

SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW.

NUMBER IV.

APRIL, MDCCLVI.

ARTICLE I.

TESTIMONY OF THE REFORMERS TO THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY.

The reformers were men of eminent ability and scholarship, and familiar with the scriptures in their original languages. They were also familiar with all the controversies which had been agitated in the church respecting the doctrine of the Trinity, and were very soon called upon to engage in these controversies themselves. They acknowledged the right and duty of private judgment and the divine perfection and authority of the Scriptures as an infallible ground of faith and hope. To the bible, therefore, they appealed as the ground of their faith and hope, and with free, diligent and impartial investigation, relying on the promised guidance of the Holy Spirit, they sought to discover and present its meaning as the teaching of Him who cannot lie and who will not deceive, and who has assured us that "all scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable to doctrine, for reproof and for correction."

Their testimony is not the opinion of one man, nor of a few, nor of those of one country, but of many, yea, of large bodies of men in various countries acting without concert, with many conflicting interests, as at present, in the face of persecution, danger and death, with much painful and laborious investigation and discussion, with every skill in languages, understanding the signification and force of words, the drift and scope of the divine

ARTICLE V.

REVELATION AND INSPIRATION

"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."—*Romans* x: 17. *

In the words before us, the Apostle first states in what the essence of a sinner's religion consists, and then how it is produced. The essence of this religion, as plainly appears from the context, he makes to be faith in Jesus Christ. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart, that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." As if anxious to avoid the imputation of novelty, and to show that he taught nothing but what was contained in the lively oracles of God, the Apostle appeals in confirmation of his doctrine to the testimony of an ancient Prophet. "For the Scripture saith, whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed." I must call your especial attention to the manner in which Paul applies this passage to the case of the Gentiles; as it furnishes a strong incidental proof of his profound conviction that the very words of Scripture were the words of the Holy Ghost. He knew nothing of an inspiration of the Spirit as contradistinguished from an inspiration of the letter, and consequently does not scruple to build an argument upon a single expression, when that expression is the language of a Prophet. Because the Scripture saith *whosoever*, without limitation or restriction, the Apostle concludes that there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek. This term equally includes them both, and he accordingly has no hesitation in drawing the inference, that "the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him." It is to be received as an universal proposition, true in all cases and under all circumstances, and that upon the force of a single term—that "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

* Sermon Preached in Charleston before the Young Men's Christian Association.

The religion of a sinner being compendiously embraced by the Apostle under the head of faith, the question arises, how is this faith produced? The successive steps of the process are first expanded in a series of forcible and pungent interrogatories, and then recapitulated in the words of the text. "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent." That is, in order to the existence of faith there must be a Divine testimony. The Word of God is its standard and measure. That this testimony may produce faith, it must be known—it must be imparted from without—it is not the offspring of our own cogitations, nor the product of our own thoughts; it comes to us in the form of a report. But in order that it may be proposed and communicated, there must be persons commissioned for the purpose—there must be Apostles—men, in other words, to whom the word of the Lord is intrusted. This then is the Divine arrangement. A class of men is put in charge of that which is to be the object of faith. This is inspiration. They report to others as the word of the Lord—this is revelation—and this report is the medium through which a saving faith is engendered. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Inspiration gives rise to revelation, revelation to faith, and faith is the sum and substance of religion. If you ask the Apostle what it is to be inspired—he briefly answers that it is to be sent with a message from God—if you ask him what he means by revelation, he as promptly replies that it is the Divine message delivered; and if you inquire of him in regard to man's duty, it is compendiously to believe the report. This is his philosophy of religion. God sends—Apostles report—men believe.

But simple and consistent as it seems, this account, we are told, is in palpable contradiction to the very nature of religion and the fundamental laws of the human mind. We are accordingly furnished with a theory drawn from a deeper philosophy than Prophets or Apostles ever knew, which, under the pretence of emancipating us from the bondage of the letter and giving free scope to the

liberty of the Spirit, has left us nothing of Christianity but the name. A revelation which reports the testimony of God and the faith which believes it because it is his testimony, are both discarded as psychological absurdities, and as to the idea that any man or set of men have ever been commissioned to speak to others in the name of the Lord and to challenge submission to their message on the ground of the Divine authority which attests it, this is scouted as "of all our vanities the motliest, the merest word that ever fooled the ear from out the schoolman's jargon." The issues involved in this controversy are momentous. It is not a question about words and names—it is a question which involves the very foundations of Christianity. The insidious efforts to undermine the authority of the Bible and to remove an external, infallible standard of faith, however disguised in the covert of philosophy, are prompted by a deep and inveterate opposition to the doctrines of the cross. The design is to destroy the religion, and hence the fury of the efforts against the citadel in which it is lodged. It is not the casket but the jewel that has raised all this clamour of rancorous opposition—and when men cry down with the Bible, the real meaning of their rage is—away with Jesus and His cross. Vain is all their opposition—vain the combination of philosophers and sophists—He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh—the Lord shall have them in derision—He hath set His his Son upon the holy hill of Zion, and there he must reign until he has put down all his enemies under his feet.

The new theory of religion—I call it new, not because any of its fundamental principles are new—they are only old errors in a new dress—but because it is supported upon new grounds—this new theory of religion I propose briefly to consider in contrast with the testimony of Paul—so that it may be seen to be untenable, even on the principles of the metaphysical philosophy, behind which it has entrenched itself.

I. I shall begin with the new theory of Revelation, as the discussion of that will lead me say all that I deem important upon the present occasion on the nature and essence of religion.

"The idea of revelation," we are told by the writer

whom I have in view, "always implies a process by which knowledge, in some form or other, is communicated to an intelligent being. For a revelation at all to exist there must be an intelligent being, on the one hand, adapted to receive it, and there must be, on the other hand, a process by which this same intelligent being becomes cognizant of certain facts or ideas. Suppress either of these conditions, and no revelation can exist. The preaching of an angel would be no revelation to an idiot—a Bible in Chinese would offer none to an European. In the former case, there is no intelligence capable of receiving the ideas conveyed; in the latter case, the process of conveyance renders the whole thing practically a nonentity, by allowing no idea whatever to reach the mind. We may say then, in a few words, that a revelation always indicates *a mode of intelligence.*"*

From this passage we see the necessity of being on our guard against the ambiguity of words. It is, perhaps, unfortunate that a term, which in its strict and proper acceptation, applies only to a part of the contents of the sacred volume should, have been, as in the language of theology it confessedly has been, applied to the whole canon of faith. The Scriptures themselves denominate nothing revelations but those supernatural mysteries, which lie beyond the province of reason, which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, and which could not be known, independently of the supernatural teaching of the Spirit. When they speak of themselves as a whole they are designated simply by some title which indicates that they are the word of God. This is the phrase which Paul employs in the text, and employs in the same sense in which popular usage applies revelation.

It is little worthy of the dignity and candour of philosophy to construct an argument upon a verbal quibble. Revelation is synonymous with the standard of faith and as covering the whole contents of Scripture, without reference to the distinction of the natural and supernatural, is not so much a mode of intelligence as a ground of belief. Its office is not subjective, but objective. It is not *in* the mind, but *to* the mind. The simplest notion that we can form of it is that it is a message from God.

* Morell's Phil. Rel., p. 123-4; Eng. Ed.

Its work is done when it reports what He says. What distinguishes *revealed* from every other species of truth—is not its nature—not its object-matter—but the immediate ground of credibility. It is the measure of faith and the argument of faith is, thus saith the Lord. The characteristic of revelation, in the generic sense in which it is applied to the canon is,—that it contains or rather is a Divine testimony and this testimony must be the immediate ground of belief—I say the *immediate ground* of belief—because the ultimate and final basis of truth in every case is the faithfulness of God in the structure of our mental constitution. We believe the reports of our senses and the data of consciousness, because the constitution of our nature is such that we cannot do otherwise—but when we are asked, how we know that our faculties do not deceive us, we can only appeal to the moral character of Him, who has wrought these laws of belief into the very texture of our frames. But in these cases the immediate grounds of belief are found in our faculties themselves. It is ourselves that we first trust and not God. Such truths may be discoveries, but they are not revelations—they may be clear, distinct, unquestionable, but they are not Divine. We receive them either because they are self-evident and need no proof, or because we are able to prove them, and not because God appears as a witness in their behalf. Revelation and a Divine testimony are one and the same thing. How this testimony shall be received and what effects it shall produce, whether men shall understand it or not, whether it shall really awaken any ideas in their minds or create any emotions in their hearts, these are matters, which, however important in themselves, do not at all affect the question whether it is really a message from God. It may be admitted that a revelation to an idiot or in an unknown tongue, where no adequate provision was made for removing the impediments to an apprehension of its contents, would be very senseless and absurd. But such a message being supposed, the question whether it is a revelation is one thing, and whether it is wise and judicious is another—and in a philosophical discussion things that are separate ought to be kept distinct.

This adroit play upon the ambiguity of the term reve-

lation, in which it is made to be a mode of intelligence rather than the measure of a Divine faith, is the cornerstone upon which the author's whole theory of the nature and grounds of religious truth is erected.

It is unnecessary to give a detailed account of the process by which revelation is distinguished—it will be enough to seize upon his fundamental principle and expose its fallacy. His doctrine is briefly this—that revelation is a species of intuition in which things authenticate themselves. The realities of religion are brought directly into contact with the mind and vouch for their own existence, just as the material world, or the forms of beauty and of virtue are their own witnesses. We know the things that are freely given us of God, not by the testimony of his Spirit, but the immediate consciousness of their presence. Revelation is a spiritual perception in which we see the invisible and stand face to face with the infinite and eternal. Its objects are presented to us by God, but in no other sense than He presents the objects of all other knowledge. The rocks, mountains, caves, and valleys of the material world, the heavens above us and the earth beneath, are as really and truly a revelation from Him and in the same essential sense, as the Person, offices and work of His Own Eternal Son.

Faith is vision and the actual presentation of its objects its only standard and measure. In conformity with these views, inspiration is represented as a subjective process in which God adapts the mind to the objects presented in revelation. It is a clearing of the spiritual sight—a strengthening of the spiritual eye—"an especial influence wrought upon the faculties of the subject, by virtue of which he is able to grasp these realities in their perfect fulness and integrity. Revelation and inspiration, then, indicate," we are told, "one united process, the result of which upon the human mind is, to produce a state of spiritual intuition, whose phenomena are so extraordinary that we at once separate the agency by which they are produced from any of the ordinary principles of human development. And yet this agency is applied in perfect consistency with the laws and natural operations of our spiritual nature. Inspiration does not imply anything generically new in

the actual processes of the human mind. It does not involve any form of intelligence, essentially different from what we already possess. It indicates rather the elevation of the religious consciousness, and with it, of course, the power of spiritual vision, to a degree of intensity peculiar to the individuals thus highly favoured by God.*

This might be taken as a caricature of the work of the Spirit in the effectual calling of God's children, were it not that the author has taken special pains to show that there can be no other kind of inspiration, without contradiction to the laws of mind, but that which he has described. His inspiration is, in many respects, analogous to the saving operations of the Spirit. It enables its subject to understand revelation; brings him into harmony with Divine truth; subdues the passions; represses the influence of sense, and sanctifies the heart. It evidently stands in the same relation to his revelation that the regenerating and enlightening influences of grace sustain to the Scriptures of God. But an inspiration which gives rise to a revelation—which commits a message from the Holy one to the hands of men—which ends in a divine testimony as the standard and measure of a Divine faith, he can by no means abide. The objects of religion must authenticate themselves. The consequence is, that every man, in so far as he is religious, is inspired, and every man has his doctrine and his psalm. The inconsistency of these views, with the uniform and pervading testimony of the Scriptures, must strike the dullest apprehension. Paul, in our text, solemnly declares that faith comes by hearing. This new philosophy affirms that it comes by vision. Paul declares that the immediate ground of belief is the testimony of God. This new philosophy, that it is found in the things themselves. Paul declares that inspiration imparts to men a Divine message. This new philosophy that it purges the mind. Paul declares that it is restricted to Apostles—the new philosophy, that it is the property of the race.

All these enormous and palpable contradictions of Scripture have sprung from the gratuitous assumption,

* Morill, p. 151.

that revelation is a mode of intelligence, a process of our own minds and not an extraordinary message of God. Taking it for granted that it is nothing more than an exercise of our natural faculties in some form of cognition, the author proceeds to conclude from the laws of the disjunctive syllogism that it must be intuitive. He acknowledges but two modes of intelligence, and to one or the other of these it must belong. It cannot be a process of ratiocination—no rules of logick, no powers of combination and analysis—no force of words, nor ingenuity of inference could ever have evolved the scheme of redemption or the sublime mysteries of the cross. There are elements embraced in religion, which it never could have entered the heart of man to conceive. It introduces us in a high and sublime sense, into a new world—exalts us to new conceptions, and unveils to us glories beyond the suggestion of mortal thought. It bears upon its face impressions of originality and novelty which remove it beyond the sphere of the logical understanding, and carry convincing evidence, that however it came, it never could have been excogitated. This reasoning has a show of plausibility—it labours, however, under one fatal defect—the disjunction can be easily retorted. It is as easy to show, on the one hand, that Christianity, as a whole, never could have been intuitive, as it is to prove on the other, that it never could have been the offspring of logic. It involves relations and dependencies which could only have been adjusted by powers of combination. It is not a single concrete reality, like a man, a mountain, or a tree, but a connected scheme of events, every one of them contingent in relation to our knowledge, and concatenated into a system which cannot be grasped without calling into play all the powers of the logical understanding. It is a system which preëminently requires reasoning—a comprehensive view of great moral principles as they are involved and illustrated in a wonderful series of facts. What then? It cannot be intuitional—it cannot be logical?—One would think that this obvious *reductio ad absurdum* would have been sufficient to open the mind of a philosopher to the fallacy of his fundamental principle. No wonder that subjective religionists hate logic—it makes sad havoc with their finest speculations.

The notion, that revelation is a mode of intelligence, which, in plainer terms, means that it is a faculty of the human mind, is the parent or child—it is hard to say which is first in the order of nature,—of a still more serious mistake in reference to the nature of religious truth, and the peculiarities of Christian experience. This double misconception has concealed from the author the palpable incongruities of his system, and induced him to believe that the doctrines of grace might be pressed to the support of an hypothesis, which, legitimately carried out, reduces them to nonsense. To refute his scheme, is simply to expose these errors. He has made religious truth essentially different from what it is, and therefore has had to postulate a faculty in order to cognize it. He has made the religious life essentially different from what it is, and therefore has had to fit the work of the Spirit to his assumptions.

1. His first error is a fundamental misconception of the nature of religious truth. To say nothing of his chapters upon the peculiar essence of religion in general—and christianity in particular—it is evident, from the manner in which he attempts to set aside the popular notion of revelation, that he looks upon religion as embracing a province of things, a class of realities, or, if you prefer an expression more in accordance with the theory of Locke, a collection of simple ideas, entirely distinct from every other department of knowledge, every other sphere of existence. It is a world to itself. And as all primitive conceptions must come through some original faculty to which they are adapted, there must be a peculiar faculty of religion analogous to taste, or the sensibility to beauty, and conscience, or the sensibility to right.

“Imagine yourself,” says the author, “by definitions and explications addressed to the understanding, attempting to make a blind man, who had never gazed upon nature, comprehend the exquisite beauties in form, true and graceful motion, presented to the eye by a summer’s landscape. It is needless to say that all your descriptions would fall infinitely short of the actual reality—that they would not convey the hundredth part of what one minute’s gaze upon the scene would spontaneously present—that he could only conceive, indeed, of any por-

tion of it by analogies taken from the other senses. The reason of this that he knows the thing only formally by logical exposition; he has never had the proper experiences, never the direct sense-perceptions, which are absolutely necessary to a full realization of it. And so it is, *mutatis mutandis*, with religious truth. You may expound, and define, and argue upon the high themes which christianity presents to the contemplation; but unless a man have the intuitions, on which all mere verbal exposition must be grounded, there is no revelation of the spiritual reality to his mind, and there can be no clearer perception of the actual truth, than there is to the blind man of the vision of beauty which lies veiled in darkness around him."

Improvement in religious knowledge accordingly, is represented as consisting in the education and development of the religious faculty, which, at every stage of its growth, enlarges the sphere of our actual experience, and expands the horizon of our mental vision. Religion, like taste, presupposes an original susceptibility to a particular class of ideas. It may be cultivated, ennobled, and refined—but the mind can never get beyond the fundamental data, which are given in this form of consciousness. All accessions to its knowledge are only new experiences—the faculty is the parent of all the truth we can know. Reflection may construct a science, presenting these data in their proper order, and showing their connections, dependencies, and consequences—but to him who is destitute of the data, the science is unmeaning and nugatory. All theology, consequently, is nothing but the product of analysis and synthesis, from the materials which are given in experience. As the science of optics to the blind, and the science of music to the deaf, can be little more than jargon, so any representative exhibitions of Divine truth to one whose religious faculty has not yet been awakened, would be worse than idle.

We meet this whole train of reasoning by a bold and confident denial of its fundamental assumption. Religion, in the sense asserted, is not a simple thing—it is not a collection of ideas at all analogous to the sensible properties of matter, or the original faculties of the mind. Neither is it exclusively confined to any one department

of our nature—so that we can say that this is the religious sense, as we affirm of conscience, that it is a moral sense, or of taste, that it is the sense of the beautiful and fair. I do not say that religion involves no simple ideas or primitive elements of thought—this would be an absurdity. But I do say that there are no intuitions peculiar to religion, requiring a separate and distinct faculty, in order to their cognition, and which could not and would not have been developed in the ordinary exercise of our powers. There are no things, no objects of thought which, as such, are simply and exclusively religious—which exist, in other words, only in so far as they are religious. There are no simple ideas characteristic of revelation, and which, without it, would never have found a lodgment in the mind. On the contrary, our faculties, in the sphere of their ordinary exercise, furnish us with all the materials out of which the whole fabric of revealed truth is constructed. Every stone in the sacred and august temple is hewn from the quarry of common experience. The Bible contains not a single simple idea, which, considered merely as an element of thought, may not be found in the consciousness of every human being, who has ever exercised his wits. It is not the elements, but the combination of these elements, that gives to revelation its peculiarity and grandeur. It is not the stones, but the order and arrangement of the stones that constitute the building. Revelation deals preëminently with complex ideas—particularly with what Locke denominates mixed modes, which, as they are mainly retained in the mind, by the force of words, would seem to refer revelation to the category from which our author excludes it, of verbal exposition.

But the fallacy of the notion of a peculiar religious faculty, with its characteristic cognitions will yet more fully appear from a brief investigation of the nature of religion itself. What, then, is religion? In whatever its peculiar essence may be said to consist, one thing is universally conceded, that it grows out of the relations betwixt moral and intelligent creatures and their God. Take away God—there can be no religion—because there is no object upon which it can fasten—take away moral and intelligent creatures, and there can be no religion,

because there are no subjects in whom it can inhere. Prosecute the analysis, and it will be found that the relations out of which religion arises, are those that are involved in moral government. They that come unto God must believe that He is, and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. It is not a little remarkable that this conception of moral government, without which religion is a term destitute of meaning, has wholly escaped the notice of our profound philosopher, and we need not be astonished that a system which dispenses with obedience and law, has no manner of use for the Bible. The essence of religion, as a subjective phenomenon, is made to consist in a state of feeling which a dog may have in common with his master. There is certainly nothing moral in a naked sense of dependence. Men may feel that they are in the hands of God, and hate His power. Devils feel it and blaspheme, although they tremble. Having settled the principle that religion grows out of the relations involved in moral government, we are prepared for a detailed consideration of its objective elements. These are obviously embraced in a history of the Divine administration—an account of the law to which obedience is exacted—of the rewards to which it shall be entitled, and of the doom to which transgressors shall be assigned. It is a history, in other words, of God's providence as unfolded in His dealings with the race. An account of God's purposes as already, or yet to be developed, in events.

Subjectively considered, it indicates the attitude in which men should stand to the Divine administration—a generic condition of the soul prompting to exercises in unison with the requisitions of the law. It extends not to a single faculty or power, but to the whole man; it is the loyalty of a subject to his prince; of a dutiful son to the father that begat him. God, the just and righteous Ruler—man, the subject, whether obedient or rebellious. These are the terms that must be given to understand religion. It is mainly conversant with relations, and those exclusively moral.

As it treats of the progress and conduct of a government, any account of it must, in the nature of the case, be, to a large degree, historical. Revelation, in regard

to it, must be analogous to an explanation of the laws, constitution and history of a kingdom in past ages, or in a distant quarter of the earth.

These things being so, no other intuitions are needed, in order to grasp the truths of religion, but those which are evolved by our circumstances in the world. The great idea of moral government is not only a primary dictum in its germ, of every human consciousness, but is daily and hourly exemplified in more or less completeness by the relations of the family, the school, the State. It meets us every where, and men can never efface it from their souls, until they have extinguished the light of conscience. Truth, justice, benevolence, mercy, all those moral attributes which adorn the character of God, and which are required to be found in us, demand nothing more than the ordinary operations of our moral nature, in order to be, in some measure, understood. Revelation consequently deals with no new and peculiar simple ideas. It is not, consequently, a faculty or mode of intelligence. Conversant about relations and historical in its form, it must be a presentation to our faculties of facts and events, involving combinations of simple ideas collected from all quarters, which can only be done by report. Philosophy confirms the apostle that faith comes by hearing.

But we may go a step farther, and show from a brief recapitulation of the distinctive doctrines of christianity, as they are unfolded in the Scriptures, that they turn upon events which could be known only by the testimony of God. The Gospel is a history of the conception and execution of God's purposes of grace to the fallen family of man. That there should exist such a purpose is, relatively to human knowledge, a contingent event. There were no principles from which we or any creature could demonstrate it a priori. How then shall we know it? By intuition? It is one of the deep things of God, and none can penetrate His counsels, but His own Spirit. He must reveal it, or it must remain locked up in eternal secrecy. The mediation of Christ, the grand agency by which redemption has been achieved, as actually interposed, is a history, involving a series of events deriving all their significancy and importance from relations

that the understanding alone can grasp. As God and man in one person—as prophet, priest and king of the church, he performed and still continues to perform, a work in which, what strikes the senses, is the shell—the substance lies within. How shall we know that He was the federal head and legal substitute of men. This was a sovereign and arbitrary appointment. How shall we know that he bore our sins in his own body on the tree; that he was bruised for our iniquities, and wounded for our transgressions. How shall we know that He was justified in the Spirit, and that he is now seated at God's right hand, and ever liveth to make intercession for us? Evidently these things must depend upon report. Faith must come by hearing. Either then such a religion as Christianity *cannot* be true—not only is not true, but *cannot* be true, or at least known by us to be true, or revelation is not a mode of intelligence. In this sense, such a religion cannot be revealed. The only species of revelation which it admits is, that of verbal exposition. It must be a history recited or recorded, or both. Faith must lean on report.

As a religion of moral government so obviously requires this species of revelation, if revealed at all, it is worthy of remark, that those who have been most malignant in their assaults against the bondage of the letter, have been left to exemplify in many painful and distressing instances, that they were also emancipated from the bondage of the law. Dealing in intuitions and rhapsodies, living in a world of impalpable shapes and airy forms, they soon learn to treat with contempt the tame and sober relations which are involved in the notions of husband, citizen, friend and subject. Mysticism is an intoxicating draught—a stimulus so powerful, not unfrequently, in particular directions, that all sense of responsibility is lost, and the darkest crimes are perpetrated with as little remorse as a drunkard belches forth his oaths, or insults the wife of his bosom, or the children of his loins. The letter is the guardian of morals as well of truth. It teaches men what they are often anxious to forget, that there is a law—holy, just, and good, and yet terrible to evil-doers, which supports the eternal throne. It unveils a judgment to come—a

day is appointed in which the world shall be judged in righteousness, and every man shall receive at the hands of impartial justice according to his deeds. This unflinching supremacy of right—this supreme dominion of law—this terrible responsibility for sin—is no doubt a grievous offence. But those who will not accept the provisions of grace—all in accordance with the immutable requisitions of right—may kindle a fire and walk in the light of their own sparks, but this shall they have at God's hands—they shall lie down in sorrow. Their intuitions and impulses, their dreams and inspirations, will not save them from the awful exactions of that government which was whispered in conscience, thundered on Sinai, and hallowed on Calvary. God will by no means clear the guilty.

But misapprehending, as he has done, the essential nature of religious truth, he has confounded two things that are entirely distinct—the process of giving a revelation and the process of making a Christian. Having made revelation a faculty in man, which, like every other faculty, is developed by exercise on its appropriate objects, he could find no other office for inspiration but that of stimulating and strengthening the natural organ of religious truth. Revelation itself is the Divine life. The possession of this faculty is what makes man a religious being—and he improves in religion just to the extent that this form of consciousness is developed, cultivated and refined. Inspiration is what quickens it into motion. Let it be granted that there is such a species of inspiration as that here described, it obviously does not exclude the inspiration which gives a message from God. If religious truth is of such a nature that in order to be known it must be reported, the fact that an influence may be necessary to enable a man to receive and understand the report, is not inconsistent with the other fact, that there must be some one to make the report. You can dispense with messengers, only upon the supposition that the knowledge to be conveyed, cannot be communicated by a message. It is this misconception which has led our author to confound inspiration with conversion. If he had been right as to what religion

is, he would have seen the necessity of inspiration in the sense of the Apostle, who makes it the sending of men with a testimony from God. What it is in its own nature, how God operated upon the minds of Apostles—and how far their own powers were called into play, are simply curious questions—about which the Bible has resolved nothing. The main thing is that those who were so sent spake not the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth—and as they spake, so also they wrote, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Their words and writings are equally and alike the testimony of God. The end of inspiration is to furnish the rule of faith. That comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But apart from the abusive application of the term inspiration to the renewing and sanctifying operations of the Spirit, the author has misrepresented that work itself in consequence of his primary error in reference to revelation.

The notion that revelation is a faculty of peculiar intuitions the author has marvellously confounded with the evangelical doctrine of the agency of the Spirit in regeneration. "In making these statements," says he, "we are simply putting in a more definite form what almost all classes of Christians fully admit, and what they are perpetually asserting. Is it not allowed that men, even of intellect and learning, may read the Bible through and through again, and yet may have no spiritual perceptions of the realities to which it refers? Do we not constantly hear it asserted that Divine truth must be spiritually understood? Nay, does not St. Paul himself tell us that the things of the Spirit of God must be spiritually discerned? And what does all this amount to, but that there must be the awakening of the religious consciousness before the truth is actually revealed to us, and that it can only be revealed to us at all, essentially speaking, in the form of religious intuition."

I am willing to admit that if religious truth consisted of a collection of simple and primitive cognitions, the only conceivable mode of making them intelligible to men would be to produce them in their consciousness. If God designed to impart to the blind the idea of colours,

to the deaf the idea of sounds, or to those totally destitute of the senses, the glories of heaven and the beauties of earth, it would be necessary to impart the faculties that they wanted and bring them into contact with their appropriate objects. But if Divine truth, so far as it implies intuitional elements, lays under tribute the contributions of all our faculties in the ordinary sphere of their exercise—as it involves no elements requiring a peculiar and distinctive faculty of religion, as it appeals mainly and pre-eminently to the logical understanding—the difficulty which is obviated in regeneration and conversion must be something very different from the production of a new class of cognitions. Hence it has never been contended by Evangelical Divines that grace communicates new faculties to the soul. Man, since the fall, possesses all the original powers with which he was gifted when he came from the hands of God. Neither is it contended that the Spirit awakens any dormant susceptibilities—any latent capacities which have lacked the opportunity of development and exercise. This, nor anything like this, is the Scriptural theory of grace—and if our author had understood the real condition of man, he would have seen the true position of the word in the economy of salvation, and have assigned it its office without confounding it with the work of the Spirit.

2. I proceed to expose his misconception in relation to the end or design of Divine Revelation. He makes it, as we have seen, a faculty in man which God develops by the presentation of its appropriate objects, and occasionally stimulates by the special influence of inspiration. Revelation is, therefore, the Divine life. A man is religious just to the extent that this form of intuitional consciousness is developed, cultivated and refined. Now in opposition to this, Paul asserts that revelation is in order to the Divine life—the means of producing it, and rearing and expanding it to its full proportions. He makes faith to be the very essence of a sinner's religion, and the word of God to be its measure and its rule. The testimony of God without us supplies us with the credenda, the things to be believed. That exists independently of our own minds. But will the mere report of

the Divine testimony infallibly terminate in faith? Paul promptly replies that they have not all obeyed the Gospel, and Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? What, then, is the difficulty? Is it that the Gospel is naturally unintelligible? that it contains, I mean, verbal statements involving simple ideas or primitive elements of thought, which we have no faculties to grasp? Is it that it talks of colours to a blind man, or of sounds to a deaf one? By no means—the terms it uses are all in themselves intelligible, and intelligible by us with none but the faculties that we bring with us into the world. It speaks of a ruler—a judge—sin—guilt—condemnation—pardon and atonement—all things which, to some extent, we are able to conceive and to represent in thought. It is not, therefore, that its terms are senseless—it is not as if written in Chinese or Sanscrit—not like the preaching of an angel to an idiot.

The difficulty is one which intuition cannot reach. If the things revealed were actually present to the mind, the difficulty would still exist—it would still be true that the natural man would refuse to receive them, and that he could not spiritually discern them. Mr. Morell seems to think that all that is wanted is simply the faculty of apprehension—the power of knowing the things and perceiving them to be real. But this is not the case. The difficulty lies in the moral condition of the sinner. The sinner remaining as he is, no presence of spiritual realities, no contact of them with the mind, however immediate and direct, would give him a different kind of discernment from that which he obtains from the word. This moral condition is denominated in the Scriptures a state of death—and the term is happily chosen. It exactly describes depravity in its pervading influence upon all the powers and faculties of the man. Holiness is called a life—the life of God in the soul of man—and by pursuing the analogies which these terms suggest we may form some definite conceptions of the real hinderances among men to the cordial reception of the word. What, then, is life? It evidently belongs to that class of things which, incomprehensible in themselves and incapable of being represented in thought, are matters of necessary belief. We see its

affects—we witness its operations—we can seize upon the symptoms which distinguish its presence. But what it is in itself no mortal mind can conceive. We can only speak of it as the unknown cause of numberless phenomena which we notice. Where is life? is it here and not there? is it there and not here? Is it in the heart, the head, the hands, the feet? It evidently pervades the frame—it is the condition, the indispensable condition to the organic action of every part of the body. The body may be perfect in its structure—it may have every limb and nerve, and muscle—and foreign influences may be made to mimick the operations of life—but if life be not there, these actions; or rather motions, will be essentially distinct from those of the living man.

In like manner holiness is a generic condition of the soul. As a state or nature, it is incomprehensible in itself, we can no more represent it in thought than we can form an image of power or causation. It is a something which lies at the foundation of all its exercises and operations, and gives them a peculiar and distinctive cast. It is not itself a habit, nor a collection of habits, but the indispensable condition of all spiritual habits. It is not here nor there, but it pervades the whole man—the understanding, the will, the conscience, the affections—it underlies all the dispositions and habitudes and is felt in all the thoughts and desires. Natural life has its characteristic functions—so spiritual life has its distinguishing tendencies. They all point to God. He is holy, and where this quality exists in the creature it is attracted to Him and produces a communion—a fellowship—a familiarity, if I may so speak, which easily detects the impressions of God wherever they exist. It involves an union with Him, that renders His traces patient and obvious wherever they are found. Spiritual death or depravity is the opposite of all this—a generic condition of the soul in which these particular exercises are not possible. The same faculties may remain—the same ideas may be suggested—the same objective realities may be conceived—the same materials of thinking may exist—but that influence proceeding from holiness which distinguishes all the operations of the sanctified

mind is wanting. That union and fellowship with God, that mysterious familiarity which hears and knows His voice, even in its lowest whispers, is gone. The characteristic tendencies of the carnal mind are *from* God—it is even enmity against God, not subject to His law nor capable of becoming so. Now faith, in the Apostolic sense, involves the recognition of God in the word. It believes in consequence of the Divine testimony. It knows God's voice. When the Gospel is proclaimed, it is perceived to be a message of love and of mercy from the eternal throne.

This faith can only exist in a holy heart. An unconverted sinner can no more exercise it than the dead can rise and walk or the blind can see. Two men may receive a letter from the same person—or rather the same letter may be put into the hands of both. One is an intimate friend of the writer—the other an entire stranger. The stranger reads it, and apprehends exactly the same ideas, considered as mere thoughts—but he sees not the writer in it, and cannot enter into it with that sympathy, that cordiality and delight with which the friend peruses it. The Gospel is a message from God—all holy hearts see God in it, and rejoice in it because of His name—strangers and aliens have the word in their hands, but have not God in the word. They may be convinced by external arguments—and such arguments abound—that it is indeed His message—but they have not that witness within themselves upon which the heart reposes with assured confidence. Now here comes in the agency of the Spirit. He imparts that new nature, that generic condition of soul, which brings the heart into sympathy with God and all that is Divine, and enables it to believe. It throws a new light around the truth—gives a new direction to the heart, and imparts its influence to the whole soul. It creates an instinct for God, which infallibly recognizes His presence wherever He condescends to manifest it. There is no new faculty and there are no new ideas—but there is a new mode of exercising all the faculties and a new discernment of the old truths.

Just apprehensions, consequently, of the work of the Spirit, afford no manner of countenance to the doctrine that Divine revelation involves an intuitive perception

of spiritual realities. Place a sinner in Heaven—and he would be no nearer to a spiritual discernment of the glories of God and the Lamb—than he is, in his guilt and blindness on earth. He would there need as much as here to be born of water and the Spirit that his heart might magnify the Lord.

The apostolic theory of the relations of faith and revelation, indicates an appointment of God in regard to the Divine life, in beautiful analogy with his arrangements for the preservation and growth of animal existence. One thing, as Butler has forcibly illustrated, is set over against another. Life implies an inward state, and an external condition to correspond to it; and in the harmony of these conditions consists the healthfulness of being. Now, the Word is to the Spiritual man, the external condition to which his new nature is adapted—it is the element in which it moves, and grows and flourishes. It is milk to babes, and strong meat to those who have their senses exercised by reason of use. If God should regenerate a man, and leave him in the world without His truth, in some form or other, communicated; if, for example, He should renew a heathen, and yet give him no revelation of His will, except as He might gather it from the instincts and impulses of the new heart, how deplorable would be his condition! Conceive him pregnant with celestial fire? Upon what objects shall his mind be employed? Where shall he go to find the materials that are suited to his taste. He has cravings which earth cannot satisfy, and yet knows nothing of the bread which came down from heaven, nor of the streams which gush from Siloah's fount. He longs for God, but his soul cannot find Him; and as he feels for Him on the right, and he is not there—on the left, but he is gone, he sinks down in weariness and disappointment, to famish and die. He is in a world of enemies, of idolators, and will-worshippers, and children of the devil. Where is his panoply against the powers of darkness—the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit. What hopes shall support and dignify his soul. He knows nothing of Christ; nothing of the Spirit; nothing of the Divine promises; nothing of the glorious inheritance of the saints in life. There is

no element about him which corresponds to his disposition. No, my brethren, such an anomaly never takes place—it cannot be endured that God’s children should be as orphans in the world, without food, or raiment, or shelter. As well might we suppose that fishes should be transferred to the air, and birds to the sea, as that God should new create a soul, and leave it without the external adaptations that its wants demand. These, in this life, are found in the Bible—faith makes them realities—makes them substantial. It opens from the Scriptures a new and glorious world, to which all the faculties of the new creature are proportioned, and when it has educated and trained them for a higher sphere, they pass from its discipline to the full fruition of the things themselves. We now learn in books. We shall hereafter study things. The appointments of God, in the kingdom of grace, are as one with this appointment in the kingdom of nature.

The argument does not apply to infants dying in infancy, because they may be translated instantly to a sphere in which a holy nature shall have ample opportunity of expansion. But the anomaly cannot be endured that God’s children should be left as sheep without a shepherd—even worse, without food, raiment, or shelter.

The scriptural doctrine, moreover, guards against the absurd supposition that the life of religion consists in the developement and expansion of any single power of the soul. It is not confined to any one department of thought or feeling. The *whole* man must acknowledge its influence; it thinks in the head; feels in the heart, and acts in the will. It is the great pervading law of our being; leading us to find God every where, and whether we eat or drink, to do all to his glory. It is the religion of a moral creature under the dominion of a moral law; not the visions of a seer; the phantoms of a dreamer; but the inspiration of a soul pregnant with celestial fire. Body, soul, and spirit, all are the organs of the Divine life. It extends to all actions, to all impulses, to all ends. It reigns as well as lives—such is Bible religion. How stunted and dwarfish in comparison—a single faculty gazing on a single class of things! the

eye, playing with colors, or the ear, sporting with sounds.

II. HAVING shown that the theory in question mistakes the nature of religious truth, and the office of revelation in the economy of salvation, it only remains that the essence of religion should be more distinctly considered. In its subjective and objective aspects, a little has already been said, but only in reference to the argument then in hand. It is particularly in the subjective aspect that we propose to consider it now. The question is—what is it to be religious? Particularly, what is it to be a Christian? The word *essence* is very unfortunately applied to the subject, as it is apt to mislead by its vagueness and ambiguity. If it is supposed that there is some *one* formal quality, some simple and uniform idea, that enters into all the exercises that are distinctively religious, (the notion, evidently of our author,) it is a very great misapprehension. When we arrange things according to their colour, it is precisely the same quality of whiteness which characterizes all that we classify as white. But there is no single quality of actions and of thoughts that causes them to be ranked under the head of religion. Two emotions, entirely distinct in their own nature, having nothing in common, considered merely as phenomena, may yet be equally religious—hope and fear, for example. Upon what ground are they grouped together? The reason of the classification must evidently be sought, not in themselves, but in the state of mind from which they proceed. That state of mind which is truly religious, is the condition which we have previously described as spiritual life or holiness, but as a state, we have also seen that it belongs to the category of things which we are compelled to believe, without being able to represent in thought. It is, rather, in fact the condition of religion, than religion itself. That consists in the *exercises* which proceed from this state of the soul, and they are all distinguished by the circumstance that they are in harmony with our relations to God. These relations must be known before it can be determined that any given experiences are proper manifestations of religion. The subjective cannot be comprehended without the objective. An universal and perva-

ding disposition to comply with the will of God—a heart in sympathy with Him is the nearest approximation that we can make to a description of what constitutes religion—as a subjective phenomenon. This is the state in which angels are, the state in which man would have been, if man had never sinned. This is the state to which when men are exalted, they are said to be saved. This is religion in general. Now, Christianity is a scheme, through which, in conformity with the nature of moral government, man is recovered from his ruin and exalted to this condition. It is the immediate end which the mediation of Christ aims at; and the attainment of this end in the case of any sinner, is salvation. But the means by which Christianity produces its fruits in us, is faith. This is the great requirement of the Gospel, the only medium by which we can ever be brought into harmony and fellowship with God. Hence, faith may justly be described as embracing the whole religion of a sinner. He that believeth hath everlasting life—with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. It is not only the instrument by which through Christ we are justified, but the organ through which the whole Word of God operates upon the soul, and builds it up in holiness. It is the great and all comprehensive duty which springs from our relation to God under the Gospel.

I need not prosecute this inquiry any further. It is only necessary to put the two systems—that of the Gospel and that of the subjective philosophy, side by side, in order that you may perceive the immeasurable superiority of the former. Both admit the importance of revelation, and in developing its nature, the Gospel gives you three terms—the person *from* whom—the *persons* to whom, and the message itself. Its revelation professes to be the Word of God. The new philosophy gives us but two, a thinking mind and the things to be thought. There is no revealer, it is a message without an author, and without a messenger. Which is most reasonable? When you go a step further, and inquire into the characteristics of the things revealed, the Gospel unfolds a system of moral government, springing from the very nature of God, and His relations to His creatures, in-

volving a series of the sublimest events that the mind can conceive. It unveils the great drama of Providence, and shows how the Divine purposes have been working to their accomplishment from the beginning of all things. It spans the arch of time, explains to man his nature, his fall, his duty, and his destiny. Above all, it unveils a scheme of grace, an eternal purpose conceived in the bosom of infinite love, for the redemption of the guilt, and executed in the fulness of time by an agency so mysterious and amazing, that angels desire to look into it. Throughout the Bible holiness reigns. God appears there a holy God. His law, supreme; and the perfection of man is measured by his approach to the Divine excellence. Religion is there represented as a life into which we are quickened by Almighty grace, and which brings every faculty of the soul in sweet subjection to the authority of God. What are the revelations of the subjective philosophy. Echo answers what? There are no responses from the tripod, the oracles are yet dumb. He sits, and gazes, and feels—but what he sees, and how he feels, we are quietly told that mortal language is incompetent to describe.

One of the most offensive features in this system is the utter deceitfulness with which it avails itself of the ambiguity of language. From its free and familiar use of the language consecrated to evangelical religion—the unwary reader is insensibly beguiled from the contemplation of its real character. It pretends to be a *revealed* system. This sounds fair and well. But when you look a little deeper—it is a revelation as nature is a revelation, and when you express your astonishment at this abuse of words, you are told, for your comfort, God made the world and He made you with faculties capable of knowing its existence. He reveals the world to you by creating you with eyes to see it. The whole work is Divine. So He made a certain class of spiritual concretions, and made you with faculties capable of enjoying them. This is all surely Divine.

So again it speaks of a Divine life. But when you inquire into its meaning—you do not find the new birth—you do not recognize a holy nature—you do not discover an influence upon the whole soul of man which brings him into

harmony with Divine truth. There is nothing supernatural—there is nothing eminently gracious. On the contrary, you meet with nothing but what takes place in regard to every function of life—just the natural faculty developed and exercised by the presentation of its appropriate objects. The faculty of religion and the faculty of imagination are brought into activity in the same way—and there is as much grace and as much of God in the process by which a child learns to know that a stone is hard, as in the process by which a man passes from death to life. God may dispose circumstances so as to hasten the development—but all religion springs from the man himself. Such, without exaggeration or caricature, is the system for which we are called upon to surrender the Bible. We are to give up God's word and the hopes of the Gospel for the rhapsodies and ravings of every spirit who pretends to a higher development of the religious consciousness. Man must be supreme. He must be allowed to create his God, his law, his religion. The mind of every individual is the universe to him—intuition is his oracle, and he has but to look within to know his state, his prospects, and his destiny.

Behold I show you a more excellent way. God, who at sundry times and in divers manners—spake in times past unto the fathers by the Prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son. We have a message from the skies. We are not left, like the blind, to grope in the dark, but we have an excellent word to which we are exhorted to take heed as unto a light that shineth in a dark place. But remember that the word alone cannot save you—it is the means, but not the source of life. The Bible without the Spirit is a dead letter, as the Spirit without the Bible is a lying delusion. The Spirit and the Bible—this is the great principle of Protestant Christianity. "The doctrine which we defend is not only the testimony of the Scriptures, but still further, the testimony of the Holy Spirit. If we maintain the Scriptures against those who wish only for the Spirit, so do we also maintain the Spirit against those who wish for nothing but the Scriptures." The Bible without the Spirit can rise no higher than formalism—the Spirit

without the Bible will infallibly end in fanaticism. The Bible with the Spirit will conduct to Christ, to holiness and God. The times are threatening—with the earlier schools of infidelity, the main objection to the Scriptures was that they inculcated the necessity of a Divine life in the soul of man—they wanted to get quit of the Spirit—with the subjective philosophers, the great difficulty is that they are not all Spirit. Surely the men of this world are like children sitting in the market place—if you pipe to them, they refuse to dance—if you mourn, they refuse to weep.

I confess frankly my apprehensions that if the great doctrine of the supremacy of the Scriptures should be shaken in the popular mind, we have no security against the perpetration of the most enormous crimes in the hallowed name of religion. If men are to draw their faith from themselves, it will be like themselves—it will patronize their lusts and sanctify their most outrageous excesses. It is impossible to estimate the power of the Bible as a bit to curb, where it does not save. Of all ungovernable mobs, that is the most dangerous which acts under the frenzy of religious fanaticism. When men enthrone the Devil as their God, we may tremble for the interests of society. Give me storms, earthquakes and tornadoes, plague, pestilence and famine—any form of evil that springs from the Providence of God—but save me from that hell—the hearts of men, where the fiends of foul delusion have taken up their lodgment. The Bible, the Bible, is the great safe-guard of nations. Reverence its holy pages as you love your country, your homes, and yourselves. We must stand by the Scriptures or perish. Well did Luther say—“If we will not drink of the water of the fountain, so fresh and pure, God will cast us into ponds and sloughs, and there oblige us to swallow long draughts of a putrid and stinking water.”

NOTE.—In the passage “whosoever believeth,” &c., it may be well to remark, that the universality is implied in the $\delta \lambda \gamma \omega \nu$ —and that Paul introduces the $\epsilon \alpha \varsigma$ as interpretative.