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ART. I.—*The Inspired Theory of Prayer.*

AS one of the evidences that Christianity, even when most purely conceived as a supernatural power, is preëminently rational, we may reckon the freedom of Christ and the apostles, especially the apostle Paul, in speaking of the manner of its operation. It thus appears that our rational exercises are usefully employed, not only under the influence of saving grace, but upon the work of grace itself. Accordingly, the church has presumed that a just speculative view of the doctrine of justification by faith will promote the saving exercise of faith; and that a definite and rational doctrine drawn out from what the Scriptures teach concerning the atonement of Christ, will be used by the Holy Spirit to help us in receiving and applying the atonement itself. The benefit of the sacraments is undoubtedly increased by a just and reasonable view of the manner of their operation. From the apostle's great pains to give, in 1 Cor. xv., the theory of the resurrection, we might presume that a well-formed philosophical doctrine on that subject, adjusted to the apostle's outline, would help the practical influence of the scriptural view on the mind and heart of the church. In like manner, we may hope that a rational expansion of the suggestions of the Scriptures, and particularly

its own great work, and not attempt to interfere with the regularly appointed religious officers of the army.

But we must draw this article to a close. There is not an enterprise of the present day more worthy the efforts of the church in this land, than the thorough evangelization of our armies. There are many difficulties to be overcome in performing this work. These it should be the aim of the wise and judicious counsellors in the church to diminish or remove. There are many discouragements to which the labourers in this field are subject. Ought not brethren at home to aid them by sympathy, kind counsel, and fervent prayers? There are rich present rewards to the faithful labourer. Soldiers are not insensible to efforts for their good. The gospel is not without power even in the camp, as many can testify by joyful experience. But whatever the difficulties and discouragements of the present, there is a rich reward in reserve for those who endure hardness in the service of the Captain of their salvation, and who shall be so happy as to turn many to righteousness, through the divine blessing resting upon their efforts in his cause.

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ART. III.—*Faith, a Source of Knowledge.*

ON the two great questions, which relate to the origin and the end of the material universe, science gives us no satisfactory light. Revelation answers both. It tells us not only by whom and how, but for whom and why, "the worlds" were made. It would seem that this latter question, to wit, what a world, which exhibits so much plan and skill in its construction, and is governed by a mechanism and laws so admirably adjusted throughout, was made for, no less than the former, would be constantly pressing upon every studious, thoughtful man. That it would be with him the question of all questions, in comparison with which the laws that govern electrical phenomena, or the affinity that gives its exact form to the crystal, or the forces which control planets and comets, would be pro-

nounced as of altogether inferior importance. These very laws dictate this greater inquiry. Science has many knotty points, but the hardest problem of all, is that which is the greatest, and lies back of all,—nay, is that, which, considered in a large view, makes the others worthy of philosophical investigation,—What was the world made for? This question receives no answer, which is not childish and trivial, unless we look for it in the immortality of man, and that invisible future state brought to light in the Scriptures.

Faith, or truth, is so essential an element of our intellectual being, that, if smothered, when a ground on which it ought to rest is presented, the tendency is to dwarf the mind. The Scriptures reveal truth which is essential no less to the well-being of the mind than of the heart. To the same extent that important truth is discarded or neglected, will the mind be misguided, possibly seriously unhinged, in its operations. That the quality of the most gifted intellect must be improved by the admission of truth, and suffer loss by its denial or refusal, needs only a statement. "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding to the simple." Ps. cix. 130. Are we to suppose that the humble faith and prayerful spirit of a Newton had no influence on his intellect, and the grandeur of those results which it wrought out? Would a Humboldt have been any less distinguished in the world of letters, or a less safe guide as a teacher of scientific truth, if he had been a humble believer in Jesus? No mind can be in a truly healthful state, or can be a safe guide in any matters which involve moral questions, so long as it is destitute of faith towards God, in respect to any of the manifestations he has been pleased to make of himself. To insist that the senses, or experiment, shall be the determining test, as to the limits of all that passes under the name of knowledge, what is it but to ignore the immortal nature of man, and bring him down towards the level of the brute? Man has an immortal, as well as a rational nature, a heart as well as mind. God, in his word, recognises and takes both under his direction; and is thus true to our whole nature. The Bible is the most thought-inspiring book in the world. Even men who have not been careful to square their lives by its precepts, have confessed to its quickening

power on their intellects. It makes large contributions to the sum of human knowledge in the department of science, as well as that of literature. These were to some extent enumerated in a former volume of this work, so far at least as one portion of the Bible, the Pentateuch, is concerned.\*

It is, however, a sincere faith in the revelations of the Bible which can alone supply what our nature needs. It ennobles the mind. It raises it above the present, with all its difficulties and darkness, to the hope which may be gathered from the progressive character of God's works and dispensations, beginning in the distant past, and stretching on to the unending future. As a source of positive knowledge, reference might be made to the revelations, which faith appropriates, concerning the nature of the Supreme Being, as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and his purposes of grace towards our fallen race. We might even point to that purely spiritual, yet experimental knowledge, which it begets in the innermost consciousness of the believer, enabling him with a holy confidence in the words of the great apostle, to say, "I know whom I have believed;" or to claim the knowledge of all those things which the beloved apostle, in his first epistle, ascribes to sincere faith. But, in considering faith as a source of knowledge, as we now propose to do, we shall confine the discussion to the two points already indicated, the first cause and the final cause of the creation, as clearly demonstrating the homage which is due from Science to Revelation, and pointing out the dividing line between the domains of the two.

It will be necessary, in the first place, to determine the sense of that faith, for which we claim so much. We use it, in precisely the same sense the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews used it, in the familiar passage, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." This is not to be taken as a definition of justifying faith, or of faith as justifying, but is a description of the efficacy and operation of this faith in them who are justified. It refers to the disposition, wrought in Christian believers, by which they live and walk, looking not on the things which are seen, but the

\* See the No. for July, 1858, Art. "Historical Value of the Pentateuch."

things which are not seen. It is not faith as opposed to works, by which they are justified; but faith as opposed to sight, by which they can patiently wait, in the face of all difficulties, for the fulfilment of the most ancient promise. It is the substance, or as the margin, with greater precision, renders *ὑπόστασις*, the ground or confidence, *i. e.*, the well-grounded confidence of things hoped for; it is the evidence, *i. e.*, demonstration, *ἔλεγχος*, or manifestness (as the rendering is in the Syriac Testament\*) of things not seen. It is a confidence in the reality of things hoped for, as if they were in actual possession; a realization of things invisible, as if they were in sight. As the confidence of things hoped for, it relates exclusively to the future; as the demonstration of things not seen, it may relate to the past as well as the future.

Now, it is through the operation of faith, as thus described, that all who have it in exercise, as the apostle to the Hebrews proceeds immediately to declare, understand, or perceive, *νοοῦμεν*, as if the knowledge were obtained through the medium of the senses, that the worlds were framed by the word of God. It is not, we say again, in, or by means of faith, as men come to the knowledge of Christ as a Saviour; but it is an understanding, which, by virtue of their faith, has been begotten within them; or, it is faith viewed as an act, which gives the knowledge and proof of the reality of things hoped for and unseen; and which, therefore, gives them, on the authority of God's revealed truth, the demonstration that the worlds were formed by the word of God. Faith is to be viewed not as a mere dogma demanding definition; it is an appropriation by the mind and heart, of all the great truths God has revealed as necessarily connected, and of all the great things he has promised, as if their possession had already been entered upon. The creation of the worlds, as understood by faith, of course must have exclusive reference to the second part of the general description of it, to wit, that it is the evidence or demonstration of things not seen. It was an event of which there were, and could have been, no human witnesses, when the things which are now visible were made, not out of apparent materials,

\* See Murdock's Translation.

or matter already in existence, but out of nothing. We have human testimony as to the reality of the miracles of Christ; but we have no such testimony as to the framing of the worlds by the word of God. Man could not have been a witness of that creation of which he was a component part. That portion of the inspired record, therefore, which gives an account of the origin of all things, is pure revelation, as much so as a prophecy of the future. It is an unfolding of the past, by him who knoweth all things, just as prophecy is an unfolding of the future. It is the testimony of man only as Moses testifies that he spake by the express authority of God. God himself (with reverence be it spoken!) was the earliest historian of the world. We know absolutely nothing—we mean to include the greatest scholars among men—of the origin of things, except what he has told us. Every true philosopher must come back to what the Bible has told him, that God is the author of all things, or he will surely prove himself to be but a fool. It is here that the simple-hearted peasant is on a footing with the profoundest student, and may often have an advantage over him, because he is simple-hearted. He believes, and is not tempted by a false science to rush in where science is of no more account than the sheerest ignorance. It is through faith, and through faith alone, that men, whether learned or unlearned, can understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God. It accepts God's own testimony, that he is the Creator of all things; and so accepts it as to know or perceive things, not perceptible by the senses. It opens up in the man a higher region of perception and knowledge than that which exists in the senses. It is well remarked by the great Dr. Owen, that as when it is said, we are justified by faith, faith includes its object, Christ and his righteousness, so in this case, faith includes its object, the divine revelation, made in the word of God. "By the word of the Lord, were the heavens made; and all the hosts of them, by the breath of his mouth. He gathered the waters of the sea together as a heap: he laid up the depths in storehouses." "He spake and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast." Ps. xxxiii. 6, 7, 9.

There was first a calling of the matter, of which the worlds are composed, by a sovereign word, into existence, and then

a framing of this matter into distinct worlds, and a fashioning of all created things into that beautiful order which we behold. All this was accomplished by the simple fiat of the Almighty. He said, BE; and IT WAS. There were no intermediate agencies, instruments, or powers, coming in between his will, or his word, and the result. The vastness of the work is intimated, by the expression "the worlds;" *i. e.*, the universe, in all its vastness and variety, beginning from the lowest and ascending to the highest; or, beginning from the highest, and descending to the lowest. There was first, as we have said, the creative act, by which they were called out of nothingness into existence, "so that things which are seen were not made" out of preëxisting materials. The omnipotent power of God was employed in this work. Nothing else was adequate to the performance of it. Every thing out of himself, or distinct from his own being, was made by him. "Without him (the Creator) was not any thing made that was made." John i. 3. That "from nothing, nothing can come," is true only in respect to the power of created, dependent beings. It would be a contradiction in terms, that an omnipotent Being could not cause that to exist, which did not exist before. Ancient philosophers, governed by the maxim that "from nothing, nothing comes," held to the doctrine of the eternity of matter. Some of them, to the eternity of the world, as it now exists; others of them to the eternity of the atoms, or elements, which were at length fortuitously brought together in the form of worlds. The very highest point which the most cultivated of them ever attained was, that the world must have been formed by an intelligent Power, but out of preëxisting materials. But modern philosophy is ready to concede that a first cause, essentially different from all dependent causes, is an intellectual necessity. The mind can find no satisfaction, no repose, except in an all-creating, self-existing mind. It cries out for God; and the senseless clod, and shapeless stone, no less than the solar system, unite in proclaiming his existence, wisdom, and power. "In his self-existence," says the acute author of the *Fundamental Principles of Mathematics*, "as it 'was, and is, and is to come,' is to be found *THE one, the absolutely necessary truth*: all others are contingent, just so far as *He* has made them so.

Herein is to be found, moreover, *the great, the final hypothesis*, upon which rests *the structure of the universe*; and which, too, undergirds and sustains the universe, in *all its relations*." The wisest of the ancients needed such a revelation of God as we have in the sacred oracles, to enable them to rise to the height of this great truth, that he created the world. They needed just that discovery, which is contained in the opening sentence of the Bible, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." They needed the enlightening power of faith.

God, having called the world into existence, by his word, did then, by divine skill, "frame," or fashion them. He said, Let there be light; and the darkness fled away. Let there be a firmament; and it was arched above the world. Let the waters be gathered into one place; and the waves rolled back, and were shut up as in storehouses. Let the dry land appear; and valleys and plains were stretched out; mountains lifted their crowns towards heaven. Let there be light to divide the day from the night, and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and for years. He speaks again, and the beautiful, and as yet tenantless world, is replenished with another and higher form of life; fishes swarm the sea, birds fill the air, cattle and beasts roam and graze in the fresh and ample pastures; and, at last, "the master-work," man, stands forth, and gazes on the scene, and listens to the morning stars singing together, and the sons of God shouting for joy, over this finished work, "very good," even in the eyes of the holy Being who made it. There was a design in his every work, and an adaptation of every work to its proper end, fitted to excite the adoration of every intelligent creature. He established that beautiful order which reigns among the heavenly bodies, and those laws which control winds, rains, seas, seasons, and the fruits of the earth, and make it a fit dwelling-place for man. All objects have their appropriate purposes; all faculties have their corresponding objects. Everywhere we are met with the evidences of divine wisdom.

Such, in brief, was the work, concerning which we are made to know something, through faith, which we can learn in no other way. Admit it to be true, if you please, that science now shuts the door as effectually against the self-existence, or



eternity of the material universe, as the Bible does, still it does not follow that science alone could make us acquainted with that great truth, which we learn, through faith, to wit, that the worlds were framed by the word of God. Have we the least reason for concluding that modern philosophy, without the revelation we have of God, in the Scriptures, would have contended any more successfully against the tendencies of a depraved nature, to darken and mislead the mind? Is not the revelation of the eternal power and Godhead of the Ruler of the world, as we have it in the Bible, absolutely essential to such beings as we are, notwithstanding all the light of nature, or all that science can teach, when we come to deal with the origin of things? Reason may decide against the eternity of the material universe, but can reason, in such depraved creatures as we are, find out the true God, or find out any better divinities than were adored, when it reigned proudly, as of old? Would it not still talk of appetency, necessity, adaptive energy, or of development, and attribute to such blind phantoms as these the work of God? And if it cannot find out a God omnipotent, and infinitely wise, can it ascertain that great truth, which is at the beginning of all our knowledge, that all things were made by him? No; it must sit down humbly at the feet of revelation, for the sublime teaching, that in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. It may investigate the composition, changes, and mutual actions of material substances; but it cannot give an account of the origin of these substances. It may treat of the structure, formation, and position of the mineral masses of the globe, and the causes of their physical features; but its explorations are sure to reach primitive beds, which it finds it impossible to trace to any antecedent matter. It may take the wings of the morning, and traverse the nebulous paths of the heavens, and expatiate amidst the so-called original fire-mist of the astral regions, as if, with its keen eye, it actually saw it rotating and aggregating into suns and planets; but who made this star-dust? who sowed the vast fields of space with it, as a husbandman would scatter wheat from his hand over his ploughed acres? "Declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it?" Job xxxviii.

4, 5. The profoundest philosopher is just as much dependent for this knowledge, on the first verses of Genesis and of John, as the most unlettered Christian.

But even if science, after reaching the conclusion that the material universe must have had a beginning, could then have inferred that it owed its origin to an omnipotent Power, still it could not have found out that it was brought into existence by the simple word of a personal Jehovah; that he spake, and it was done; he commanded and it stood fast. Here, then, unmistakably, is a clear, dividing line between Revelation and Science, where the former says to the latter, in tones of authoritative majesty, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further." That great fact of the Divine authorship of worlds, of which ancient philosophy was ignorant, and which modern science fails of itself to discover, we understand through faith, by the revelation God has made of it in his word. The eminent astronomer, La Place, because he could find, as he said, in the solar system no indications of an end, was unable to find in it any trace of a beginning. The Bible, in its very first flash of light on our darkness, finds that beginning. It "establishes," to use the words of the lamented Hugh Miller, "the divine authorship of the universe, and shows that all its various forces are not self-existent, but owe their origin to a great First Cause." *Test. of the Rocks*, p. 384, Am. ed.

That faith, in behalf of which we set up the claim that it is a source of positive knowledge, is just our faith in the Bible, or the revelation it contains. It has evidences without, and evidences within, which convince us that God addresses us in its pages. He must have revealed directly to Moses the account it contains of the creation of all things. Hence the grounds of our faith in the Divine authorship of the universe are just the grounds of our faith in the Divine origin of the Scriptures. Strike away the one, and you strike away the other, and remand us to the ignorance of ancient philosophers, or to the mere speculations of science. Let those who disparage faith, or condescend to speak of it, in comparison with science, in a patronizing tone, as if it belonged to some less certain, less important sphere, ask themselves, how, without it, they would arrive at any correct knowledge of the origin of things. Faith

makes us to know. It makes us "understand." It is a source of positive knowledge. We use these words in their plain, natural sense. It brings great light to the understanding. Its own source of light is the scriptural, supernatural revelation. Without this, it would be no better than a dream, a delusion, or, at the best, the suggestion of a plausible theory; but with God to guide it, it guides the human mind to the acquisition of the highest species of knowledge. The Scriptures not only contain the revelation, which gives light to the understanding, but they seem to put, as we have already seen, the knowledge gained through faith, on much the same footing with that gained through the senses, as to the certainty of it. It certainly fills the mind with the most noble conceptions and ideas: whatever is revealed to us in the Scriptures, that we may be said to understand, through faith. All the great and glorious things contained in them, and not discoverable by the mere light of nature, constitute the knowledge we acquire through faith. Without faith, the Bible makes nothing known to us any more than light discovers to a blind man the objects and scenes among which he is moving. The light to us is in Divine revelation; and faith is the instrument, the eye, by which we discern things in that light. To estimate them, the value of faith, as a means of positive knowledge, we must estimate the value of that revelation on which it rests. Such is that sometimes despised, and little understood thing, FAITH. That by which we understand some of the greatest things the men of this world do not understand. It not only "brings distant prospects near," and is thus the confident ground of things hoped for; but it "sets times past in present view," and is in that direction also the demonstration or manifestness of things unseen. It looks backward as well as forward. It places, as it were, the weak mortal, of whom God asks, "Where wast thou when I laid the foundation of the earth?" at his right hand, and permits him to see his work, as it rises out of nothing, and hear his voice, as he speaks to things that are not, and they are. It fills his own understanding, and makes him know, for a great moral purpose, how this world arose out of eternal nothing into being.

But we are as much indebted to faith for our knowledge of

the final cause of the creation, as of its first cause. It gives us the same certainty in respect to the one as in respect to the other, as it is founded on the same revelation. That revelation declares that the world was created not only by Him, but for Him, who is the Lord both of the dead and the living, who was in the beginning with God,—a beginning before that spoken of by Moses in the first verse of the Bible, before any thing was made that was made. “By him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and FOR HIM. And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.” Col. i. 16, 17. He is the end as well as the beginning of his works, the Omega as well as the Alpha; and his work of redemption is the end of all his other works. All his works of providence, as well as creation, are subservient to it,—are designed to work out the eternal counsels of sovereign, saving grace. Here, surely, is a province in which science is as blind,—if not even more so,—and must be as silent as in the former case. What can it know, or possibly discover, respecting the gracious purposes of God? Faith in divine revelation, and this faith alone, tells us what the world, and what we were made for. It represents the whole creation, standing as with outstretched neck, waiting, and even groaning and travailing in pain for the longing it hath for some grand event of the future. And what is 'that event? The manifestation of the sons of God, the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. Redeemed man, in his whole nature—that body made out of the dust of the earth, no less than the soul from the breath of the Almighty—is to be made partaker of immortal life. The hour is coming in the which all that are in their graves shall come forth. It is this “deciphers man.” He was not made merely for this short, vain life. That the resurrection is not too great a hope, we have the same power which created the body out of dust, as well as the promise of him who created it, to rest upon. What could be more opposed to the long-received principles of natural reason, than that the worlds were made out of nothing? The same faith that assures of this, assures us of the resurrection, and places it among the items of our knowledge.

The resurrection past, the heavens and the earth, which are now, or as at present constituted, will also pass away. This appearing and disappearing of human generations, in long succession, so that history is constantly reproducing itself, or, in the words of Solomon, the thing that is, and hath been, is that which shall be, and that which is done is that which shall be done, is not to go on for ever. They stand, as it were, waiting for the great change which has been predicted in them, and is to fit them to be the theatre of man's immortality. The very things which science, perhaps, would pronounce abnormal, or exceptional to the usual course of nature, are her interceding groans for the coming of that brighter era. The jars and discords of a disjointed world—the reverberation of the elemental war—the sighing of the midnight storm—the angry voice of tempest-wrought oceans, are cries for deliverance, the prayers which earth sends up, "How long, O Lord, how long?" The heavens and the earth, created by his word, and at his will, when the fulness of the time is come, will be dissolved. "The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." 2 Peter iii. 10. Our faith as to this matter rests on the same ground precisely, as does our faith as to the original framing of the heavens and the earth. God hath told us so, and we know whom we have believed. The scoffers, who are to come in the last days, saying, "Where is the promise of his coming?" are described as those who are "willingly ignorant of this, that, by the word of God, the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water." Because they are willingly ignorant of the beginning of the heavens and the earth, they are, in like manner, ignorant of their predicted end. If we know the one, we may know the other. By the same word, we "look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness," and in them discover the glorious completed end of a benevolent God, in the first creation. "Behold, I create new heavens, and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind." Isa. lxxv. 17. The God who could make this creation out of nothing, can fashion and garnish new heavens and a new earth out of the ruins of the former, and so

much more glorious, by indwelling and abiding righteousness, that the old shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. The fairest scene of beauty which they present, and which have won the praises of the gifted children of song, shall be for ever forgotten. Should it be said, in derogation of our faith, that there are no appearances, in the present imperfect, disordered state of things, which favour such a hope, we do not forget that there were no appearances which prognosticated the creation of this world. It was not made of things which do appear. What if there be no encouraging appearances, and such as there be are quite discouraging! What are they to Him who made heaven and earth out of nothing? What cannot that God who made the heavens do? He will, out of "this tempestuous state of human things," bring forth order and beauty, evoke a new creation, call into being, or frame out of the ruins of this, another world, pure, peaceful, blissful, everlasting; which no storm shall ever smite, no sin ever defile, no strife ever deluge with tears and blood.

Such are the great certainties, in respect to the origin and ultimate end of creation, which that faith, which is the demonstration of things not perceptible by the senses, makes us to know. The universe has a Creator—omniscient, omnipotent, merciful. There is a presiding Intelligence, a controlling Hand, a sovereign Will, over the dread potencies which are at work among these worlds and systems of worlds. Let not science, in investigating them, ignore Him who is in them, his agency or purpose, or attempt to place Jehovah at too great a distance from his works. In drinking at the fountain of knowledge, we are not to "dissolve the pearl of our salvation in the draught." For, upon what, then, shall we rest our hope? where seek the elements of faith? or, where look for consolation, to keep up the sinking heart, amid the woes and deaths through which we are making our way to the grave?