

THEOLOGICAL ESSAYS

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PREFACE.

THE substance of this volume has been before the public some twenty years or more. The opinions expressed in it relate to some of the most important and difficult themes in theology and theological philosophy. The editions through which it has passed prove that there is a considerable circle of readers who are interested in such problems, and in that particular mode of presentation in which they here appear. The author has seized the opportunity afforded by a new publication to revise and enlarge these papers. No change, however, has been made in the dogmatic positions. The reader will find the historical Calvinism defended in the essays upon Original Sin and Atonement; yet with an endeavor to ground these cardinal themes in the absolute principles of reason, as seen in the nature of both God and Man. Sin must take its origin, from first to last, in the finite will, and atonement is the necessary requirement of eternal justice. In these two essays, the writer, if he has done nothing else, has at least shown the sincerity of his belief that theology and philosophy have no inherent contradiction, and that the more exact and strict type of theology is the one of all which is most defensible at the bar of reason and logic; agreeing with Selden, that "without school divinity a divine knows nothing logically, nor will be able to satisfy a rational man out of the pulpit."

The essay upon Evolution was first published in 1856, under the title of "The Philosophy of History." This has been recast, amplified, and carefully revised. The recent misuse to which the doctrine of evolution has been put by the sceptical physics of the day, has imparted a fresh interest to the subject. The author, in his discussion, discriminates the idea of evolution from that of creation, and from that of improvement or normal progress—with both of which it has been identified and confounded—and having evinced that an evolution is never creative, or originant from nothing, shows the applicability of the term either to an improvement or to a deterioration, either to a development of good or to a development of evil. In this way, a doctrine which of late has been violently forced into the service of pantheism is seen to be in harmony with the first truths of theism.

The remaining essays in the volume are somewhat more popular in their tone and contents. That upon the influence of Theological Studies, the author is glad to know, has given to some minds an impulse towards the ministry, and the service of the Church. The article upon the influence of Symbols, though in its form having a prevailing reference to a particular denomination, owing to the circumstances of its preparation, has a universal bearing, particularly at a time when the question respecting the value and need of creed statements is being raised. The subject of Clerical Education is examined, first, in reference to the need of its being scientific and professional, in distinction from lay education; and secondly, in reference to the duty incumbent upon the Church to facilitate it by institutions and endowments.

It will thus be seen that the contents of this volume are theological, either theoretically or practically. The writer for

more than a quarter of a century has been engaged in theological instruction, which has overflowed, more or less, into authorship. An author in the more abstruse departments of literature gradually makes his own circle of readers, as a logical preacher gradually forms his own congregation. Both have the advantage of homogeneousness in readers and hearers, and escape the evils of a miscellaneous concourse. To that circle upon whom from experience he finds he may rely, and whose favorable verdict is his chief concern, the writer would express his hearty thanks for their past interest in his thoughts, and the hope that he may ever continue to retain it.

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THE METHOD, AND INFLUENCE, OF THEOLOGICAL STUDIES.

A DISCOURSE DELIVERED BEFORE THE LITERARY SOCIETIES OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT, AUGUST 5, 1845.

GENTLEMEN OF THE SOCIETIES :

THE subject to which I invite your attention is :
The method, and influence, of Theological Studies.

Theology more than any other science, suffers from false views of its scope and contents. In the opinion of many, it is supposed to have little or no connection with other sciences, and to exert but a very small and unimportant influence upon other departments of human knowledge. Its contents are supposed to be summed up in the truths of *natural* theology. It is thought to be that isolated and lifeless science which looks merely at the *natural* attributes of God and man, and which consequently brings to view no higher relations, and no deeper knowledge, than those of mere nature. Of course, for such minds theology must be a very unimportant and simple science, treating merely of those superficial qualities which do not reach into the depths of God and man, and of those merely secondary and temporal relation-

ships that rest upon them. Said a member of the Directory appointed by France during its Revolution to remodel Christianity, "I want a simple religion: one with a couple of doctrines." Theology, as understood by many, is the science of the French Director's religion.

But such is not the scope, or the character, of that "sacred and inspired divinity" which Lord Bacon asserts to be "the sabbath and port of men's labors and peregrinations." Nature; the natural attributes of God and man, and the natural laws and relations of creation forms but a minor and insignificant part of its subject matter. This lower region of being is but the suburb. The metropolis and royal seat of theology is the *supernatural* world; a region full of *moral* being, sustaining most profound and solemn relations to reason and law.

Before proceeding, then, to speak of the true method of theological study, and of its great and noble influences, it will be needful to discuss more at large the real spirit and character of the science itself; and for this somewhat abstract discussion, I bespeak your forbearing and patient attention. It is needed in order to a clear apprehension of the enlarging and elevating influence of the science. Far am I from recommending to the educated man, the pursuit of those seemingly religious studies which never carry him out of the sphere of natural theology, and which cannot awaken enthusiasm of feeling or produce profundity of thought. I am pleading for those really theological studies, which by means of their *supernatural* element and character give nerve to the intellect and life to the heart.

Theology is the science of the supernatural. That we may obtain a clear knowledge of its essential character, let us for a moment consider the distinction between the natural and the supernatural.

That which makes these different from each other in kind, so that the line which divides them divides the universe into two distinct worlds, is this fact:—the natural has no *religious* element in it, while the supernatural is entirely composed of this element. There is and there can be in mere nature nothing religious. There is and there can be in that which is supernatural nothing that is not religious.* When we have said this, we have given the essential difference between the natural and supernatural.

The common notion that by the natural is meant the material and visible, and by the supernatural, the immaterial and invisible, is false. Nature may be as invisible and immaterial as is spirit. Who ever saw or ever will see the natural forces of gravitation, electricity, and magnetism? Who ever saw or ever will see that natural principle of life, of which all outward and material nature is but the manifestation? Back of this world of nature which we apprehend by the five senses, there is an invisible world which is nature still; which is not supernatural; neither the object of supernatural science nor of supernatural interests, because there is no moral element in it. When we have stripped the world of its materiality, and have dissolved all that is visible into unseen forces and vital laws, we have not reached any higher region than that of nature. We have not yet entered the supernatural and religious world. He who worships the vital principle or adores the force of gravity; nay, he who has no higher emotions than those of the natural religionist, which are called forth by the beauty

* Religion is from *religo*:—natural laws have no *religious*, or *binding* force, and in the sphere of nature there can be no such things as *duty*, *guilt* or *praiseworthiness*.

and glory of visible nature, or by the cloudy and mystic awfulness of invisible nature, is as really an idolater, as is the most debased heathen who bows down before a visible and material idol. And that system of thought which never rises into the world of moral or supernatural reality, is as truly material (whatever may be its professions to the contrary), as is the most open and avowed materialism.

It seems like stating truisms to make such statements as these ; and yet some of the most seductive and far-reaching errors in philosophy and theology have arisen from the non-recognition, or the denial, of any thing higher than invisible nature. Ideal Pantheism, a system received by minds of a really profound order, and which boasts of its spirituality, results from the error in question. Hence, although it admits of, and produces, a mystic adoration and a vague dreamy awe, it is utterly incompatible with really spiritual feeling and truly moral emotion.

But the reality, and nature, of the distinction between the natural and supernatural, is still more clearly seen by a contemplation of the Divine attributes ; partly because at this point the distinction itself is more marked and plain, and partly because from this point the vital errors in theological and philosophical science take their start.

Although, at first sight, it may appear bold and irreverent, yet a thorough investigation will show that it results in the only true fear and adoration of God, to say that his natural attributes considered by themselves are of no importance at all for a moral being. Taken by themselves, they have no religious quality, and therefore, as such, cannot be the ground of theological science or religious feeling. Considered apart from his supernatural

attributes, what meaning have the omnipresence, the omnipotence, and even the adaptive intelligence, of the Deity, for me as a religious being? Of what interest, is the possessor of these merely natural attributes, to me as a rational and moral being, until I know the *supernatural character and person* which reside in them, and make them the vehicle of their operations? I may see the exhibitions of Infinite Power in the heavens above me, and on the earth around me; I may detect the work of an Infinite Intelligence in this world of matchless design and order; but what are these isolated qualities to me as one who possesses *moral* reason and sustains *supernatural* relations? Let that Infinite Power thunder and flash through the skies, and let that Infinite Intelligence clothe the world in beauty and glory; these merely natural attributes are nothing to me, in a religious point of view, until I know *who* wields them, and what *supernatural* and *holy* attributes make them their bearer and agent. Then will I fear spiritually, and then will I adore morally.

This fundamental distinction between the natural and the supernatural is of vital importance to theological science. If not clearly seen and rigidly recognized in theology, this science comes to be nothing more than an investigation of the *natural* attributes of the Deity, and treats merely of those relations of man to the Creator, which the vilest reptile that crawls has in common with him. For if we set aside the supernatural attributes of God, man sustains only the same relations to him that the brute does. He, in common with the brutes that perish, is the creature of the Divine Power, and in common with them is sustained by the Divine Intelligence; that attribute which causes merely natural wants to be supplied by their correlative objects. The mere supervision of consciousness will make no difference between

man and brute in relation to the Deity, unless consciousness bring with it the knowledge of his higher *supernatural* attributes. If we set aside his relations to the Wisdom, Holiness, Justice and Mercy of God, we find man on a level with brute existence in all respects. He comes into being, reaches his maturity, declines, and dies, as they do, by the operation of the natural attributes of the Creator manifesting themselves in natural laws, and this is all that can be said of him in reference to his Maker.

The more we contemplate the Divine Being, the more clearly do we see that his supernatural are his constituting attributes; the very Divinity of the Deity. If they are denied, the Creator is immediately confounded with the creature; for his natural attributes, without his moral ones, become the soul of the world, its blind, though anerring principle of life. Or if they are misapprehended, and the difference between the two classes is supposed to be only one of degree, and consequently that there is no essential distinction between nature and spirit, fatal errors will inevitably be the result. There will be no sharply and firmly drawn line between the natural and spiritual worlds, natural and spiritual laws, and natural and spiritual relationships. A mere naturalism must run through theology, philosophy, science, literature and art, depriving each and all of them of their noblest characteristics.

The reality and importance of this distinction between the natural and the supernatural, are to be seen in a less abstract and more interesting manner in the actual life of men. Man is by creation a religious being; and even in his religion we discover his proneness to deny or misapprehend the distinction in question. The religion of the natural man is strictly *natural* religion. It

refers solely to the *natural* attributes of God. There is no man who is not pleasurable affected by the manifestation of the Power and intelligent Design of the Deity, as seen in the natural world; and all men who have not been taught experimentally, that there are higher attributes than these, and a higher religion than this, are content with such religion. "As is the earthy, such are they that are earthy." They are strictly natural men, and seek that in God which corresponds to their character. The spirit, or the supernatural part of man, has not yet been renewed and vivified by a supernatural influence, and therefore there is no search after the spiritual attributes of God. The moment that the *supernatural* dawns upon such men, and the *moral* attributes of God appear in their awful and solemn relations to law, guilt, and atonement, they are troubled; and unless mercifully prevented, descend into the low regions of nature, to escape from a light and a purity which they cannot endure.

It will be evident even from this brief discussion that the distinction between the natural and the supernatural is a valid and fundamental one; that the natural world is essentially different from the supernatural, and that theology, as the science of the supernatural, possesses a scope, contents, and influence, as vast and solemn as the field of its inquiry.

And think for a moment what this field is! It is not the earth we tread upon, nor the heavens that are bent over it, all beautiful and glorious as they are. It is not that unseen world of living forces and active laws which lies under the visible universe, giving it existence and causing its manifold motions and changes. This is indeed a deeply mysterious realm, and is a step nearer the Eternal than all that we see with the eye or touch with

the hand is ; but it is not the proper home of theological inquiry.

Above the kingdoms of visible and invisible nature, there is a world which is the residence of a personal God, with supernatural attributes, and the seat of spiritual ideas, laws, and relations. It is, to use the language of Plato, "that super-celestial place which no one of the poets has hitherto worthily sung, or ever will," where righteousness itself, true wisdom and knowledge, are to be seen in their very essence.* This is the proper field of theological inquiry, and as the mind ranges through it, it comes in sight of all that invests man's spirit with infinite responsibilities, and renders human existence one of awful interest.

But what is the proper method of theological studies ?

If what has been said relative to the two great kingdoms into which the universe is divided, be true, it is plain that theological studies must commence in that supernatural world whose realities form its subject matter, and that the true method is to descend from spirit to nature, in our investigations. The contrary process has been in vogue for the last century and a half, and the saying "from nature we ascend to nature's God," has come to be received as an axiom in theological science.

If this assertion means anything, it means that by a careful observation of all that we can apprehend by the five senses, in space, we shall obtain a correct and full knowledge of God. The *spirit* of the assertion is this : Nature is first in the order of investigation, because its teachings are more surely correct, and its proofs are

* Phædrus. Opera viii. p. 30. See the whole of the beautiful description of this *ὑπερουράνιος τόπος* : a passage vividly reminding of 1 Cor. ii.

more to be relied on, than those of the supernatural. Let us test it by rigidly applying it to the investigation of the being and character of God. What is there in nature which teaches, or proves, the existence of the Holiness of God; or his Justice; or his Mercy? What is there in the world in which we live as beings of nature and sense, which necessarily compels us to assume the personality of God? It is true that we are taught by all that exists in "the mighty world of eye and ear," that there are power and adaptive intelligence *somewhere*, but whether they are seated in a self-conscious and personal being, or are only the eternal procession of a blind and unconscious life, we cannot know anything that nature teaches. You see a movement in the natural world: say the growth of a plant or the blowing of a flower. What does that natural movement teach (considered simply by itself, and with no reference to a higher knowledge from another source,) and what have you a right to infer from it? Simply this: that there is a *mere* natural power adequate to its production; but whether that power has any connection with the *moral character of a spiritual person*, you cannot know from anything you see in the natural phenomenon. Now extend this through infinite space, and will the closest examination of all the physical movements occurring in this vast domain, *taken by itself*, lead up to a personal and holy God? What is there in the law of gravity which has the least tendency to lead to the recognition of the law of holiness? Is there any similarity between the two in kind? What can the motions of the sun and stars, the unvarying return of the seasons, the birth, growth, and death, of animated existence, *taken by themselves*, teach regarding the supernatural attributes of God? Take away from man the knowledge of God which is

contained in the human spirit and in the written word and leave him to find his way up to a personal and spiritual Deity by the light of nature alone, and he will grope in eternal darkness, if for no other reason, because he cannot even get the idea of such a Being.

For the truth is, that between the two kingdoms of nature and spirit a great gulf is fixed, and the passage from one to the other is not by degrees, but by a leap; and this leap is not up, but down. There is one theory which assumes that the universe is but the development of one only substance; and if this is a correct theory, then it is true that we can "ascend from nature up to nature's God." For all is continuous development, with no chasm intervening, and the height may consequently be reached from the bottom by a patient ascent. There is another and the true theory, which rejects this doctrine of development, and substitutes in its place that of creation, whereby nature is not an emanation, but springs forth into existence for the first time, at the fiat of the Creator, who is now distinct from the work of his hands. Nature is now, in a certain sense, separate from God, and instead of being able to prove his moral existence, or to manifest his supernatural and constituting attributes, requires a previous knowledge of the Creator, from another source, in order to its own true apprehension.*

Now the true method of obtaining a correct knowledge of an object, is to follow the method of its origin, and therefore true theological science follows the footsteps of

* Whether the absolute is the *ground* or the *cause* is the question which has ever divided philosophers. That it is the *ground* but not the *cause* is the assertion of Naturalism; that it is the *cause* and not the *ground* is the assertion of Theism. Jacobi. Von den Gött. Dingen. Werke. iii. 404, together with the references.

God. It *starts* with the assumption of his existence, and the knowledge of his character derived from a higher source than that of mere nature, that it may find in the works of his hands the illustration of his already known attributes, and the manifestation of his already believed being. True theology descends from God to nature, and rectifies and interprets all that it finds in this complicated and perplexing domain, by what it knows of its Maker from other and higher sources.

Take away from the human spirit that knowledge of the moral attributes of God which it has from its constitution, and from revelation, and compel it to deduce the character of the Supreme Being from what it sees in the natural world, and will it not inevitably become skeptical? As the thoughtful heathen looked abroad over a world of pain and death, was he not forced resolutely to reject the natural inference to be drawn from this sight, and to cling with desperate faith to the dictum of a voice speaking from another quarter, saying: "See what thou mayest in nature apparently to the contrary, He *is* Just; He *is* Holy; He *is* Good."

This false method of theological study proceeds from a belief common to man, resulting partly from his corruption and partly from his present existence in a world of sense. It is the common belief of man that reality in the strictest sense of the term is to be predicated of material things, and in his ordinary thought and feeling, that which is spiritual is unreal. The solid earth which the "swain treads upon with his clouted shoon" has substantial existence, and its material objects are real, but if we watch the common human feeling regarding such objects as the soul and God, we detect (not necessarily a known and determined infidelity, but) an inability to make them as real and substantial as the sun in the

heavens, or the earth under foot. Lord Bacon in describing the idols of the tribe; the false notions which are inherent in human nature; says, that "man's sense is falsely asserted to be the standard of things."* It is, however, under the influence of the notion that it is, that man goes to the investigation of truth, and especially of theological truth. Every thing is determined by a material standard, and established from the position of materialism. It is assumed that nature is more real than spirit; that its instructions and evidences are more to be relied on than those of spirit; and that from it, as from the only sure foothold for investigation, we are to make hurried and timid excursions into that dim undiscovered realm of the supernatural which is airy and unreal, and filled with airy and unreal objects.

This is a low and mean idol, and if the inquirer after spiritual truth bows down to it he shall never enter the holy of holies. Spirit is more real than matter, for God is a spirit. Supernatural laws and relations are more real than those of nature, for they shall exist when nature, even to its elements, shall be melted with fervent heat.

Why then should we, as did the pagan mythology, make earth and the earth-born Atlas support the old everlasting heavens? They are self-supported and embosom and illumine all things else. Why should we attempt to rest spiritual science upon natural science; the eternal upon the temporal; the absolute upon the empirical; the certain upon the uncertain? Is all that is invisible unreal, and must a thing become the object of the five senses, before we can be certain of its reality? Not to go out of the natural world; by what in this do

* *Novum Organum*, Aph. 41.

main are we most vividly impressed with the conception of reality, and how is the notion of *power* awakened? Not by anything we see with the eye or touch with the hand, but by the knowledge of that *unseen* force and law which causes the motions of the heavens, and makes the "crystal spheres ring out their silver chimes." Not by an examination of the phenomena of the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms, but by the idea of that one vast *invisible* life manifesting itself in them. Even here, upon a thoughtful reflection, that which is unseen shows itself to be the true reality. And to go up higher into the sphere of human existence: where is the substantial reality of man's being? In that path which, in the language of Job, "no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen." In that unseen world where human thought ranges, where human feelings swell into a vastness not to be contained by the great globe itself, and where human affections soar away into eternity. No! reality in the high sense of the term belongs to the invisible, and in the very highest sense, to the invisible things of the supernatural world. There is more of reality in the feeblest finite spirit than in all the material universe, for it will survive "the wreck of matter and the crash of worlds." The supernatural is a firmer foundation upon which to establish science than is the natural; its data are more certain, and its testimony more sure than those of nature. None but an open ear, it is true, can hear the voices and the dicta that come from this highest world, but he who has once heard never again doubts regarding them. He *cannot* doubt, if he would. He has heard the tones, and they will continue to sound through his soul, with louder and louder reverberations, through its whole immortality.

Perhaps it will be objected that, granting spiritual

things to be the true realities, yet the mind cannot see them except through a medium, and cannot be certain of their existence except by means of deductions from a palpable and tangible reality like that of the material world. But is it so? Does the spirit need a medium through which to behold the idea and law of Right, for example; and must it build up a series of conclusions based upon deductions drawn from the world of sense, before it can be certain that there is any such reality?—Does not the human spirit see the idea of Right as directly and plainly as the material eye sees the sun at high noon; and when it sees it, is it not as certain of its existence as we are of that of the sun? If man does not see this spiritual entity, this supernatural idea, directly and without a medium, he will never see it, and if it does not of itself convey the evidence of its reality, it can be drawn from no other quarter.

The same may be said of all spiritual entities whatever; of all the objects of the supernatural world. The rational spirit may and must behold them by direct intuition in their own pure white light. It has the organ for doing this. Not more certainly is the material eye designed for the vision of the sun, than the rational spirit is designed for the vision of God. The former is expressly constructed to behold matter, and the latter is just as expressly constructed to behold spirit. Nor let it be supposed that the term "behold" is used literally in reference to the act of the material eye, and merely metaphorically in reference to the act of the spirit. The term is no more the exclusive property of one organ than of the other. Or if it is to belong to one exclusively let us rather appropriate it to that organ which sees eternal distinctions. If the term "sight" is ever metaphorical,

surely it is not so when applied to the vision of immutable truths and everlasting realities.

Man, both by nature and by the circumstances in which he is placed, finds it difficult thus to contemplate abstract ideal truth, and when it eludes his imperfect vision he charges the difficulty upon the truth and not upon himself. But for all this the ideal is real, and man is capable of this abstract vision. Upon his ability to free himself from the disturbing influences of sense, to be independent of the physical senses in the investigation of spiritual things, and to see them in their own light by their correlative organ, depends his true knowledge of the supernatural. It is on this ground that Plato asserts it to be the true mark of a philosophic mind to desire to die, because the mind is thereby withdrawn from the distraction of sense, and in the spiritual world beholds the Beautiful, the True, and the Good, in their essence. — Hence with great force he represents those spirits which have not been entirely freed from the crass and sensuous nature of the body, as being afraid of the purely spiritual world and its supernatural objects, and as returning into the world of matter to wander as ghosts among tombs and graves, loving their old material dwelling more than the spirit-land.*

The knowledge which comes from a direct vision of spiritual objects is sure, and needs no evidence of its truth from a lower domain. He who has once in spirit obtained a distinct sight of such realities as the Good, the Beautiful, the True, and their contraries, will never again be in doubt of their existence, or as to their natures. These are entities which once seen compel an everlasting belief. These are objects

* Phædon, Opera I. pp. 115, 116, 139.

that wake
 To perish never ;
 Which neither listlessness nor mad endeavor,
 Nor man nor boy,
 Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
 Can utterly abolish or destroy.

The true method then of theological studies is to commence in and with the supernatural and to work outward and downward to the natural. The theologian must study his own spirit by the aid of the written word. He will ever find the two in perfect harmony and mutually confirming each other. The supernatural doctrines of theology must be seen in their own light; must bring their own evidence with them, and theology must be a self-supported science.

Whatever may be said in opposition to this method by those who magnify natural theology to the injury of spiritual religion, it has always been the method of inquiry employed by the profoundest and most accurate theologians. Augustine lived at a period when natural science was but little cultivated and advanced, but even if he had possessed all the physical knowledge of the present day, that inward experience with its throes, agonies, and joys, so vividly portrayed in his "Confessions," would still have kept his eye turned inward. The power of Luther and Calvin lies in their realizing views of supernatural objects seen by their own light; and nothing but an absolutely abstract and direct beholding of supernatural realities could have produced the calm assurance and profound theology of that loftiest of human spirits, John Howe.

But what has been the result of the contrary method? Have not those who commenced with the study of natural theology, and who made this the foundation of their inquiries into the nature and mutual relations of

God and man, always remained on the spot where they first stationed themselves? Did they, by logically following their assumed method, ever rise above the sphere of merely natural religion into that of supernatural, and obtain just views either of the Infinite Spirit as personal and therefore tri-une; or of the Finite Spirit as free, responsible and guilty? Did they ever acquire rational views of holy and just law; of law as strictly *supernatural*; and so of its relations to guilt and expiation?

An undue study of natural science inevitably leads to wrong theological opinions. Unless it be pursued in the light which spirit casts upon nature, the student will misapprehend both nature and spirit. Who can doubt that if Priestley had devoted less time to the phenomena of the natural world, and far more to those of the supernatural; less attention to physical laws as seen in the operations of acids and alkalies, and far more attention to the operation of a spiritual law as revealed in a guilty conscience; he would have left a theology far more nearly conformed to the word of God and the structure of the human spirit.

I have been thus particular in speaking of the supernatural element in theological studies, for the purpose of showing where their power lies, and whence their influence comes. I turn now to consider the influence of these studies as they have been characterized, upon education and the educated class in the state.

Genuine education is immediately concerned with the essence of the mind itself, and its power and work appear in the very substance of the understanding. It starts into exercise deeper powers than the memory, and it does more for the mind than merely to fill it. It enters rather into its constituent and controlling principles; rouses and develops them, and thus establishes a basis for the

mind's perpetual motion and progress. Whether there be much or little acquired information is of small importance, comparatively, if the mind has that which is the secret of mental superiority, the power of originating knowledge upon a given subject for itself, and can fall back upon its own native energies for information. That process whereby a mind acquires the ability to fasten itself with absorbing intensity upon any legitimate object of human inquiry, and to originate profound thought and clear conceptions regarding it, is education.

The truth of this assertion will be apparent if we bear in mind that knowledge, in the high sense of the term, is not the remembrance of facts, but the intuition of principles. Facts are that through which principles manifest themselves, and by which they are illustrated, but to take them for the essence of knowledge is to mistake the body for the soul. The true knowledge of nature, art, philosophy, and religion, is an insight into their constituent principles, of which facts and phenomena are but the raiment; the "white and glistening" raiment in which the essence is transfigured and through which it shines.

Now, principles are entities that do not exist either in space or time. They cannot be apprehended by any organ of sense, and therefore they are not in space.—They cannot in a literal sense be said to be old or new. Principles are eternal and therefore they are not in time. Where then are they? In the intellectual world:—a world that is not measured by space or limited by periods of time, but which has, nevertheless, as real an existence as this globe. In the world of mind, all those principles which *constitute* knowledge are to be sought for. They lie in the structure of mind, and therefore the development of the mind is but the discovery of principles, and education is the *origination* of substantial

knowledge out of the very being who is to be educated.*

Thus, by this brief examination of the true nature of knowledge, do we come round in a full circle to the spot whence we started, and see that he alone is in the process of true education who is continually looking within, and by the gradual *evolution* of his own mind is continually unfolding those principles of knowledge that lie imbedded in it. Such an one may not have amassed great erudition, but he possesses a working intellect which, unencumbered by amassed materials, overflows all the more freely with original principles. We *feel* that such a mind is educated, for its products, are alive and communicate life. From a living impulse it originates a knowledge, regarding any particular subject to which it directs itself, that commends itself to us as truth, by its congeniality and affinity with our own mind, and by its kindling influence upon it.

Accustomed, from the domination of a mental philosophy which rejects the doctrine of innate ideas, to consider learning as something carried into the mind instead of something drawn out of it, it sounds strangely to speak of *originating* knowledge. But who are the really learned statesmen, philosophers, and divines? Not those who merely commit to memory the results of past inquiry, but those in whom after deep reflection the principles of government, philosophy, and religion, rise into sight, with the freshness, inspiration, and splendor, of a new discovery. In asserting however that learning is the product of the mind itself, I mean that it is relatively so.

* This is Plato's meaning when he asserts that learning is recollection :—the reminding of the human spirit of those great principles which are born with it, and which constitute its rationality.—Phædon Opera I. p. 125, et seq. Cudworth's Im. Mor. Book iii, Chap. 3.

It is not asserted that every truly learned mind discovers *absolutely* new principles, and consequently that the future is to bring to light a great amount of knowledge unknown to the past. Far from it. The sum of human knowledge, with the exception of that part relating to the domain of natural science, is undoubtedly complete, and we are not to expect the discovery of any new fundamental principles in the sphere of the supernatural.— But it is asserted with confidence that these old principles must be discovered afresh *for himself*, by every one who would be truly educated. “He who has been born,” says an eloquent writer, “has been a first man, and has had the world lying around him as fresh and fair as it lay before the eyes of Adam himself.” In like manner, he who has been created a rational spirit, has a world of rational principles encircling him, which is as new and undiscovered for him as it was for the first man. In the hemisphere of his own self-reflection and self-consciousness, the sun must rise for the first time, and the stars must send down their very freshest influences, their very first and purest gleam.

For education, in the eminent sense of the term, is dynamic and not atomic. It does not lie in the mind in the form of congregated atoms, but of living, salient, energies. It is not therefore poured in from without, but springs up from within. The power of pure thought is education. Indeed the more we consider the nature of mental education, the more clearly do we see that it consists in the power of pure, practical reflection; the ability so to absorb the mind that it shall sink down into itself, until it reaches those ultimate principles, bedded in its essence, by which facts and all acquired and remembered information are illuminated and vivified. It cannot be that he who remembers the most, is the most thoroughly

educated man, or that the age which is in possession of the greatest amount of books and recorded information, is the most learned. No! learning is the product of a powerful mind, which, by self-reflection and absorption in pure, practical thought, goes down into those depths of the intellectual world, where, as in the world of matter, the gems and gold, the seeds, and germs, and roots, are to be found. It is related that Socrates could remain a whole day utterly lost in profound reflection.* This was the education in that age of no books, to which, through his scholar Plato, himself educated in the same way, is owing a system of philosophy, substantial with the very essence of learning; a system which for insight into ultimate principles is at the head of all human knowledge.

Such being the nature of education, it is evident that theological studies are better fitted than any others, to educe a rational mind. For they bring it into immediate communication with those supernatural realities and truths which are appropriate to it, and which possess a strong power of development. There is in the human mind a vast amount of latent energy forming the basis for an endless progress, and this will lie latent and dormant unless the forces of the supernatural world evolve it. The world of nature unfolds merely the superficies of man, leaving the hidden depths of his being unstirred, and only when the windows of heaven are opened are the fountains of this great deep broken up. For proof of this assertion, consider the influence which the theological doctrine of the soul's immortality exerts upon the spirit. When man realizes that he is immortal he is supernaturally roused. Depths are revealed in his being which he did not dream of, down into which he looks with solemn awe, and energies which had hitherto slum

* Convivium. Platonis Opera vii. p. 278.

bered from his creation are now set into a play at which he stands aghast. Never do the tides of that shoreless ocean, the human soul, heave and swell as they do when it feels what the scripture calls "the power of an endless life." The same remark holds true of all properly theological doctrines. An unequalled developing influence rains down from this great constellation.

And the intellect as well as the heart of man feels the influence. Hence that period in a man's life which is marked by a realizing and practical apprehension of the doctrines of spiritual religion is also marked by a great increase of intellectual power. A manlier and more substantial cultivation begins, because the being has become conscious of his high origin and the awfulness of his destiny, and a stronger play of intellectual power is evoked, because the stream of supernatural influence flows through the whole man, and both head and heart feel its vivification. The value of theological studies, in an intellectual point of view, does not consist so much in the amount of information as in the amount of energy imparted by them. The doctrines of theology, like the solar centres, are comparatively few in number, and while the demand they make upon the memory is small, the demand they make upon the power of reflection is infinite and unending. For this reason, theological studies are in the highest degree fitted to originate and carry on a true education. There is an invigorating virtue in them which strengthens while it unfolds the mental powers, and therefore the more absorbing the intensity with which the mind dwells upon them, the more it is endued with power.

This truth is very plainly written in literary history. If we would see that period when the mind of a nation was most full of original power, we must contemplate

its theological age. We ever find that the national intellect is most energetically educed in that period when the attention of educated men is directed with great earnestness to theological studies, while that period which is characterized by a false study, or a general neglect, of them, is one of very shallow education. Compare the education of the English mind during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, with its education in the eighteenth. The great difference between the two, is owing to the serious and profound reflection upon strictly theological subjects that prevailed in the first period, and to the absence of such reflection in the second. The former was a theological age in the strict sense of the term; a period when the educated class felt very powerfully the vigor proceeding from purely supernatural themes. The latter was a period when, through the influence of a system of philosophy which teaches that every thing must be learned through the five senses, a mere naturalism took the place of supernaturalism, and when, as a matter of course, the mind of the literary class was not the subject of those developing and energizing influences which proceed only from supernatural truths.

Again, that we may still more clearly see the vigorous character imparted to education by purely theological studies, let us consider two individuals who stand at the head of two different classes of literary men, and afford two different specimens of intellectual culture:— Lord Chancellor Bacon and Lord Chancellor Brougham.

The education of Bacon is the result, in no small degree, of the influence of the truths of supernatural science. There was no naturalism in the age of Bacon; there was none in his culture; and there is none in his writings. He lived at a period when the English mind was stirred very deeply by religious doctrines, and when

the truths of the supernatural world were very absorbing topics of thought and discussion, not only for divines, but for statesmen. We of this enlightened nineteenth century, are in the habit of calling those centuries of reformation, dark, in comparison with our own; but with all the darkness on some subjects, it may be fearlessly asserted that since the first two centuries of the history of Christianity, there has never been a period when so large a portion of the race have been so *deeply* and *anxiously* interested in the truths pertaining to another world, as in those two centuries of reformation; the sixteenth and seventeenth. With all the lack of modern improvements and civilization, there was everywhere a firm belief in the supernatural, and a sacred reverence for religion. Even the very keenness and acrimony of the theological disputations of that period prove that men believed, as they do not in an indifferent age, that religious doctrines are matters of vital interest.

Bacon lived in this age; in its first years, and felt the first and freshest influences of the great awakening. His intellect felt them, and hence its masculine development and vigor. The products of his intellect felt them, and hence the solid substance, strong sinew, and warm blood, of which they are made.

The education of Brougham has been obtained in a very different age from that of Bacon: an age when the faith and interest which the learned class once felt in the realities of another world, have transferred themselves to the realities of this. It has also been the result, in no small degree, of the belief and the study of the half-truths of natural theology. While then the recorded learning of Bacon bears the stamp of originality, is drenched and saturated with the choicest intellectual spirit and energy, makes an epoch in literary history, and

sends forth through all time an enlivening power, the recorded learning of Brougham is destitute of fresh life, being the result of a diligent acquisition, and not of profound contemplation, gives off little invigorating influence, and cannot form a marked period in the history of literature.

Thus far we have considered the developing and energizing influence of theological studies; but if we should stop here, we should be very far from discovering their full worth. There is a merely *speculative* development and energy of the mind which is heaven-wide from genuine education, and really prevents growth in true knowledge.

There have ever been, and, so long as man shall continue to be a fallen spirit, there ever will be, two kinds of thought. The one speculative and hollow; the other practical and substantial. The one wasting itself upon the factitious products of its own energy; the other expending itself upon those great realities which are veritable, and have an existence independent of the finite mind. The natural tendency of the intellect, *when not actuated by a rational and holy will*, is to produce purely speculative thought, and in this direction do we see all intellect going which does not feel the influence of moral and spiritual truth. The speculative reason is a wonderful mechanism, and if kept within its proper domain, and applied to its correlative objects, is an important instrument in the attainment of truth and culture, but if suffered to pass over its appointed limits, and to occupy itself with the investigation of subjects to which it is not adapted, it brings in error rapidly and *ad infinitum*, preventing the true progress and repose of the spirit. There is no end to the manufactures of the speculative faculty, or to the productive energy of its life, when once the pro-

cess of speculation is begun. Nay, it is the express doctrine of Fichte (the most intensely and purely speculative intellect the world has yet seen) that the finite mind having the principle of its own movement within itself, by working in accordance with its own indwelling laws, is able to *create*, and actually *does create the great universe itself!* The history of philosophy disclose much of such speculative thought, and hence the dissatisfaction of philosophy with what it has hitherto done, and its striving after a substantial and genuine knowledge. Man as a moral being cannot be content with these hollow speculations, for spirit as well as nature abhors a vacuum. Thought must be filled up with substantial verity, and knowledge must become practical, in order to the repose and true education of the mind.

Yet notwithstanding the unsatisfying nature of speculative thinking, an intellectual life and enthusiasm are generated by it which invest it with a charming fascination for the mind that is led on by a merely speculative interest. What though the thinker is bewildered and lost in the mazes of speculation; he is bewildered and lost in wonderful regions, the astounding nature of whose objects represses, for a time, the feelings of doubt and dissatisfaction. He is like the pilgrim lost in "the gorgeous East," who is *delightedly* lost amid the luxuriant entanglements and wild enchantments of the oriental jungle. In this exciting world of speculation, the energies of the intellect are in full action, the thirst and curiosity for knowledge are keen, and under the impulse of these the thinker says with Jacobi; "though I know the insufficiency of my philosophizing, still I can only philosophize right on."*

* Jacobi, quoted by Tholuck. *Vermischte Schriften*. ii. 427; and see a similar remark by Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*. p. 196. The philosoc

It is possible to evoke intellectual energy so powerfully and habitually that the action shall become organic, and the intellect shall be instinctively busy with the production and reproduction of speculations; and though the thinker gets no repose of soul by it, yet he is so much under the power of the intellectual appetite that he will not cease to gratify it. There is no more mournful chapter in the history of literary men than that which records their unending speculative struggles; their efforts to find peace of mind and true education in the application of merely speculative energy to the solution of the great problems of moral existence. The process of speculation continually becomes more and more impeded, as at every advance still more mysterious problems come into sight, not soluble by this method; the over-tasked intellect at length gives out, and its gifted possessor falls into the abyss of unbelief like an archangel.

It is not enough therefore that the latent power of the mind is developed merely; it must be developed by some substantial objects, and it must be expended upon some veritable realities. In other words, the thought of man must be called forth by the ideas and principles of the supernatural world, and the mind of man must find repose and education in moral truth.

pher, (says Chalybäus in the conclusion of his lecture upon Jacobi, *Vorlesungen* p. 77.) as well as the poet, can say of himself:—

Ich halte diesen Drang vergebens auf,
Der Tag und Nacht in meinem Busen wechselt,
Wenn ich nicht sinnem oder dichten soll,
So ist das Leben mir kein Leben mehr!
Verbiete du dem Seidenwurm, zu spinnen —
Wenn er sich schon dem Tode näher spinnt,
Das künstlichste Geweb' entwickelt er
Aus seinem Innersten, und lässt nicht ab
Bis er in seinen Sarg sich eingeschlossen.

The reader of Plato is struck with the earnestness with which this truly philosophic and educated mind insists upon knowing *that which really is*, as the end of philosophy. It matters not how consecutive and consistent with itself a system of thought may be, if it has no correspondent in the world of being, and does not find a confirmation in the world of absolute reality. The form may be distinct, and the proportions symmetrical, but the thing is spectral and unsubstantial, and though it be dignified with the name of philosophy, it is nevertheless a pure figment. Though not the product of the fancy but of a far higher faculty, a merely speculative philosophical system is but a fiction; a creation of the brain, to which there is, objectively, nothing correspondent. As an instance of such philosophizing, take the system of Spinoza. No one can deny that as a merely speculative unity, it is perfect, and perfectly satisfies the wants of that part of the human understanding which looks for nothing but a theoretical whole. All its parts are in most perfect harmony with each other, and with the whole. This system is conceived and executed in a most systematic spirit, and if man had no moral reason which seeks for something more than a merely speculative unity, it would be for him the true theory of the universe. But why is it not, and why cannot the human mind be content with it? Because a rational spirit cannot *rest* in it. There is in this system, great and architectural as it is, no repose or home for a moral being, and therefore it is not truth; for absolute truth is infallibly known by the absolute and everlasting satisfaction it affords to the moral spirit.

Another great aim of education, therefore, is the calm repose of the mind; its settlement in indisputable truth. This can proceed only from the study of the purely spir-

itual truths of theology, because such is their nature that there can be no real dispute regarding them, whereas merely speculative dogmas are susceptible of, and awaken, an endless ratiocination. There has always been, for example, even among thoughtful men a keen dispute regarding some points in the mode of the Divine existence, but none at all regarding the Divine character. The doctrine of the subsistence of creation in the creator has ever awakened honest disputations among sincere disputants, but the doctrine that God is holy has never been doubted by a conscientious thinker. This holds true of all speculative and practical doctrines. Within the sphere of theory and speculation there is room for endless wanderings, and no foundation upon which the spirit can stand still and firm. Within the sphere of practice and morality there need be no doubt nor error, and the sincere mind, by a direct vision of the truths of this practical domain of knowledge, may enter at once and forever into rest.

The influence of purely theological studies, in producing an education that ministers repose and harmony to the mind, is great and valuable. The intellectual energy is not awakened by abstractions, nor is it expended upon them, but upon those supernatural realities which are the appropriate objects of a rational contemplation, and which completely satisfy the wants of an immortal being. For that which imparts substantiality to thought, is religion, and all reflection which does not in the end refer to the moral and supernatural relations of man, is worthless. Though a fallen spirit, man still bears about with him the great idea of his origin and destiny. This allows him no real peace or satisfaction but in religious truth, and there are moments, consequently, in the life of the educated man, when he feels with deep despondency the

need of the purer culture, and the more satisfactory reflection, of better studies. If any, short of strictly theological studies, can give repose of mind, they would have given it to the poet Goethe. Yet that mind, singularly symmetrical and singularly calm by nature, after ranging for half a century through all regions save that strictly supernatural world of which we have spoken, and after obtaining what of culture and intellectual satisfaction is to be found short of spiritual truths; that mind, so richly and variously gifted, at the close of its existence on earth confessed that it had never experienced a moment of genuine repose.

The German poet is not the only one whose education did not contribute to repose and peace of mind. The literary life has not hitherto been calm and satisfied. From all times, and from all classes of educated minds, there comes the mournful confession that "he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow," and that all learning which does not go beyond the consciousness of the natural man and have for its object the Good, the True, and the Divine, cannot satisfy the demands of man's ideal state. From Philosophy, from Poetry, and from Art, is heard the acknowledgment that there is no repose for the rational spirit but in moral truth. The testimony that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain, together, is as loud and convincing from the domain of letters, as it is from the cursed and thistle-bearing ground. From the immortal longing and dissatisfaction of Plato, down to the wild and passionate restlessness of Byron and Shelley, the evidence is decisive that a spiritual and religious element must enter into the education of man in order to inward harmony and rest.

Time forbids a longer discussion of this part of the

subject. It may be said as a result of the whole, that a thorough study of theology as the science of the supernatural, results in a profundity and harmony of education which can be obtained in no other way, and if the culture which comes from poetry and fine literature generally be also mingled with it, a truly beautiful as well as profound education will be the result of the alchemy.

I turn now to consider the influence of theological studies upon Literature. And let me again remind you that I am speaking of *purely* theological studies, as they have been defined. There is an influence proceeding from so-called theological studies, which deprives literature of its depth, power, beauty, and glory; the *quasi* religious influence of naturalism, of which the poetry of Pope, the philosophy of Locke, the divinity of Priestley, and the morality of Paley, are the legitimate and necessary results.

The fact strikes us in the outset, that the noblest and loftiest literature has always appeared in those periods of a nation's existence, when its literary men were most under the influence of theological science. Whether we look at Pagan or Christian literature, we find this assertion verified. The mythology and theology of Greece exerted their greatest influence upon Homer, the three dramatists, and Plato; and these are the great names in Grecian literature. If Cicero is ever vigorous and original he is in his ethical and theological writings. The beautiful flower of Italian literature is the "unfathomable song" of the religious Dante. The beauty and strength of English literature are the fruit of those two pre-eminently theological centuries:—the sixteenth and seventeenth. The originality and life which for the last century has given German literature the superiority over other literatures of this period, must be referred mainly to