a perfect black sphere. I often amuse myself in the twilight by travelling in perception from a bright star to a fainter, then still farther to a still fainter, and so on, trying to make real each receding distance, till I feel as though penetrating the depths of space, when suddenly my eye rests on the landscape before my window, the far receding vista, hill behind plain, fading far away into indistinguishable mountain and cloud, where the river threads its way; and I am at once made aware that all my efforts have left the faintest stars near me, when compared with those far off mountains. The star, as a point, gives no data to the judgment for accurately adjusting its size and distance. The sky still stoops to us. Unaided conception cannot equal perception in the extent of space it occupies with its figures.

We do not then imagine or make space by adding part to part; we perceive it already existing and stretching beyond all other extended objects.

2°. Space as absolute. That space is a necessary notion does not account for the fact that we cannot conceive or believe any extension which we think as occupied in perception or conception to be the whole of space. We might have a necessary notion of the finite as well as the infinite. It might have been a law of thought that when we reach a given limit in pure extension, thought should definitely end; every thing possible to thought might be embraced therein, and any suggestion of going farther be impossible to the human mind—that is to say, we might have the subjective assurance that there extension ends.

Hamilton's argument, that if we could imagine space bounded, and nothing beyond, we should not be obliged to think every thing in space, is a transparent fallacy; as though thinking all objects in space implied thinking space itself to be in a second space, and that in a third, and so on *in infinitum*.

The reason that we cannot conceive any finite extension to be the whole of space is, that to the perception of space as indefinite is attached an intuitive knowledge or belief that space is infinite. The only reason that we cannot conceive it contained in any sphere that we make is because we know that is not so contained. We can conceive bounds, and perceive bounds; it is not an incapacity to that which affects us. If space were bounded within bounds possible to our perception or conception, we could conceive it easily enough; if we did not know that it is not bounded, we could easily conceive some bounded phantasm as a representative of it. We perceive it extending indefinitely beyond any bounds which we can make either in perception or conception. We intuitively know that it is not bounded, and therefore we know that no figure can represent it.

3°. Space as infinite. We have already pointed out the two senses of the word infinite, which Hamilton confounds. Space is infinite in the higher sense; it is given in an indefinite perception not as made up by increase, but as an existence to which nothing can be added or supposed to be added; but Hamilton describes its infiniteness as of the lower kind, made up of endlessly added parts, and argues that we can never complete the series because it would take an eternity to do it.

We remark therefore in regard to the statement that infinite space and absolute space in Hamilton's sense are two inconceivable extremes, that they are inconceivable,—i. e. not to be pictured in phantasy, for very different reasons. Space cannot be pictured as absolutely finite, (Hamilton's absolute,) because we know it is not so; it is implied as the canvass, for every picture, and seen to exceed the picture;* while it cannot be wholly pictured in a phantasm made up of an endless number of finite parts, (Hamilton's infinite,) because it is truly infinite.

* This may be the fact in the structure of our minds, by which the intuitive knowledge of the infinity of space is conditioned.

The one inconceivability is an inability to conceive the contradictory of a fact of which we have necessary intuition, the other an inability to limit infinite extension. Hamilton is wrong then in making them co-ordinate weaknesses. The inconceivability of the absolute here depends on the positive intuitive necessary belief of a true infinite.

4°. Absolute and infinite in the sense in which they are applicable to space are not contradictories. Space is known to us intuitively as a whole which is no part, in the higher sense as absolute. It is also known to us intuitively as so great that nothing of its own kind can be added to it, or supposed to be added—in the higher sense as infinite. These are not contradictories. On the contrary, it is because space is not finite, that we know it is not a part of anything.

In the sense in which Hamilton uses *absolute* and *infinite*, namely, a finished or unfinishable progression of finite parts, neither of the terms are applicable to space. So far from its being necessary that space should be either a finished series of finite parts, or an unfinished series, as Hamilton affirms, the fact is that it is neither one nor the other.

5°. The conclusion that space is a form of mind does not follow, even if the premises were true. That space cannot exist as we conceive it, would seem to show rather that it cannot be a form of conception. That which is perceived to exceed conception should be objective rather. (b) The element of necessity which belongs to space is taken as proof that it is a form of thought and not of things; necessity belongs to the intellect not to the senses. But an intuition of necessity can attach as well to a perception as a conception; and it seems to contradict the testimony of consciousness, when what we know as a necessity in external objects, is declared to be the consequence of a necessity of thinking.

6°. The result is sceptical. That space as conceived cannot exist, and space as it exists cannot be conceived, is a good foundation to build scepticism or nihilism. We have already in our discussion of perception (p. 295,) remarked the connection of the statement that space is a form of mind, with idealism.

Thirdly. Hamilton concludes that time present is wholly inconceivable as anything positive, a *nihil cogitabile*. He seems

to say also that he can prove that it is impossible, *nihil purum*. (*Dis.* 571;) for he says a demonstration of it may be made as insoluble as Zeno's of the impossibility of motion, and he elsewhere pronounces that satisfactory. (*Lect.* 530.) Time past and time future he speaks of, as he does of space. We remark that while our intuition assures us that all of space is a reality now existing, it assures us that time present is the only existing time. We are always conscious of present duration. We know the past and future to be non-existent; objects* perceived or conceived, may be conceived as they were in the past, or will be in the future, and the present flow of duration answers representatively for the duration then passing or hereafter to pass. So that in regard to time, Hamilton's nihil is the only reality. Time implies, we think, something to endure. Eternity presupposes necessary Being.

Fourthly. This doctrine claims to show that several of the fundamental laws of thought are only results of our inability to think the unconditioned. Hamilton mentions the law of substance and phenomenon, but he has made the application of the doctrine only to the law of cause and effect. Of all the words that have entangled thought, *cause* is the worst. Material, efficient, formal, and final causes are too unlike to be confounded under the same name; mechanical, chemical, crystalline, vegetable, animal, moral causes, if called causes at all, ought to be clearly distinguished. If Hamilton had discriminated the different senses of the word by clear definitions, and stamped each with some brave, long Greek name, which would have taken our ears and filled the lines of our Quarterlies, and established itself in use, he would have done us noble service. As it is, he has introduced a new ambiguity, and made the confusion worse confounded.

The idea of cause or necessary antecedent is given indefinitely when reflection commences. All the antecedents of a fact, and everything involved in them and in it, whether (loosely) phenomena, substances, powers, relations, occasions, motions, or changes,—and all the consequents under the notion of final causes or the like, are objects of interest and examination,

* We know the here in the now, the there in the then. The remote takes time for perception. We see it as it was.

when one would thoroughly investigate a fact, and they have all at one time or another been confounded under the name *cause*.

It seems that the relation of substance and quality should be definitely distinguished from that of cause and effect. (1.) The material world is made up of substances having permanent qualities, which do not change either in reality or appearance, unless some change of relation is produced among them by a force external to them. These qualities are adjusted to space, so that a change of position with regard to the substance gives a new appearance. A spark explodes gunpowder only when they are brought together. A large element of the chemical and mechanical powers should be counted as quality, not cause. (2.) It seems that beside these material particles, there are units of existence which are conceived as permanent subjects of the properties of crystallization,—that there is an order of existences which show themselves in arranging particles of matter in definite geometrical forms, and in the other facts in which crystals differ from uncrystallized matter. These existences are endowed with permanent affections as substantial created existences, and should be classified as substances rather than modes. (3.) It seems that there is an order of existences which have power to display themselves to us by taking up and arranging matter in the form of plants, and by exhibiting the peculiar phenomena of vegetable life; these too, it seems, should be classified as substances, and their permanent capacities be referred to them as qualities rather than as effects to causes. (4.) It seems that there is also an order of existences which have power to organize matter into animal forms, and display themselves in it, and in the peculiar phenomena of animal life, and that here too we have substances and qualities. (5.) Consciousness assures us of the existence of the human soul, having various permanent capacities analogous to states or qualities in other substances; but which also has the control of power, and can originate motion and change on a simple prevision of a mere ideal future, or in obedience to a moral law.

Now, whatever is found on examination to be referred to these or other like substances as a permanent quality, may with propriety and advantage be dismissed in so far from the

relation of causation. A world of substances with their permanent qualities, if it were possible to conceive it unadjusted and unmoved, would exhibit no change and call forth no judgment of causation. The projecting matter in space with such a distribution that the qualities shall produce by their proper action and reaction the successive phenomena of an astral system, implies a power over and above matter. The facts of motion are those which are most obtrusive in their demand for a cause. Changes in quality—brightness, colour, savour, smell, resistance, are results of motion producing changes in the relations of bodies in space. It is to this succession of changes by motion considered not merely as the expression of a permanent quality of a created substance, but as the effect and expression ultimately of a force external to the material world and to all substances incapable of free-act, that the suggestion of causation seems legitimately to point. Every change must be preceded by another change of which it is a necessary consequence. Change is a mark of force which is not quality—that is to say, a mark ultimately of free-force.

The creation of substances is therefore a different thing from the arrangement and ordering of a cosmos; the timely and orderly introduction of successive vital substances, or living beings, is a different exhibition of infinite power from that which is displayed in their creation: the providential ordering of the human race, that progress of the work of redemption which renders a philosophy of history possible, implies forces which cannot be refunded into the constitution of man, and displays the Creator as Governor of his creatures. It seems then that the suggestion of causation legitimately leads to the tracing of free-force among created substances. It seems to us that the necessity that simple substances in space and time should be thought created existences is a consequence involved in the master necessity of God as a Governor, and in the special intuition of ends (final causes) in their natures, rather than a consequence of causation proper. In common use the word cause is not so confined, but certainly includes the permanent qualities or properties of substances considered as communicating motion or change to other substances. We have premised thus much to distinctly point out that there is free force in the

world in addition to its created substances, and to open the way to a discussion of Hamilton, who seems to ignore both free force and final causes. It would be a great service could all the known qualities or properties of all created substances be distinctly given them even in generals, that the atheistic supposition which makes them everything, might not be able to lurk longer in the chaotic confusion of causes, substances, qualities, properties, and powers; and that the power which moves all in wisdom from use to use, but belongs to none, might be clearly seen ever active, the quick witness of God.

His course of thought is this:—we put certain comments of our own in parenthesis. (1) We are aware of a new appearance, (2) and cannot but think an object existent in time (the substance of the phenomenon); (3) we cannot but think this object existed before (this substance, not this phenomenon), (4) and existed as plural objects; (5) because we cannot annihilate anything in thought (any substance, it should seem) or because—in equivalent statements (6) we cannot conceive an absolute commencement of time. = (7) we cannot conceive an absolute commencement in time of existence (i. e. all existence). = (8) we cannot conceive an absolute commencement in time of any individual object. = (9) we cannot conceive the sum of existence (existence in time, it should seem) to be increased or diminished; but (10) to be obliged to think the same existence which now shows a new appearance, was in being before under other appearances, is the law of causation, i. e. Every change must have a cause, which is thus shown to be (11) only an inability to think an absolute commencement in time.

On this we remark 1°. It seems that we can perceive and conceive phenomena to commence in time. It is such a perception that in fact calls forth the judgment of causation, and therefore, if it is impossible to conceive a beginning of substance, this impossibility must be a consequence of something in the nature of substance, and not of anything in the nature of thinking in time. But this negatives the theory.

2°. According to Hamilton, substance itself is nothing; our negatively thinking it, even as an inconceivable correlative of quality or phenomenon, is only a necessity of imbecility, like causation. (*Lect.* 532. *Dis.* 570.) How can it be then, if we

can annihilate all we can conceive—namely, the phenomena, that we must think the unthinkable negation to remain? Is it because we cannot get hold of it at all in thought, and if therefore we smuggle it into the mind by any logical trick, we cannot get it out again?

3°. How is the necessity of thinking plural objects accounted for? The inability to annihilate one object in thought is certainly not equivalent to the necessity of thinking two.

4°. The different forms used in stating the alleged inability confound in the one numbered 5, all thinkable objects with substance; in 6 and 7, time and objects thought in time; in 7 and 8, the sum of all existence with the separate existence of an individual thing; in 9, the sum of existence in time (created existence) with the total of God and the universe, and so existence in fact with the existence *in posse* involved in the divine omnipotence. We do not see how these confusions to common sense can be made consistent with any philosophy of existence except Monism, i. e. a philosophy which holds that the existence of individuals is not distinguishable in thought, one from the other, or the whole from God; that power and effect are one only; that existence is one unvarying total, of which the thinkable is phenomenal—but of this farther on.

5°. The inability to conceive that the same existence which now shows a new appearance, was not in being before, is not equivalent to the law of causation. (a) Change is required as the starting point to call forth the judgment of causation. Change implies a substance in two states or places, (for creation see further on). Now the necessity of conceiving continued existence would only operate to render the first of the perceived states of the change permanent; but the affirmation of causation really is, that change, i. e. all the perceived states must have been preceded by some other change or cause—that the antecedent state *of* the change must have been preceded by some different state antecedent *to* the change. The true affirmation of causation is that change has preceded change back to the first creation of things. The enunciation of Hamilton's principle is that so far as it can tell, everything must have for ever before been permanent in the state in which we first have knowledge of it. The inability to conceive an absolute begin-

ning of time may, by a (slight!) confusion with regard to *of* time and *in* time, be said to prevent our conceiving a beginning of substance; but by no possibility can it be made to necessitate the conception of beginning after beginning of phenomena in endless succession. Motion is the most common appearance which excites the causal judgment. My friend before me raises his hand. There must have been a cause of the motion. Does that mean that I cannot conceive that his hand was not in existence before? Surely not. The question relates not to change of existence or form, but to change of place. Is it the motion which cannot be conceived to begin? That confounds, in the doctrine, cause and substance, effect and quality—and the motion does begin. Is it said we must conceive it to have virtually existed in the will? If that is a continuation of the same existence, we have all facts and possibilities resolved into one existence.

(*b*) The law of causation at the lowest involves necessary connection. Hamilton's principle only asserts that we must think the substance in its present form was preceded by the substance in some other form. The necessity of an antecedent is confounded with a necessary antecedent. He is in exactly the position he charges upon Brown; he gives us an antecedent, but has eviscerated the necessity. The proposition "this substance must have existed in some former state," is confounded with "this substance must have existed in some former state of which this state is a necessary consequence."

(*c*) We think it also a clear affirmation of common sense that the necessity of thinking a relation is a very different thing from perceiving a necessary relation. Hume, as we have before said, started the notion in respect to causation that ideas of objects become associated by the laws of the mind, so that one idea draws the other after it, and that we, feeling that the idea draws the idea, conceive that the object is attached to the object. That would do for a sceptic. Kant developed this notion into the far-reaching principle that all necessity is only a necessity of thought, and this will do for an idealist; if we know nothing but ideas, the laws of connection among ideas would seem to be all that we can know of necessary connection. But common sense and Hamilton declare that we immediately

know an external world, and with this seems to be inseparably connected the statement that we perceive or know as objective fact real relations among real objects ; that we must think such relations does not go to the point. The instant we think ourselves as possessing created powers of thought, adjusted to our uses by design, we have a stand-point from which our necessity of thinking gives only a contingency. In fact, Kant holds that our necessary thinking may not correspond to objective fact. Common sense, if it claim certainty, must hold fast to the statement that we believe objective facts and relations to exist, because we perceive and know them to exist, and not that we know, inasmuch as we cannot help believing. Pantheism and Monism alone, which see our faculties as a necessity, and subject and object as one, can logically claim that they can give objective necessity in their *a priori* subjective announcements. We hold then that if Hamilton had claimed with Kant that the law of causation is a positive subjective necessity, that would not be enough ; there must be a subjective necessity to perceive or know an objective necessity, and neither necessity explains or involves the other.

(d) Necessity cannot be founded at the last on simple inability to conceive ; that we cannot conceive a thing to-day does not prove that we may not be able to conceive it to-morrow. Inability as a mere fact of experience can no more give necessity than can any other fact. The inability must be seen as a necessary consequence of some positive affirmation of intelligence, or it must be accompanied by an intuitive positive affirmation of its own necessity ; otherwise it is only experience : and how often has Hamilton repeated after Leibnitz and Kant, that experience cannot give necessity ? We put this dilemma then. Either Hamilton's exposition of the principle is as weak as that of the weakest sensationalist whom he laughs to scorn, or he must admit a positive intuitive affirmation of necessary inability, and annihilate his whole theory.

Hamilton further illustrates the excellencies of this theory of causation, by applying it to creation and free-agency. We will follow him up.

Creation. The course of thought should be as follows. In a place where there was nothing material existing, we suddenly

see matter appear. We are unable to conceive a commencement of matter, we therefore believe this existing matter to have before existed under some other form, and God being by hypothesis the only former existence, it is as a part (or as the whole) of Him, that it existed before. Creation then is only a transfer of the same substance from existence in eternity to existence in time. With this compare Hamilton's statements. "When God is said to create out of nothing, we construe this to thought by supposing that He evolves existence out of Himself." (*Lect.* 533.) "We are able to conceive, indeed, the creation of a world, but not as the springing of nothing into something,—only as the evolution of existence from possibility into actuality by the fiat of the Deity. We cannot conceive that there was a larger complement of existence in the universe and its Author together, than, the moment before, there subsisted in the Deity alone; there cannot be an atom added to or taken away from existence in general. All that is now actually existent in the universe, this we think and must think, as having prior to creation, *virtually* existed in the Creator." (*Dis.* 583.) These statements are the least repulsive form in which this doctrine that cause and effect are different forms of an identical substantial existence, can be applied to creation. There are two lights in which they may be viewed. One is that they verbally confound existence in time with that which has a place only in the eternal counsels of God,—existence in fact with existence as a possibility to Omnipotence,—the material universe with the being and power of God,—cause and effect,—the many and the one. The other is that they are intended scientifically to identify the whole. If this latter is the truth, they constitute as rigorous a system of Monism as Spinoza's. We incline to think that it is. It has been an insoluble puzzle to many not acquainted with Kant, where Hamilton slips in the idea of cause,—how he comes to think that his law has anything to do with causation at all. It seems that he thinks that a new appearance implies *present* force; and so begs an efficient at the start; this force he in some way merges in substance and thinks does not involve necessary connection; it is not given by, and does not give the law of causation. It is only in view of thinking in time, which

makes it impossible to conceive a beginning of this substance (with the force) that we get the idea of a necessary connection of the present substance (and force) with some antecedent substance (and force.) Of this we have to say, first, that force and necessary antecedence in time are truly indissolubly connected in thought, but the connection grows out of the nature of force, and not of the nature of thinking in time. These views of the connection of causation and the inconceivableness of a beginning, are fully brought out in Kant—indeed are obvious enough; only the necessity of causation produces the inconceivableness of a beginning without a cause, and not the inconceivableness, the causation. Hamilton merely gives us Kant under the form of a metaphysical hysteron-proteron. Again, it seems that all force is refunded to the substances whose phenomena are observed: the doctrine wholly ignores that free-force, as we termed it, which moves and arranges substances, and so produces the interaction of their qualities, and the exhibition of harmonious and orderly phenomena. Hamilton's favourite illustration of causation is a neutral salt. This he expounds as an effect of which an acid and an alkali are the causes. Everything that is in the salt was in the acid and alkali; but when he happens to mention this example where he is not thinking of his theory, he mentions a third cause, namely, "the translating force (perhaps the human hand) which made their affinities available, by bringing the two bodies within the sphere of mutual attraction." (*Lect.* 42.) What needs be said of a doctrine that either coordinates the human hand with an acid and alkali as three substances with which a neutral salt is to be identified, or omits the translating force wholly from its account of causation? It seems to us that this theory does omit the translating, and designing force in nature; and does therefore in representing cause and effect as one, represent all that is thinkable as the successive phenomena of one identical existence, which passes from state to state without order or design, unless such may exist in its own nature; and that this account of creation carries back the same identical existence to form a part or element of the eternal being of God.

Free agency. The essence of this, Hamilton declares to be

an absolute commencement in time. (*Dis.* 585.) It is therefore wholly inconceivable according to the grand law, but its contradictory, an infinite retrogressive succession of existence, is also inconceivable: and since as contradictories one or the other must be true, the true one may as well be freedom, which is vouched for by conscience.

We remark (1) this is not an accurate application of the law. The law is, "there cannot be conceived an absolute beginning of existence," i. e. substance, not phenomenon, not act. There is no difficulty in having a phenomenon begin, an act begin; such a beginning is the very starting point of the causal judgment. Is volition a substance? Does every act of free-will add to the amount of existence in the universe? A correct application of the law seems to be as follows; we are conscious of the *Ego* putting forth a volition; we are unable to conceive that the same existence, *Ego*, should not have been in existence before; we therefore are compelled to think the mind as existing in some antecedent state; or to use the other form of statement, we cannot conceive that the volition did not exist *in posse* before, i. e. we must believe that there was before existent some power to put forth the volition. All of which is true but impertinent. Necessary continuity of substantial existence does not interfere with freedom of the will. It is the necessary connection between the successive acts which troubles us, and this necessity Hamilton has eviscerated. This is one illustration of the total inapplicability of this theory of causation to any facts. (2) But if we inject the idea of necessary connection into the law, more serious consequences follow. Freedom is then inconceivable, but created freedom impossible. Freedom being an absolute beginning of existence, and creation a change in an identical existence, created freedom is a contradiction in terms. A peculiarity of Hamilton's metaphysics, it will be remembered, is that he has a demonstration that one of the two contradictory poles between which thinking is conditioned, is true, that the other is false, and that a combination of both in being is absolutely impossible—*nihil purum*. We are not allowed to take refuge in our ignorance and believe that both are true. His ignorance is a learned ignorance, which penetrates into the deepest mysteries of being, and there author-

atively enounces that we must take our choice between beliefs which to other philosophers have seemed to stand together. He indeed brings forward only the necessity that one must be true, and in this discussion for example, seems to be proving freedom. Nor does he put the foreknowledge and predestination of God as contradictories of free-will, but holds them both to be true though incomprehensible. (*Dis.* 588.) But we have not been surprised to see some of his admirers counting free agency and the omnipotence of God among the great contradictions which illustrate the profundity of his metaphysics. That one of these "anti-current truths" must be true, is good; but that the other must be false! a law to prove that, would be no triumph for philosophy.

Fourthly. God is nothing; as infinite he is *nihil cogitabile*; as absolute and infinite, *nihil purum*, impossible. We remark, 1°. A philosophic nomenclature is objectionable, which establishes this as the proper way to speak of God. What odium have the Hegelians met for this feature of their system! Even Hamilton uses it against them. "Jacobi (or Neeb?) might well say," writes Hamilton, "that in reading this last consummation of German speculation, he did not know whether he were standing on his head or his feet," (*Dis.* 28.) With which compare, "Both (the philosophy of the absolute and the philosophy of the conditioned) agree that the knowledge of nothing is the principle or result of all true philosophy." (*Dis.* 574.)

2°. That we are in measureless ignorance with regard to God; that there are many realities neither revealed nor within our comprehension, is a truth universally admitted so far as we know. Even Spinoza defines God to be "*substantiam constantem infinitis attributis*," of which attributes infinite in number, we know but two, extension and thought, (*Eth. def.* 6), Hamilton's system undertakes to prove that we know, and can know nothing of Him truthfully. This is its statement. Existence (God) must be either infinite or absolute. We cannot conceive it (Him) as either, therefore our conceptions are untruthful. Infinite and absolute are contradictories and cannot both be true, i. e. an infinite and absolute God is a contradiction, a *nihil purum*, an impossibility. Now, in complete opposition to this statement the truth is, that in any sense in

which infinite and absolute are either of them true of God, both are true; and each true in that the other is. God is truly without bounds—infinite, and truly a whole and no part—absolute, and truly absolute in that he is infinite.

We will speak briefly of our knowledge of God, its nature and conditions, first more objectively, and then more subjectively.

Objectively.—The material universe is made up of parts; it is in a progress of change; its adjustments to space and time, as shown in gravity and decay, for example, indicate it to be finite both in space and time. It appears to be absolute in Hamilton's sense, and not infinite, and there is no difficulty in so conceiving it—in conceiving it to begin and to end both in space and time. Hamilton admits this. If we could think of matter only, construct only extension in thought, we could not think an infinite God. But we have higher powers. We know another kind of existence which is not thought under any such conditions; we know mind, a person, a free person, in knowing ourselves. We are not made up of parts; indeed so totally removed are we from any such condition, that we know not what relations we sustain to extended substances. We are removed from them by the whole diameter of being. In ourselves we know substance and power. Our actions are not like the movements of matter conditioned to quantitative degree, but have the absolute qualities of right and wrong, benevolent and malevolent. God also is a free person, just, benevolent, omnipotent, omnipresent. We know this, conceive it, can reason from it. We do not understand his relations to extension more than we do our own. We can only repeat the mystical dogma of the schoolmen, that He is all in the whole, and all in every part; or the still older and more mystical figure, that His presence is a sphere whose centre is everywhere, its circumference nowhere. He is totally unconditioned by any laws of progressive series of quantity.

More subjectively.—Our bodily organs are such that we cannot perceive an object unless it is of a certain size, or perceive it as a whole, if it is too large; nor can we perceive a state unless it lasts a certain time; or a motion unless it is of a certain slowness, and quickness. A sound may be too high or too low to be heard; a light too faint or too bright to be seen. The power of conception or phantasy, which limns

phantasms in space, follows perception and is confined within similar limits. The same nerves are used in both. What is too small to affect a fibril is also smaller than the fibril can limn. A microscopic point or form can be represented in phantasy, but only by a magnified picture of it. That our bodies are adjusted to our animal wants, and bring us into definite relations with a very limited part of things and facts is plain. But the ability to invent and make instruments by which we improve the organs which nature gives us, and perceive objects, and measure motions and forces a thousand times removed from the utmost reach of unassisted ken; the fact that reason can see the invisible and weigh the intangible by its mathematics just as well as the visible and the tangible; the ability to know the remote starry heavens, and find delight in their beautiful order; the ability to perceive necessary truth, and to reason out in detail how things must be wherever the same substances and same laws exist, which we know here,—all bespeak a being who is not to accept as final these adjustments of the senses; while the moral sense speaks out loud and clear, and bids us know the infinite worker as a moral Governor, and know moral acts as right and wrong in the eternal necessity of His nature. How far can we know the infinite God? Can a finite mind have an idea of an infinite? Hamilton seems to think it a contradiction; but an idea of the infinite is a different thing from an infinite idea, as an idea of extension is a different thing from an extended idea; the total want of necessary resemblance, or proportion, between knowledge as a state of mind and the thing known, is such, that it seems impossible to say from a consideration of the nature of any object, that it cannot be known. The reference must be to consciousness. Do we know it? If so, under what conditions? And what are the elements subjective and objective that enter into the act of knowledge? By way of introduction, we remark that the fact seems to be that the indications of spirit are not quantitative. How do we know the existence of our fellow-men? How do we know an intellect or will of mighty power? a soul absolutely devoted to right? a loving heart? Not by quantity of act, but by quality. It seems to be of the nature of the soul that it may concentrate its total greatness

and express it in a single act or thought; its whole power may be put forth, its wisdom shown, in a single act. There is a certain indubitable mark which a single act may have, there is a meaning in a single tone or glance, which renders it as impossible to doubt the heroism or devotion of a man or woman, as to doubt the proven equality of two geometrical figures. And in like manner, it seems to us, the infinite wisdom, justice, mercy and love of God are revealed to us in Christ, and by his grace we may see them in such infinite fulness that no repetition could augment our knowledge.

Reid counts it one of the first principles, or fundamental truths, "that there is life and intelligence in our fellow-men, with whom we converse" (*R.* 448,) and another, "that certain features of the countenance, sounds of the voice, and gestures of the body, indicate certain thoughts and dispositions of the mind." (*R.* 449.) We believe Reid was right in enumerating these as instinctive perceptions. It has been too often taken for granted, that whenever it can be seen how the exercise of mature reason might have given knowledge, no further discussion of that knowledge is required. The facts of childhood seem to us to show that we are kindly fitted out with peculiar powers of perceiving certain things as if by instinct, which we could have ultimately learned, after a fashion, by the conscious exercise of our faculties. Such perceptions are worthy of a careful enumeration as having, like other first principles, a peculiar sanction.

We believe the existence of the infinite God to be known by such a perception. We could arrive at it by the conscious exercise of reason; but it seems we instinctively perceive it in the marks of design in nature, and in providence. Sir Isaac Newton used to say, that there was a peculiar style in all the works of nature. These works are the works of the infinite God acting in a finite relation. We can certainly know them to be works of a being of peculiar power, and wisdom, and goodness. Can we know them as works of the infinite God? Hamilton says we cannot (*Lect.* 687.) Those who have assented to our prefatory remarks, will not hesitate to say we can. Just as to our perception of a particular example of cause is added a more remarkable power of perceiving its necessity; just as to

the perception of space as indefinite is added the more wonderful power of perceiving it to be incapable of increase, so we think to the perception of the peculiar acts of God in design and providence, is annexed the more remarkable power of perceiving these acts to be the acts of an infinite Being, of perceiving this wisdom to be His wisdom, this goodness to be His goodness, this moral law to be His moral law. It seems further, that in the very frame-work of our own minds is felt the same power, carrying with it the same knowledge of God, even without the cognizance of reflective consciousness, since the general laws of mind, as they are called, are obviously the same energy running through and through the Ego, consciously distinct from acts of the Ego, and shaping our consciousness to the designs of infinite wisdom. In a similar manner it seems that to the perception of a particular right or wrong act, is annexed the perception that this right or wrong is also an announcement of the nature of the infinite God, and that the imperative accompanying it is the command of the absolute Governor of the world. Such appears to us the testimony of consciousness as to our ability to know the infinite God. He acts in finite relations. As having power to perceive wisdom, goodness, and justice, we recognize them in these acts; as having power to know the acts of the infinite and absolute God, as distinguished from the acts of a finite being, we recognize these acts as His. "The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead." With the first two statements Hamilton agrees; with the last he disagrees. The element of it which implies a recognition of an infinite and absolute Being, in a manner corresponding to that which he calls an *a priori* conception, he declares to be impossible. We began by showing that the nature of the object does not render it impossible; we close by appealing to consciousness for the affirmation that it is a fact.

3°. Hamilton's "learned ignorance" is a very different thing from simple silence on a subject too deep for thought. It boasts itself to have sounded the depths of being, and enounces what is possible and what impossible to the divine existence, on points which are usually passed in silence—its absoluteness and

infinity; and it claims to know that our conceptions of justice and goodness are merely relative, and cannot be true for Him. We see no good ground for saying that Hamilton was merely humbling those who pretend to grasp the whole infinite nature of God, by showing that there can exist no such infinite or absolute as we can conceive—that both, as involving contradictions, are predicates of nothing—have nothing to do with real being. On the contrary, in the first place, he rests a proof of the existence of God, and a proof of the reality of free-agency, on the alleged necessity that one of these predicates must be true. It is in fact his great claim for the doctrine, that it proves the actual and necessary existence of one of these inconceivable facts. In the second place, it is not necessary to affirm any positive knowledge of the infinite or absolute, to bring one within the grasp of the “grand law.” Hamilton’s statement is, that the infinite and absolute are only negations, (*Dis.* 23.) According to him, then, it makes no difference what we think infinite to mean, provided only it is not finite; or what we think absolute to mean, if it is not a part. If the demonstration is anything, it is that in the whole compass of being, thought, language, there is nothing not finite that infinite can mean, and nothing not a part which absolute can mean, which it is possible in the nature of things should both be true of God. To a modest Christian who should say, I know I am totally ignorant of the real nature of God in this respect, but I certainly think that God is not finite, and I certainly think that he is not a part of anything—the grand law is made to say, “Make your thinking definite on this subject, and you will find that you have been thinking a contradiction; that He must be one or the other, and cannot be both of the negations which you say you think He is.”

4°. The truth is, that this whole application of the law of contradictories is totally baseless. The absolute and infinite defined by Hamilton, i. e. the completed and uncompleted, (*Dis.* 21,) are not contradictories; they do not include all being; do not include all unconditioned being; neither of them is a character of uncreated being; neither of them a character of spirit; neither has anything to do with God. The first lie from which all the rest here spring is, that we can know

or think of nothing except as a quantity to be completed—to be made up by addition of parts, either extensive, protensive, or intensive; that all thoughts and all things exist in degrees as an indefinite more and less. But we have already pointed out that a person is a unit to whom more and less do not apply; right and wrong are absolute, and not produced by addition; necessity has no degrees; intuition has no degrees; demonstration has no degrees; knowledge is not a sum of probabilities; God is not made up of a sum of parts. He is a spirit, a person, an uncaused cause, an infinite and perfect one, a righteous governor. He who stands on this ground has only to say that Hamilton's progressive infinities and absolutes are altogether impertinent, and his grand law is words, *vox, et præterea nihil*.

We have now been over and through the philosophy of the Conditioned, and have seemed to find that it is utterly baseless, and that if its claims were granted, it would destroy all knowledge on the most vital subjects of human thought. We must now qualify the latter conclusion. Hamilton is one of the most difficult writers to fully understand; partly because he deals with such excessive generalizations that they cannot be trusted; as in perception, the *ego* and *non-ego*; in the Conditioned, *existence, thing, the thinkable, the unconditioned, &c.*; partly because his views are not thought out, but are really critical shifts from particular views of some preceding philosopher; but chiefly, we think, because these critical shifts formed mostly on the meaning of words, while he gives the discussions the form of a critique on thought; thus in treating perception he narrows its meaning as we have before explained; so in the discussion of causation, he treats other philosophers as though he and they were treating the same facts, yet he has really shifted the meaning of the law. So in regard to knowledge, he has perhaps only narrowed the meaning of the word, and made a merely verbal transfer of whole classes of topics into the domain which he calls faith, or belief. If so, this domain becomes the most important province of philosophy, and his critique of our faculties of knowledge is of no practical worth in limiting speculation, as long as the faculties of belief are uncriticised, and the region of faith open to all excursions, with as good promise of certainty and satisfaction, as

that of knowledge. But in regard to almost all the topics here treated, it would seem there can be no such resort, because the deductions are drawn from supposed general laws of consciousness, and would negative belief, just as much as knowledge. An absolute and infinite God being an impossibility—an absolute nothing, He could not be an object of belief, any more than of knowledge: a created free-agency is in the same condition; nor is it easy to see how belief can be brought to bear at all on that which general laws of consciousness render nothing to us—*nihil cogitabile*.

Hamilton informs us that his confidence in this system rests in part upon finding in it “a centre and conciliation for the most opposite of philosophical opinions.” (*Dis.* 588.) Yes; from this centre we see how Hume was right in declaring that we do not know any substantial external world; that we do not know ourselves as substances capable of thought; power is to us nothing; cause and effect a trustless subjective suggestion; God unknowable; the phenomena only which bubble up in our consciousness—the fleeting succession of relations of the unknown is all our knowledge. In all this Hume was right; he was only wrong in letting these speculations land him in scepticism. A “learned ignorance,” which dogmatically and undoubtingly knows that its ignorance is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, is the true philosophy. And yet this passage is found in Hamilton, “Doubt is the beginning and the end of all our efforts to know; for as it is true—‘*Altè dubitat qui altiùs credit,*’ so it is likewise true, ‘*Quo magis quærimus magis dubitamus.*’ ” (*Dis.* 591.)

From this centre we see also that Reid was right in maintaining that we have an immediate knowledge of the material world; though he did not see that we only know it, as being ourselves part and parcel of the same subject with it—that sensations are states of mind and matter at once, and in knowing sensations, we know mind and matter equally; that is to say, we know neither, but a relation of both.

From this centre, also, we see that Kant was right in holding that all our speculative thinking is confined to the relative, and that the laws of belief are laws of thought alone, and mislead if used as laws of being. He is only wrong in giving a

special place to the ideas of reason which direct our thinking towards that absolute it can never attain, and in trusting in a practical reason as giving us absolute knowledge of right and wrong, and of an infinite and absolute moral governor.

From this centre also, we understand the position of Schelling, in his first philosophy. He was right in confining our conceptions to the relative, and his intellectual intuition of the absolute was a blind grasping after the grand law of the conditioned, according to which, "by a wonderful revelation we are thus, in the very consciousness of our inability to conceive aught above the relative and finite, inspired with a belief in something unconditioned beyond the sphere of all comprehensible reality." (*Dis.* 22.)

Here also is the identity system in all its vague immensity. Here, subject and object, substance and attribute, power and effect, whole and part, God and the world, intermingling and interchanging, float and flow phenomenally on the currents of the unknown, the ocean stream of identical existence; power is nothing; substance nothing; God is nothing. Hegel only missed it, that when he had everything shut up in this dark closet of annihilation, he had no grand law of the conditioned to turn the lock and hold all fast for ever.

Here also we are at one with the last philosophy, the Eclecticism of France: only in place of the principle that all the positive thoughts of all systems are to be taken and the negative left, we here learn that all the negative are to be taken and the positive left. "The knowledge of nothing is the principle or result of all true philosophy." (*Dis.* 574.) We have no confidence in this idea of comprehension by universal conciliation; it implies that there is error in all thinking, and that truth is to be *sought* (not found) in a compromise of all opinions. We want thinkers in these times who will brace themselves stoutly on the old stable truths, and draw men to them, not meet them half-way. And we may here mention Hamilton's doctrine of education, that the pursuit of truth is better than the possession and loving contemplation of it. (*Lect.* 61.) It is of a piece with his whole philosophy;—but we have no room here to expose it. We can only protest against it.

It is, however, in the interest of religion that most is claimed for this philosophy, as “abolishing a world of false, pestilent, and presumptuous reasoning in theology.” (*Dis.* 588.) The writer of this article will not follow the disciples of Hamilton into this field of thought. They have given up, most of them, the peculiar position of Hamilton, and fallen back on the old negatives of the positive school and the sceptics, in regard to natural religion. As to anything added by Hamilton himself to the familiar teachings of our divines in regard to the incomprehensibility of God, we believe we have shown that his claims are totally baseless; that they are either a tangle of verbal confusions, or spring from a metaphysical system which grounds in Monism or Nihilism. It has been represented as a merit of this philosophy by one of its ablest defenders, that it teaches in regard to the greatest truths of religion, that in themselves they are incomprehensible, and that it is only in their relation to each other, and in their mutual relation to our understanding, that we can comprehend them. We believe that the converse and opposite of this statement expresses a more important view of these truths—that is to say, we know, in some degree, the great truths of religion as they are in themselves, but we are largely ignorant of their relations to each other, and to the intuitions which give them to us, or enable us to receive them intelligently from nature or revelation. We have what we have called *pure* knowledge of the infinite as a reality, and also of the finite as a reality; but we do not know their relations to each other—we cannot deduce one from the other. We have pure knowledge of free agency as a fact, and of foreordination as a fact; but we do not know their relations to each other; we cannot co-ordinate them; but not because our knowledge has a hidden subjective element which renders it impure, so that we ought to modify our statements to express these truths,—the admission of such an element would fling the doors wide open to all “pestilent reasonings;” we know the truths, but not all their relations. So we have a pure knowledge of the unity and of the three-fold personality of God; and however much learning and eloquence may be exhausted to show that the three-foldness is only the result of a relation to us—an appearance which the infinite

must show to the finite, we must still stand on the firm ground that these are veritable objective truths. We know that they are true, but do not understand their mutual relations. A Christian introduced by the Spirit into the glorious temple of truth, may well be blinded by excess of light, but he can still clasp in his arms the great pillars of the faith.

That right and wrong are relations to us, and are not of the nature of God; that natural religion, if logical, must be a tissue of contradictions, would seem to annihilate all possibility of religion;—certainly all possibility of convincing unbelievers. If pantheism and nihilism are the only propædeutics to Christianity which reason can legitimately use, she will lead very few to Christ. Locke says—“He that takes away reason, to make way for revelation, puts out the light of both, and does much the same as if he would persuade a man to put out his eyes, the better to perceive the remote light of an invisible star by a telescope.” Hume closes one of his most destructive essays—that of miracles—by saying, “I am the better pleased with this method of reasoning, as I think it may serve to confound those dangerous friends or disguised enemies to the Christian religion, who have undertaken to defend it by the principles of human reason. Our most holy religion is founded on faith, not on reason.” That it is founded on faith is true, but only a half-truth. It is a faith which does not destroy or demand the destruction of reason, but elevates and perfects it.

If we have, in the foregoing criticisms, injuriously misconstrued Hamilton, none will more sincerely than ourselves rejoice to have such misconstruction shown. At all events, we think it has been demonstrated that he is not that infallible oracle in philosophy which many flattered themselves had appeared in these last times. Much yet remains to be done before we have a truly Christian philosophy, or a perfect conciliation of philosophy with Christianity. With all the precious truth which Hamilton has so ably vindicated, are mixed some formidable and monstrous errors, against which all need to be put on their guard. While we yield to none in legitimate admiration of this wonderful man, we are clear and earnest against any indiscriminate acceptance or endorsement of his opinions.