THEOLOGY AS A SCIENCE, INVOLVING AN INFINITE ELEMENT.

INAUGURAL ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

AT

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BY THE

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Note: This address by the Rev. Dr. John L. Girardeau [1825-1898], first appeared in *The Southern Presbyterian Review*, 27.3 (July 1876): 462-485. The Address was subsequently reprinted under its own title, with the addition of a Prefatory Note and Appendices. The text presented here reflects this latter 1876 reprint, with care taken to reproduce, line for line and page for page, the text of that edition.

Upon request from the Rev. Dr. C. N. Willborn, this digital edition has been prepared by Mr. Wayne Sparkman, director of the PCA Historical Center, working from an original copy of the Inaugural Address, as found in the extant library of the Rev. Thomas Dwight Witherspoon, now preserved at the PCA Historical Center.

Typographical errors, where they appear, are shown in red. These errors appear on pages 14, 31 (2), and 33. The older spelling of "laniard" is also displayed in red, on page 32. A brief glossary and reference of key works cited has also been added, following the Appendices.

PREFATORY NOTE.

In the following discourse, as it was delivered, and has since been published in the SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW, the term *cognition*, and others related to it, were used in a restricted signification, exclusive of that sort of knowledge which was arrogated to faith. Subsequent reflection has convinced me that the reasons which, at the time of preparing the discourse, appeared to me to justify their employments in other than their widest sense, are not satisfactory. The discussion, consequently, is felt to labour under the disadvantages of a disputable use of some of its prominent terms, and the obscurity which results from that fact; and I am not willing that it should continue to be encumbered by these difficulties. I have, therefore, substituted for the questionable terms others which bring out more clearly and definitely the views maintained in the discourse; and in venturing to send it forth in a revised form, respectfully ask of those who may have honored it by reading it as at first published, that they will judge it as it now appears.

J. L. G.

THEOLOGY AS A SCIENCE, INVOLVING AN INFINITE ELEMENT.

FATHERS AND BRETHREN OF THE ASSEMBLY: Did not usage require that something be said touching my induction into this chair, I would prefer to be silent upon that subject. A few words will, I trust, suffice for the demands of the occasion, and I shall pass on to the discussion of a more congenial topic.

The act just performed in your presence scarcely needs comment—it speaks for itself. Yet it is proper that I should say it has been done without reserve. I accept your Standards in the sense in which they were construed by the Old School Church in 1837 and 1838, and in which they are notoriously understood by the Southern Presbyterian Church. Accustomed for years to teach those venerable documents in the pulpit, the Sabbath-school, the Bible class, and the family, it occasions me no difficulty to bind them thus solemnly upon the conscience. It is only to repeat what was once done when I stood up with profound emotion to assume my ordination vows. I have no particle of sympathy with the infidel cant which prates of the tyranny of creeds and the decay of "crumbling theologies." On the contrary, I fully subscribe to the necessity of confessions and symbols, as a testimony to the truth of God, and as a bond of union between the faithful witnesses for Christ. Still I feel bound in honesty to express the opinion, that, as there is a possibility in the future of more and more perfectly conforming our doctrinal standards to the word of God as the supreme and infallible rule of faith and practice, some wise and carefully guarded provision to that effect should be made in the Constitution of our Church; and also to state, that, as such a provision exists for the amendment of our governmental standards, one is at liberty to discuss the necessity or expediency of changes in them, it being at the same time understood that until they are duly made, the practice of the Church ought to be in accordance with the existing law.

I would avail myself of this occasion to tender to my able and honored brethren of the Faculty of the Seminary my grateful acknowledgments for the welcome to their sacred academic fellowship which they have been pleased to extend, and to express the hope that the fraternal intercourse with them which it has been my privilege already to enjoy may know no unhappy interruption. An obvious delicacy restrains me from speaking of the present, with its living actors; but I may be indulged in a brief allusion to the past, and especially to those who, once connected with this institution, have rested from their toils for Christ's kingdom and truth upon earth, and have taken their seats among the General Assembly on high.

I esteem it a joy that the school of sacred learning, in which I have been called to occupy a place, is that at whose maternal breasts I first drew my knowledge of theology. There it was my privilege to sit at the feet of Dr. George Howe, the erudite and accomplished scholar, and Dr. A. W. Leland, the sacred orator, endowed by Providence with rich and splendid gifts. The grand head, the classic face, the organ-like voice, the majestic elocution, the fervent and evangelical delivery of truth, are matters of tradition now, for he has been gathered to his fathers and sleeps in Jesus. At the same time it was my happiness, with my fellow students, to listen to the eloquent and powerful preaching of James H. Thornwell and Benjamin M. Palmer, whose pulpits were additional professorships of theology to the favored pupils of the Seminary. I blush at the thought that the chair to which I have been called, and which I have reluctantly consented to ascend, was subsequently filled by both these distinguished servants of the Church—by one provisionally for a brief period, and by the other for a term of years. Yes, I blush to venture into a seat which Thornwell illuminated by his ample learning, his profound genius, and his exquisite tact for instruction. He shone in the ecclesiastical firmament a brilliant star, of the first magnitude, which blazed the more lustrously as all too swiftly it sunk to its setting in a dark and frowning horizon; and although, alas! it disappeared from our straining eyes, it has left behind a trail of light which lingers a wake of glory

upon the scene of his last labors and the Church of his passionate love. Plato thanked God that he was permitted to live in the age of Socrates, and no youthful lover of theological truth who ever sat under the teachings of Thornwell would be ashamed to confess a kindred gratitude. But though he be dead, yet shall he, by the grace of Providence, yet speak in the place in which his eloquent tongue discourses no more. Had he survived to complete the labors so auspiciously and magnificently begun, the Calvin of our Southern Presbyterian Church would have produced a work which would have been to us what the immortal Institute of the Christian Religion was to its age, and upon which the encomium contained in the line of Martial might justly have been pronounced:

"Unum præ cunctis fama loquatur opus;"

at least the great work of the illustrious Princeton theologian would not now, save as to the doctrine of the Church, be without a peer as a comprehensive modern recast of theology. What he has left will yet, I trust, make its mark upon the Columbia Seminary, and the grand analyses and comprehensive principles of revealed truth he has embodied in his writings be infused into the minds of the students of that institution. It will be a labor of love for one who has studied in the school of this master—and it was the school of Christ—though he may follow with no equal pace, nay, at a long interval behind, to endeavor up to the bent of his ability to continue its methods and inculcate its doctrines.

The communications which have been presented to the Assembly render it unnecessary for me to allude to the great reluctance with which I entered upon the duties of this position; but I take leave to say that, in their susception, I acted not from choice, but in obedience to the repeated call of my brethren. Now that the trust is assumed, nothing remains but that I bring to it what industry and ability the Head of the Church has granted me. Discarding all dependence upon fleshly wisdom, and implicitly relying upon the unction from the Holy One, who teacheth all things, I not unwillingly dedicate myself to the performance of this office. Profoundly conscious of insufficiency

for these responsibilities, I am nevertheless comforted in part by the conviction that the love of the truth, which has never been a subordinate passion of my heart, has not diminished with the lapse of years. I can sincerely adopt the language in which the great scholar, Sir William Jones, has beautifully paraphrased a noble passage of Berkeley's Siris:

> "Before thy mystic altar, Heavenly Truth,
> I kneel in manhood, as I knelt in youth ;
> There let me kneel till this dull form decay,
> And life's last shade is brightened by thy ray!
> Then shall my soul, now lost in clouds below,
> Soar without bounds, without consuming glow."

When Dr. Thornwell was inaugurated into his Professorship in the Seminary, he pronounced a discourse in which he discussed all the great aspects of theology—its nature, its scope, its methods, its distributive principle, and its importance. That address is extant in his writings; and however appropriately to the circumstances of this occasion one might submit his own views upon these subjects, the fact which has been mentioned deters me from so ungraceful and supererogatory an effort. I shall, therefore, content myself with inviting attention to the discussion of a more specific question.

It is now so generally admitted that theology is a science, that any elaborate attempt to establish its claims to that denomination would seem to be superfluous. It has been said that the title of science is denied to theology, "partly on the ground that the habit corresponding to it is not natural, but supernatural; and partly on the ground that it does not spring from principles of reason, nor proceed by logical deductions. It does not, in other words, find a place under the Aristotelic definition of science." Now, even were it conceded that it professes to be a subjective and not an objective science, the first of these objections would not necessarily be fatal. For if there may be a natural habit of natural knowledge, there is no just reason why there may not be a supernatural habit of supernatural knowledge; and if reason, in its natural condition, is adapted to the scientific

treatment of the former, one fails to see why reason supernaturally enlightened may not be competent to deal with the latter. Theology, however, claims to be mainly a science in the objective sense, as concerned about the theory rather than the habit of religion, and the difficulty alleged is consequently deprived of force. To the other objection it may be answered that theology does in part spring from the indestructible principles of reason, endorsed and enforced by revelation; that in so far as it arises from the dicta of a supernatural revelation, it does no more than other sciences in accepting fundamental principles already furnished; that if that be granted, it grounds itself upon data which are at least of no lower original than those supplied by reason; and that if the facts and doctrines of a divine revelation be given so as to be apprehensible, our faculties, if supernaturally illuminated, not only may, but must, by a logical necessity, proceed to arrange and classify them—in other words, to reduce them to scientific form. It may surely be allowed to a theologian to do reflectively what every intelligent man of piety, to a certain extent, does spontaneously.

It is not, however, my purpose to vindicate at large the claims of theology to be a science, but to endeavor to meet what is, perhaps, the most formidable difficulty lying in the way of these pretensions, growing out of the allegation that the attempt is made to reduce the infinite to scientific conditions—to make the unthinkable a term of human syllogisms. It must be admitted that, as to His essence, God is undefinable; an infinite being, as He is in himself, cannot be subjected to logical forms, cannot be made an element in the narrow premises of finite reasoning. We know nothing of our own substances except through their phenomenal properties, and what can we know of the substance of God? But if this were all, as theology has for its chief object an infinite God, it would follow that its pretensions to be a science at all, in any proper sense, must at once be discharged. With a profound conviction of the littleness of man and the greatness of God, and, I trust, with the reverence which befits the discussion of such a theme, I would adventure some reflections upon the questions : Have we valid knowledge of the In-

finite Being? What is the mode of attaining to that knowledge? And is it possible for the reason to employ it as an element in the processes of science? In order to clear the way, it will be necessary to institute some preliminary inquiries, and to fix the meaning of the terms which will be prominently employed.

In the first place, what is the relation between faith and reason? It has been so customary for certain writers to speak of the distinct provinces of faith and reason, and to represent them as occupying entirely different domains, and performing entirely separate functions, that there is no wonder that confusion has been the result. It would seem to be obvious that there can be no generic difference between them. Take any view of the nature of faith, except the special one of a feeling of trust, and it cannot be excluded from the territory of the reason. If we adopt the distribution of Kant, and regard the pure reason as distinct from the logical understanding, and as constituting the seat of transcendent ideas, it is manifest that such a faculty would be the very repository of our fundamental faiths. It would be the precise office of the reason to believe those truths which transcend the forms of the logical understanding. Take the view of Hamilton, and identify the reason with the understanding as the same generic faculty, and it is clear that it must be considered as the place in which these primary faiths or fundamental laws of belief are to be found. And as faith, in all its aspects, whenever it is in exercise, involves as its first element the assent of the understanding, it must be admitted that since the understanding and the reason are, on this hypothesis, the same faculty, faith can only be regarded as a function of the reason. To what other department of the mind can we assign it? The truth would seem to be that reason is simply a *genus* of which faith is one of the species. Another is thought; and the distinction, which is really valuable and deserves to be noted, is not between faith and reason, but between faith and thought. In the one case it is the reason believing, and in the other the reason thinking. It is one and the same faculty discharging distinct specific functions. If this view be correct—and I see not how it can be fairly disputed—a considerable advance is made toward disen-

tangling the difficulties connected with the main questions before us.

In the second place, the inquiry must be met as to the real distinction between faith and knowledge. It is one of critical importance in regard to the possibility of a knowledge of God as an infinite being. It deserves to be signalised in consequence of differences which, I am inclined to think, are to a certain extent more apparent than real between the parties to the issue in reference to the cognoscibility of God. It is moreover deserving of consideration in view of the fact that, as the result of inadvertence, or perhaps, in some cases, of the desire to avoid an apparent captiousness and technical minuteness, the greatest writers have not always used their terms with that rigid uniformity which is demanded by the importance and difficulty of the subject. Sir William Hamilton, notwithstanding the ordinary accuracy of his terminology, has not always been free from vacillation in this matter. And one at least of his distinguished critics has, in consequence of the same fact, rendered it doubtful whether his intention was to affirm or deny the possibility of knowing the infinite simply by the functions of the thinking reason. Now, it is respectfully submitted that knowledge sustains to faith the same generic relation which I have attempted to show is held by reason; with this important difference, however, that reason is the generic source from which faith and thought spring as species, while knowledge, on the other hand, is the generic result of the exercise of these specific powers. Is it not clear that there are some things which we know because we believe them, and other things which we know because we think them? And yet there appears to be continual tendency to confound the cognoscible with the cogitable. There are cases in which they coincide, but there are others in which they do not—in which the knowable transcends the thinkable. There are instances in which knowledge is the common product of faith and the reflective reason; and there are others in which faith attains a knowledge which lies utterly beyond the reach of the thinking faculties alone. There is, therefore, no generic distinction between faith and knowledge, just as there is no such distinction between faith

and reason. Knowledge is a result of which at one time faith is a factor, and at another, thought. When, therefore, it is affirmed that we cannot know the infinite by the thinking reason—in other words, that we cannot conceive it—the meaning need not be taken to be that we cannot know it at all; but, on the contrary, the position is consistent with the affirmation that we know it by faith. When Hamilton sometimes says, We do not know, we only believe, the infinite, he departs from his own strictness of speech. His meaning is that we do not know it by conceiving it, but we know it by believing. "The Divinity," he correctly remarks, "is in a certain sense revealed, in a certain sense is concealed; he is at once known and unknown." That is to say—his meaning obviously is—the Deity is known as revealed to faith, and unknown, as infinite, through the exercise of the reflective reason. The knowledge derived through faith immeasurably overpasses that acquired by thought. Dr. Thornwell, who, with a philosophical genius akin to Hamilton's, criticises the position of the great Scotchman in reference to the cognoscibility of the infinite, enounces the distinction for which I am now contending when speaking of the knowledge even of finite substance. His language is: "In our knowledge of the finite there are evidently two elements or factors. There is, first, the relative and phenomenal, which can be conceived and known; this is the proper object of thought. There is, secondly, the substance or substratum, the *quasi* absolute, which cannot be represented in thought, but which is positively believed as existing. One element addresses itself to the intelligence and the other to faith. * * * It is in and through the phenomena that substance is known." Here knowledge in one relation is attributed to conception, and in another to faith. These citations are sufficient to indicate that the view now insisted upon was at bottom held by both these great thinkers, to wit: that faith and knowledge are not contrasted, but that knowledge is a product of which at one time faith is the efficient, and at another time, conception.

I would take occasion, in connection with this subject, to remark briefly upon the vexed question of the relation, in the order of sequence, between faith and knowledge; for that is the

form in which the question is nearly always stated, although the terms of the relation ought to be, not faith and knowledge, but faith and thought. It would appear to be evident that first of all would come a fundamental belief or faith, and then a special act of cognition furnishing a certain kind of knowledge, and lastly, a particular exercise of faith resulting in another kind of knowledge. Let me illustrate by two cases—one drawn from the sphere of nature, the other from that of grace. We have, it is now well nigh universally admitted, at the root of our faculties fundamental laws of belief, which are elicited into exercise upon the occasions which occur in experience. Among these, characterised by simplicity and necessity, is the intuitive faith in the relation of effect to cause. We behold a new event. Something begins to be which did not exist before. What takes place? Apparently there is first the cognition of the event. But back of that act of cognition lay the fundamental law of belief in the relation of cause and effect. That law, existing prior to the cognition, but latent and undeveloped to consciousness, is now elicited by the perceptive act, and the result is a special exercise of faith, necessitating the inference that the event perceived was due to some sufficient cause. Take a case from the supernatural sphere. A sinner believes in Christ as his Saviour. What is the order here? First, there is the capacity and tendency to believe—a fundamental law of the spiritual life, imparted by the grace of regeneration. Then there is an apprehension in thought of the propositions of the gospel which offer Christ to sinners, and, lastly, there is the special act of faith by which the soul receives those propositions as the testimony of God, embraces the Saviour, and knows him unto salvation. We would infer from this analysis that the special cognitive acts of thought are preceded by fundamental faiths, and that the special cognitive acts of faith are occasioned by the particular exercises of the thinking faculty; and it would further follow that the knowledge which results from perception, conception, and reasoning, is of one kind, and that produced by faith is of another sort.

There is but one difficulty which I can conceive in this statement of the order of procedure among the mental powers in the

evolution of knowledge. It is one which arises from the fact, that it is not uncommon to rank primitive concepts, as well as primary or intuitive faiths, among the fundamental data of consciousness. If by primitive concepts be meant formed and developed knowledge, as the term would strictly imply, it is evident that the theory of their existence is based in mistake. Whatever were Locke's defects, he exploded the doctrine of innate ideas as involving formalised knowledge. If it be meant that they are laws of thought bearing the same regulative relation to the specific acts of thought as the laws of belief may be conceived to sustain to the special exercise of faith, the question of their separate existence would be a fair one. It would seem, however, to be unnecessary to make the distribution. The fundamental laws of belief are usually considered as holding, in the form of certain necessities of knowing, a common relation to all the cognitive functions. But if the distinction be admitted between the primary laws of thought and those of belief, it is obvious that, as both classes would equally lie at the very foundations of the mental processes, there could be no precedence of one to the other. They would be concurrently evolved, each in its own special direction. I**n** cannot be shown that, in the last analysis, faith is ever grounded in thought. The probability lies the other way—that our fundamental faiths lie at the basis of all our mental acts. Knowledge begins in faith, and ends in faith.

Having endeavored to clear away certain difficulties which lay in the path of the discussion, by indicating the relations of faith and reason, and of faith and knowledge, and by calling attention to the real distinction which deserves emphasis, viz., that between faith and thought as specific functions of the reason and specific factors of knowledge, we are prepared to take up the question as to the validity of our knowledge of the Infinite, and as to the mode of its possession.

There are two sorts of revelation which God has furnished—the first natural, the second supernatural. Natural revelation is the testimony of God to natural truth—concerning himself, man, and the relations involved. That testimony—the unwritten word of God—is contained in the microcosm within man, and the ma-

crocosm without him. It is imbedded in his make and constitution, and utters itself in every energy which wakes to activity from the profoundest depths of the soul. It whispers in consciousness, thunders in conscience, and breaks into doxologies in the instinctive worship of the heart. Every bodily sense gives it a tongue. It proclaims itself at the gates, through which the procession of the mental powers marches out to communicate with the external world, and through which a mighty host of influences from the universe without throngs into the capacious courses of the human spirit. It breathes in the air, shouts in the storm, and lifts up its awful voice in the roar of tempestuous seas. By day, it is read in the light poured out upon the earth like a baptism of glory, and by night unrolls its flaming register upon the distant vault of heaven. In a word, the testimony of God afforded by natural revelation is inscribed upon every power of man, and upon every element of external nature.

Supernatural revelation is the testimony of God to supernatural and redemptive truth—concerning himself, man, and the relations involved. This is furnished in the Scriptures. They discharge a twofold office. In the first place, they republish and confirm the lessons of reason, of the external universe, and of the Covenant of Works as a positive element in the first religion of man as an unfallen being. They bring out afresh and illuminate the testimony of God furnished in natural revelation, but rendered, in great measure, illegible, inaudible, and impotent by the deadening influence of sin. In the second place, they create the knowledge of the scheme of redemption, reveal the original principles of God's moral government under new modifications and altogether singular and distinctive methods of application, and unveil to the gaze of a holy universe, an attribute of the divine nature which had not previously terminated upon its appropriate objects—the lovely quality of mercy, yearning over the guilty, the wretched, and the lost, and suggesting their recovery from sin and hell through the blood of the eternal Son, and the grace of the eternal Spirit. The gospel, therefore, is not coextensive with the Scriptures. They are generic; it is specific. So far as the Scriptures reveal redemption for sinners, they are the gospel.

Corresponding to these two kinds of revelation, and to the respective divine testimonies yielded through them, there are two sorts of faith—natural and supernatural. Generally considered, faith, as fundamental and undeveloped, is an aptitude for, and as elicted into act, an assent to, truth upon evidence, and commonly evidence in the form of testimony. Truth is the object, faith the organ, and testimony the ground. Specifically contemplated, natural faith is an aptitude for, or assent to, the truths of natural revelation upon the testimony of God.

Supernatural faith—the product of the regenerating grace of the Holy Ghost—in so far as it is fundamental and regulative, is an undeveloped spiritual power lying at the roots of the renewed nature, and adapted to the reception of the transcendent truths of redemption upon the written testimony of God. In so far as it is brought out into special exercise, it actually receives the truths of the gospel upon God's testimony, and embraces and relies upon the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Saviour of sinners.

Let us now inquire into the functions of these respective sorts of faith in regard to the infinite element in natural and supernatural revelation; and the apostle Paul shall furnish us a text for the discussion: "He that cometh to God must *believe* that he is."

1. We begin with natural faith. The proposition which I desire to establish is, that there is in the soul a fundamental faith which adapts it to the knowledge of the Infinite Being, and that, when developed through experience, it positively affirms his existence. It is in this way we know God as infinite, and not through the processes of the thinking reason. It has been the common opinion of theologians that the knowledge of God is intuitive. It is not to be understood that they meant, by the use of this language, to affirm that there is any presentative knowledge of him. Intuition, though sometimes employed in that sense, is not in this relation. Had we such a knowledge of God, we could describe him as we do objects upon which we gaze. What they intended was, that man is so constituted that the truth of the divine existence is self-evident—it vouches for itself by its own light. Of course, by such a doctrine, if it be not un-

meaning, they designed to teach that there is an intuitive knowledge of an infinite Being. As specimens of theological consent in this matter, I cite a witness from the Reformation period, one from a later age, and two from our own time. Calvin, sometimes, is wont to say that the knowledge of God is implanted in the mind, and at others that it is carved into it. De Moor, in his able and learned Commentary on Marck's Compendium, expressly draws a distinction between the *notitia insita* and the *notitia acquisita*—the implanted and the acquired knowledge of God. Dr. Charles Hodge, by a convincing argument, sustains the position that such knowledge is intuitive; and Dr. Thornwell, although somewhat guarded in his language, admitted that there is a fundamental faith which necessitates the inference of the Divine existence. And yet it seems strange that, notwithstanding these express admissions, the two last-named illustrious divines were reluctant to concede the impossibility of knowing the Infinite Being through the processes of the discursive understanding. They criticise the doctrine of the great Scotch philosopher, that we know the Infinite only by faith, and appear to hold, that by thinking away limitations, and removing imperfecttions, from our concepts of finite manifestations of the Infinite, we may reach, though only a partial, yet a real and valid knowledge of it. I must confess that, to my mind, such a process of the thinking faculty, however indefinitely prosecuted, could only avail to give an ever-enlarging conception of the finite. We know the Infinite Being, as infinite, by faith; we know his finite manifestations by perception and thought.

There are criteria by which the existence of fundamental beliefs may be tested—they are self-evidence, simplicity, and necessity. If a principle is revealed in its own light, if it cannot be resolved into simpler elements, if it must be admitted in a healthful and normal condition of the faculties, it ought to be acknowledged to be primary and fundamental. Universality, though not strictly one of these coördinate criteria, is a fair proof of necessity. Beliefs which we find existing in every partially civilised tribe of men, and expressed in the language of every people possessed of even a moderate degree of cultivation, are proved by

that fact to be necessary. Subjected to these tests, the belief in the Infinite, and, I am disposed to think, in an Infinite Being, will be evinced as one of the fundamental faiths of the human mind. It certainly is characterised by simplicity, for it cannot be resolved into anything more ultimate. It will be said that it cannot abide the tests of self-evidence and necessity, in view of the fact, first, that there are some who are ignorant of it; and secondly, that there are some who theoretically deny it. To the first objection it is easy to reply that no acknowledged intuition is developed in the mind of an infant, and that there are tribes of men who, in intellectual culture, are in an infantile condition. The belief in substance is self-evident and necessary, whenever the faculties are developed by education; but there may be an intellectual state so brutish that it is not elicited into exercise. There is a failure, even on the part of some philosophers, to distinguish between the originality and the comparative maturity of a principle. Paley, for example, confounded the maturity and the originality of conscience. It is conceded that a fundamental faith, like a fundamental law of morality, depends for even its lowest development upon the conditions furnished by experience, and that the degrees of its expansion correspond with the degrees of a regular and normal cultivation of the faculties. It is susceptible of doubt, moreover, whether the cases are not exceedingly few, in which men have been found in so dwarfed a state of the intellectual and moral faculties, as not to possess some belief in the illimitable.

To the second objection—that there are some who theoretically deny the existence of an Infinite Being—it may be answered that the number of such thinkers is just exceptional enough to challenge attention to the general rule. The rash and abnormal expressions of a few men cannot be assumed as at all affecting the consentient faith of the race. It is worthy of notice that when God himself deigns to speak of those who deny his existence, he stigmatises them not so much as criminals, but as fools. The indescribable folly of such a course would appear to transcend its impiety. It is to the credit even of a sinful and infatuated race, that this variety of it, like the mutilated specimens of some ani-

mal species, are very limited in number. They may emphatically be regarded as *lusus naturæ,* since in their production nature seems to indulge in a horrible amusement at her own expense; and so, by the hideous caricature of herself, proves that the sin which has revolutionised her integrity is as besotted as it is devilish.

The whole difficulty, if any there be, is relieved of force by the simple consideration that there is scarcely any self-evident truth which has not had some one to deny it. It would seem as if the ultimate effect of sin would be to craze the reason, and to convert the world into a lunatic asylum.

Having endeavored to prove, positively, that there is a fundamental law of belief which guarantees the Infinite, I pass on to show, negatively, that we can reach the knowledge of the Infinite in no other way—that it is not possible for thought to furnish it. It is the province of the thinking faculties to receive the information furnished by perception, to conceive, to form judgments from concepts, to construct arguments from judgments—to proceed by analysis and synthesis, by induction and deduction. It is clear that as each one of these powers is limited to phenomenal properties, the conclusions which they reach must be characterised by a corresponding limitation. There cannot be in the conclusion more than is contained in the premises. Let us test this law of the processes of thought by a single illustration. Take the notion of substance. How do we know it? That about which perception and conception are concerned, is simply the phenomenal properties. Think away, for example, from this desk all its properties—its dimensions, its configuration, its color, its divisibility, and others which belong to it—and what remains to be apprehended in thought? Nothing. And yet we must postulate the existence of a substance in which these properties inhere, and of which they are the phenomenal manifestations. What we know in thought is the accidents, what we know by faith is the substance. In like manner think away thought, feeling, desire, volition, moral perceptions from the mind, and what remains to be conceived? Nothing. Still we must demand a substance, which is ourselves, to which these qualities belong

and which they express. How do we know it? Not by conception, but by faith. The knowledge of the substance is as valid as the knowledge of the properties. The explanation of the process would seem to be clear. The cognitive apprehension of the phenomenal manifestations elicits into exercise a hitherto dormant fundamental law of belief; that necessitates the inference from the properties that the substance exists; and that inference is precisely a special act of faith. It is necessary,—we cannot avoid it. It is immediate,—it differs entirely from the mediate inference of the syllogistic process. There is no enthymeme with a suppressed premise; for there is no suppressed premise to be supplied. We pass, *per saltum*, from the concept of the properties to the existence of the substance. Now what is true of our knowledge of finite substance, is, *a fortiori*, true of our knowledge of an infinite substance. Let us take, for instance, the famous cosmological argument. We cognize effects, and effects upon a stupendous scale. We refer them to an adequate first cause. That, however, only gives us a sufficient, not an infinite cause. The effects are apprehended as finite; the cause that is postulated need not be more than a vast finite cause. Were the process purely ratiocinative, that would be the result. Limited and conditioned effects, however great, demand no more than a limited and conditioned cause. But this, it will be said, is not a complete account of the argument. We cognize the cosmical effects as changing, fluctuating, contingent; and we refer to a first cause which is unchanging, unfluctuating, uncontingent that is, to a necessary Being who has the reason of his existence in himself. But given a necessary Being, and we have an infinite Being. Now, in regard to this procedure, we submit a few remarks: In the first place, it is based, even in its simplest form, upon a fundamental law of belief, namely, the principle which demands a cause for every effect, and a cause sufficient for, and corresponding to, the effects. What, then, is the process? By perception and thought we apprehend the phenomenal effects, and the fundamental law of causality necessitates the inference to the cause. That inference is but a special act of faith. Call it judgment, if you will, but it has no middle. It is immediate

and necessary, and therefore ceases to be ratiocinative, and takes on the complexion of faith. In the second place, the inference from contingent effects to a necessary Being as their cause is only legitimated by a similar fundamental law of belief. The mere process of thinking would never conduct us to it. In the third place, it is possible to doubt whether the affirmation of a necessary Being is tantamount to the affirmation of an infinite Being. It may be conceivable that a Being might have the reason of his existence in himself, and yet not contain all that is strictly demanded by the notion of the Infinite. But granted that such a result follows from the attainment of a necessary first cause, and still it is urged that the knowledge of that Being is the product, not of the conceiving and reasoning process, but of an act of faith enforced by a fundamental and regulative law of belief. Why not admit that there is a primary and intuitive faith, which is at once an aptitude and a guarantee for the knowledge of the Infinite? I have already attempted to show that there exists such a fundamental principle, which will stand the test of criteria by which the existence of such primitive laws are determined.

Let us then start with that assumption, and indicate the steps of the process by which an actual knowledge of the Infinite Being is reached. Let it be observed that there is not here even a squinting to the theory of the Absolutist philosophers—that we immediately know the Infinite Being as the result of this law of belief. Were that possible, what could we know? Nothing but the Infinite Being Himself, without the qualification of a single attribute. Properties as such, are only apprehended by perception and thought. These faculties cannot, therefore, be overslaughed in the effort to answer the question, What God is, as well as the question, Does God exist? Hence it is no marvel that Cousin, who contended that the mere possession of the belief in the Infinite necessitates the immediate knowledge of the Infinite God, denied his personality, and made the human reason itself impersonal. It is true that the term Infinite, unless it symbolises nothing, and language in its most solemn and impressive form be only an imposture practised upon our faculties by themselves or by some malignant spirit, implies the existence of

a corresponding reality. But that determines nothing in reference to the mode by which the knowledge so represented is ultimately attained. What is that mode?

Consciousness and external perception furnish for thought the phenomena of our own being and those of the external world. We perceive them as effects, and effects upon a vast, an universal scale. The fundamental belief in the Infinite, elicited into exercise by these conditions of experience, induces the inference, in the form of a special act of faith, not only of a first cause, but of an infinite first cause. We cognize the moral phenomena of our minds; we infer a moral lawgiver and ruler. This conducts us, however, only to one who has knowledge and power sufficient to enable him to govern the universe. The fundamental belief in the Infinite leads to the inference, by a special faith, in the infinity of the moral Ruler. We are conscious of the sense of dependence, and of religious tastes and emotions which infer a Being of vast knowledge and power, and of beauty, loveliness, and glory as the object of worship. But we have not reached the Infinite. That is given by faith. We know the Infinite Creator, Governor, and Object of worship, as infinite, not by thought, but by faith.

To be more particular: for it is special cases which are the tests of theories. How do we acquire the knowledge of infinite attributes? Let us take the instance of power. We cognize effects, which we are constrained to refer to power as their cause. That reference is itself necessitated by a fundamental belief. But finite effects can only give us finite power. I do not deny that we have a real and valid knowledge, by conception, of the finite manifestations of infinite power, just as we have the knowledge, by conception, of our own power and of the forces of nature, in their lower degrees of exercise, as well as their higher. But still we have only reached limited power. We then, by the thinking faculty, endeavor to remove all limitations, and to attain the concept of an unlimited and illimitable power. We fail; for conception cannot grasp the Infinite. Here faith comes in, and projects the highest concept of finite power into the region of the Infinite. Without the condition afforded by the thinking process,

faith would sleep; without faith roused into activity by that condition, thought would stop infinitely short of the Infinite.

Indulge a figure for a moment. Faith and Thought—twin powers—go forth together to the examination of phenomena, of effects and properties; and at first Faith leans upon the arm of her sister. Thought proceeding upon the phenomenal contents of perception, rises concept by concept, and removes imperfection after imperfection, in her endeavor to reach the Infinite. Foiled in her attempt, she sinks in her final effort, breathless and exhausted, on the hither side of the chasm, which opens up between the highest concept of the finite and the Infinite God. "Art tired, sister?" says Faith; "rest thou here, until I essay the passage of this gulf." Then stretching her hitherto folded wings, and planting her feet on the last standing ground of Thought, as her point of departure, she flies across the ocean impassable to her feebler sister, home to the bosom of the Infinite Being. She sees the invisible God, hears his inaudible voice, and, by a mysterious and inexplicable power, apprehends his infinitude. Then returning, she furnishes her grand knowledge to Thought, and ever after the form of the Infinite, so to speak, is imposed upon the processes of the finite understanding. Thenceforward Faith and Thought unite their forces, and reason together concerning the infinite, as though it had been an original datum of the thinking faculty. The same line of argument might be pursued in regard to the other attributes—wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth. By conception, we validly apprehend them in their finite manifestations. This gives us, so to speak, their quality, under the imperfect but real analogies presented by the properties of our own being. By faith we know them as infinite. And then the irresistible inference is to the existence of an Infinite substance, of which they are the wholly singular and peculiar properties. It deserves to be remarked, that in this account of the mode by which we reach the knowledge of the Infinite, I have described the reflective rather than the spontaneous process. So much for the office of natural faith in conducting us, upon the evidence furnished by natural revelation, to the knowledge of an Infinite God.

2. The limits of this discourse will allow only a brief reference to the distinctive influence of supernatural faith in regard to the knowledge of the Infinite. And, indeed, it is not necessary to prosecute in detail that branch of the inquiry, for the reason that what has been said of the office of natural faith may, by an easy change of the terms and relations involved, be applied to that which is supernatural. The latter kind of faith reaffirms all that the former declares, and, in addition, discharges a characteristic office in receiving all that the written Word and the Spirit reveal of the infinite perfections of God, under the transcendent relations of Redemption. The apostle Paul tells us that "through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear;" and that "he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of such as diligently seek him." In these remarkable words we are taught that there are truths which, though they lie beyond the range of the cognitive faculties, are known by faith. The existence of God, the creation of the worlds out of nothing, the infinite moral government of the Divine Ruler, and his infinite perfections as the supreme object of worship, are all among the *cognita* of faith. Our blessed Saviour also teaches that this mysterious power belongs to faith. "This," says he, "is eternal life, that they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." Thus to know God, is to know him as infinite, for only an infinite is the true God; and thus to know Jesus Christ, is to know him as an infinitely sufficient and merciful Redeemer. A knowledge of the Infinite, Paul expressly assigns to faith, and that of which our Saviour speaks is of course attributable alone to the same exalted principle. This ought to settle the question of the cognoscibility of God by faith; and, I humble conceive, does confirm what I have claimed for the office of faith in furnishing the infinite element in our knowledge. It may be said, however, that faith is a spiritual conception. In a sense, this is true. When the believer cognizes the facts of revelation which are level to the apprehension of the unbeliever, he knows them after a spiritual fashion which is impossible to the latter. But

there are other elements which not even the renewed thinking powers are competent to understand. It is a supernatural faith, as distinguished from thought, and it alone, which apprehends the infinite perfections of a Redeeming God, and the transcenddent, the inconceivable facts and relations and ends of the glorious scheme of redemption.

It only remains to gather up the results of this discussion, and show their bearing upon the question with which we began—whether the fact that theology involves an infinite element bars its claims to be regarded as a science. It is urged that as science proceeds by definition, the infinite cannot be made an element of it, because to define it is to limit it, and that involves a contradictttion. The difficulty is removed by noting the distinction between logical definition and limitation as to extent. To illustrate: Unless we take the ground of the Pantheist, we must distinguish the divine substance from all created substances. He is not they, and they are not he. We define, but we do not limit the divine essence as to extent. It is immense, and contains the sum of all being, but it is different from finite essences. Further: We distinguish between the divine attributes. Justice, for example, is not mercy. We define, but we do not limit these attributes as to extent. They coexist as equally infinite, but they are both really and logically distinguishable. We are forced to do this, not only in theological statement, but in ordinary preaching. There is a sense, therefore, in which we are obliged to define the infinite, but in which we by no means limit it as to extent. There is, then, no contradiction emerging on this score from the introduction of the infinite into the scientific procedure of theology. A distinction must also be taken between different sorts of knowledge of the Infinite Being. It is one thing to say that by faith we know the fact of God's existence, and quite another that we know the *how* of his existence—we know that his essence is, but not how it is. The latter we cannot know for we are not God; but the former we not only may but do know. It is known as revealed to faith. It is susceptible of affirmation and negation—may be made a term of human judgments. In like manner, a divine attribute cannot be perfectly comprehended by us, but it

may be known as an infinite perfection by faith; and as known may be made the subject or the predicate of a proposition. Conception may furnish one term and faith the other, and yet the proposition be valid. For example, we are entitled to make the affirmation: the justice of God is infinite. Conception gives justice, a particular kind of perfection, as the subject, and faith gives the term *infinite* as predicable of justice. Here, then, we have an infinite element as a valid constituent of a premise, and as other premises may be constructed in the same way, legitimate conclusions may be drawn. But if we may reason about the infinite and from the infinite, it is manifest that it may constitute a valid element in human science, under the limitations, however, which have been pointed out. To all this it may be objected that it involves a mere juggle of words—that the term infinite is a symbol of nothing real and positive, but represents only a bald negation. We deceive ourselves by the "fatal imposture" of words. Then, if that be so, an infinite God means nothing, and infinite guilt means nothing, and infinite mercy means nothing, and nothing an infinite Saviour and an infinite salvation. They are mere negative conceptions; at best but protests in thought against the absolute restrictions implied in positive affirmations of the thinking reason. No doubt it would be pleasant to some to get quit of an eternal hell as a mere negative concept, a grim play upon words; and *that,* it is likely is the end sought by the objection; but we insist on an infinite Redemption and an eternal heaven as something more than a mere charlatanry, a petty quackery, of terms. It deserves to be carefully considered by those who either deny the knowledge of the Infinite altogether, or affirm what is impossible and must have a terrible recoil—that mere thought can furnish us that knowledge—what a practical sweep these positions imply. They threaten the foundations of both natural and supernatural religion. But if we are made to know God, and not to know him as infinite is not properly to know him at all; if he has laid deep in the very ground-forms of the human soul a fundamental faith adapting us to that knowledge; if he has so constructed our powers as by the very virtue of their energies to conduct us to it, and if he has been pleased

more fully and explicitly to reveal it to us in his written Word—what hinders that, in the employment of our reasoning powers, which were made with an adaptation to order and system, we should attempt to arrange and digest that knowledge into a theoretical and practical science of religion? If the term *infinite* has no corresponding reality, it is of course admitted that there can be no science which involves an infinite element; but it also follows that there can be to us no God. But if the knowledge of the infinite Being and his infinite perfections be a real and not a delusive human knowledge, it may, under proper restrictions, be made the subject of scientific treatment, both inductive and deductive. Not only does the theologian act upon this assumption, but every preacher of the gospel proceeds upon it. He reasons concerning the Infinite inductively when, for example, by a collation of infinite titles and attributes and works, he establishes the divinity of Christ or the Holy Spirit. He reasons concerning it deductively, whenever, in reply to the difficulty of the sinner that his sins are infinitely great and deserve infinite reprobation, he infers the possibility of his pardon from the infinite mercy of God, from an infinite atonement, and from the infinite ability and willingness of Jesus Christ to save. It is obvious that there is a sense in which the Infinite not only may, but does and must enter into the reasoning processes of the human mind. That being conceded, the possibility of a science of theology is granted. Soberly and reverently to reason about God is not to dishonor him; not to do it is to degrade ourselves.

This is the science of sciences which the theological instructor is called to teach. It deals with the high problems of the infinite, the unchangeable, the eternal, as well as with questions adjusted to the measures of the finite intelligence. It lays under tribute every other science, subordinates its lessons to its supreme religious end, and, recapitulating the resources of all into it own grand unity, it offers the collected results in adoring worship before the altar of God. Exploring three worlds in the scope of its mighty induction, examining by its analysis the doctrines of Natural Religion, and the sublime principles of Redemption, it employs its comprehensive synthesis in the construction of a sys-

tem which refuses to be a cold and formal digest, and rises, step by step, into an immortal epic, moving to the passionate notes of a triumphal anthem, and pouring its rich and thrilling doxologies into the ear of the Triune God. Not confined within temporal limits, death will lay no arrest upon its quest of truth, but translated with the glorified Church into the eternal sphere, it will develope its principles through the everlasting ages. The infinite perfections of God will be its text-book, Redemption its transcendent theme, Heaven its seminary, and Eternity its time of study.

APPENDICES.

P. 10. In the remarks made upon the relation of faith to reason, and the denial of any generic difference between them, the term *reason* is not employed specifically, as designating either the noetic or the dianoetic faculty. It appears to me illegitimate to treat reason as no more than the discursive understanding. It is more comprehensive than the faculty of reasoning. What has been here maintained is, that faith is a function of reason in its widest sense. It is not, however, intended to confine faith to the domain of the intellect proper. It would seem to involve the feelings in the form of the special emotion of trust. Faith is an intellectual exercise, so far forth as it is a conviction of the existence of a being or of the truth of a proposition. It is a feeling, so far forth as it involves trust in any being, or confidence in the truth of any proposition. This is true of supernatural faith, and, for aught that appears to the contrary, is true also of natural faith. In both cases an intellectual and an emotional function are discharged in one concrete, personal act. But to contradistinguish faith from reason, or to place it in antagonism to right reason, is to strip it of its most fundamental feature—an intelligent assent to truth.

P. 10. In the first draft of the preceding Address, the term cognition was used in what was admitted to be a strict and narrow sense. As an act, it was contradistinguished from faith as a certain kind of knowing; and as a result, from the knowledge which is distinctively the product of faith. A term was needed which would group into unity, and compendiously express, all the acts of the mind by which it knows, excepting faith. Conception was too narrow, as excluding perception on the one hand, and on the other, judgment and reasoning. Nor did the term *thought* appear to be wide enough, for, strictly speaking, it does not include percepts, but begins with concepts; and in adopting it, for the sake of clearness, in the present form of the Address, it has been found necessary to employ some circumlocution. Cognition, in a limited signification, answered the purpose; and there was high authority for that manner of using it. Sir William Hamilton (Discussions, p. 608,) he says: "Of things absolutely or in themselves, be they external, be they internal, we know nothing, or know them only as incognisable." It must be conceded, however, that the prevalent usage is adverse to this restricted employ-

ment of the term, and the Address has been recast so as to eliminate the ambiguity occasioned by it, and to render unnecessary a mere criticism of words.

P. 13. Sir William Hamilton, the most pronounced advocate of the existence of fundamental laws of belief, as original principles in the constitution of the human mind, expressly excepts the law of causality from that category. While admitting the necessity of the causal judgment, he denies that it is the result of an original principle. The law which demands a cause for every thing which begins to be, he maintains, is one which is derived from experience. It is but a special application of the great law of the Conditioned, viz., that positive thought lies between two contradictory extremes, neither of which can be conceived as possible, but one of which, on the principle of Excluded Middle, must be admitted as true. The positive thought of cause, accordingly, lies between two contradictory extremes: one, the fact of an absolute commencement; the other, the fact of an infinite non-commencement. Neither of these extremes is conceivable. But the fact of an absolute commencement must be admitted to be true, on the ground that consciousness affirms it in the case of every free act of the will. Consciousness attests the fact that what thus begins to be, absolutely begins to be, that is, it is not related to anything previously existing which determines it. Now this fact, vouched for by a deliverance of consciousness, beyond which there can be no appeal, is inconceivable. The mind is impotent to think it. It is unable to think that anything which appears to begin to exist is an addition to the sum of existence. This impotence of mind necessitates the judgment that what thus appears to begin to exist in one form, must have had a previous existence in another form,—that is, that the existence of a thing in one form is caused by its existence in another form. Thus it is shown that the causal judgment—the positive thought of cause—lies between two contradictory and inconceivable extremes, one of which, however, is proved to be true by the testimony of consciousness, viz., the fact of an absolute commencement. But the inability of the mind to think that fact, necessitates the postulation of a cause for everything which appears to begin to exist. This, in brief, is Hamilton's account of the genesis of the causal notion. Now, argues he, the alleged existence of an original law of belief, which necessitates the positive affirmation that everything which begins to be must have had a cause, is contradicted by the deliverance of the fact of an absolute commencement by consciousness. Unless, therefore, consciousness lies, the existence of such an original principle must be denied.

It will be perceived that the argument is based upon the assumption that consciousness gives the fact of an absolute commencement. The only proof of the fact which Hamilton adduces is the consciousness of

of it. Now, if it can be shown that we can have no consciousness of the alleged fact, it must be abandoned as destitute of proof; for if, as he says, it is inconceivable, it is beyond the reach of the discursive understanding. That we cannot be conscious of an absolute commencement may, I humbly submit, be evinced upon Hamilton's elaborately established opinions as to consciousness taken into consideration with his express admissions in this argument.

1. In the first place, he explicitly admits that the fact of an absolute commencement is inconceivable—that it cannot be thought. Now if, as he affirms, we are conscious of an absolute commencement, it would follow that we are conscious of what is inconceivable, of what is impossible to thought. But his own doctrine is, that thought and consciousness are concurrent and inseparable. Consciousness he contends, is the condition of all thinking, feeling, willing, etc.; in a word, of all our mental acts. There can be no mental act without consciousness, and, of course, there can be no consciousness of an act, if the act does not exist. But in this case, consciousness and thought are divorced. The consciousness of an absolute commencement conditions no thought; it conditions the vacancy of thought. There is no act of thinking, for, *ex hypothesi*, the fact is unthinkable. There can be, consequently, no consciousness of an absolute commencement.

Nor will it do to say, that we may be conscious of a belief in the fact though it be inconceivable; for Hamilton grounds the belief of the fact in the consciousness of it, and not the consciousness of it mediately in the belief of it.

2. In the second place, Hamilton expressly and formally teaches that consciousness is only possible in cases in which immediate knowledge is involved. We are conscious only of that which we immediately know. And, in this relation, he uses the terms *intuitive knowledge, presentative knowledge,* and *immediate knowledge*, as equivalents. There be can be no mistake as to his doctrine upon this subject. He illustrates it very clearly in the case in which we reproduce a past event in memory. The event itself, as past, is mediately known through a vicarious representation of it in the mind. What we immediately know, is not the past event, but the mental modification which represents it. Now, says Hamilton, we are conscious of the representing image as immediately known, but of the past event itself, as only mediately known, we have no consciousness. If, then, we are conscious of the fact of an absolute commencement, it follows directly from his own doctrine that it is immediately known—that it is intuitively and presentatively given. If so, as it is face to face with us, we perceive it, and of course can subsequently construe it in thought. It is first perceivable and then conceivable. But Hamilton contends that the fact of an absolute commencement is inconceivable. It is one of the contradictory and inconceivable extremes between which lies the

positive concept of cause. We have then upon his principles an inconceivable fact apprehended in an act of immediate, presentative knowledge. There is here a manifest contradiction, and the argument which evinces it is very simple: We cannot be conscious of anything which is not immediately known; but an absolute commencement, as inconceivable, cannot be immediately known; therefore, we cannot be conscious of it.

We have, therefore, as flowing from Hamilton's doctrine of consciousness, the conclusion that we cannot be conscious of an absolute commencement; and we have his strong assertion, in this argument concerning the origin of the causal judgment, that we *are* conscious of it. It is difficult to imagine so astute a thinker as Hamilton slipping into a flagrant self-contradiction, and the presumption is so strong against this supposition, that one is disposed to suspect some fatal flaw in the reasoning which appears to unmask it. It seems, however, but too conclusive. If, then, there be a contradiction between the two statements thus contrasted, it would follow, in accordance with the law which Hamilton himself so strongly enforces, viz., that of two contradictories one only can and must be true, that only one of the contradictories here signalised can be true. In making the election we cannot hesitate. The position that consciousness only exists in cases of immediate knowledge is the most clearly established; and we are, consequently, forced to reject the contradictory supposition of a consciousness of an absolute commencement as wholly untenable. At least, it must, upon Hamilton's principles, he denied.

If, now, we are obliged to abandon the hypothesis of the consciousness of an absolute commencement, the only ground alleged for holding it as a fact is destroyed. There being no consciousness of it, it cannot be proved to exist—it is to us zero. But as Hamilton finds the empirical origin of the causal judgment in our ability to think an absolute commencement, and that is nothing, it would follow that our impotence to think nothing, must result in nothing. His account of the origin of the notion of causation breaks down. It is not likely that any similar attempt to assign the law to an empirical source will prove more successful that that of this great thinker; and we fall back on the theory which ranks the law of causality among the original and fundamental principles of our mental constitution. The hand that pulls the laniard may be a feeble one, but if it discharges Hamilton's own battery, it must succeed in demolishing his celebrated structure of an Absolute Commencement. The fact would seem to be that his famous speculation upon this subject fails to exhibit even the conditions of experience upon which the causal judgment is elicited. All that is necessary is, not only that a phenomenal change, but that the existence of anything, be perceived. That occasions the positive inference that it must have had a cause, and that affirmation is grounded in a fundamental law of belief.

P. 16. Dr. Calderwood, in his Philosophy of the Infinite, which I had not read before the delivery of this Address, maintains that we have an immediate knowledge of God, and it would follow from that position that we have a consciousness of Him. On the contrary, I have endeavored to show that while we have, by faith, a real and valid knowledge of God, that knowledge is mediate and not immediate. It is evident that as we cannot directly perceive Him, we can have no consciousness of Him as an object perceived. Nor, if we admit that we cannot conceive or think Him, can we be conscious of Him as an object conceived or thought. But, if we do know Him, as infinite, by faith, the question might be suggested whether we may not be conscious of Him as an object believed—whether there may not be what might be called a faith-consciousness of God. That question will, perhaps, be best answered by a reference to the distinction between our knowledge of substance, and of its phenomenal qualities. We are not directly conscious of our own substance, either spiritual or material; that is, we are not directly conscious either of the substance of our souls or of that of our bodies; but only of the qualities which respectively manifest these substances. What then? We believe in the existence of the substances in which the qualities inhere. Of course, as that belief is an energy of the mind in operation, we are conscious of it. Now does it follow, that in being conscious of the belief, we are conscious of its objects, viz., the substances believed to exist? This brings us to the last analysis. If Hamilton's doctrine be true, that there can be no consciousnesss where there is no immediate knowledge, then we are not conscious of substance. Phenomenal qualities are immediately given and we are conscious of them, whether mental or material. We then believe in the substance so manifested, that is, mediately given through the qualities. The faith is an object of consciousness because one of immediate knowledge, but the substance believed, not being immediately, but mediately, known, is not an object of consciousness.

This line of argument will apply with increased emphasis to our knowledge of God. We are conscious of perceiving the phenomenal manifesttations of His attributes. Granted that we are also conscious of these phenomenal manifestations; what then? We believe in the attributes so manifested. That, I think, is the first step. We are conscious of the act of faith as immediately known, but not of the attributes as mediately known. But given the attributes, we necessarily believe in the substance of God, to which the attributes belong. We are conscious of that second step in faith, but we are not conscious of the substance of God, because it is not immediately, but only mediately given. In short, neither our own substance, nor the substance of God, is presentatively known and consequently an object of consciousness. This view would seem to be clear. We may raise that question, as between Reid and Ham-

ilton, whether in being conscious of our perception of an object we are also conscious of the object itself, in the same concrete act. We might, with Reid, deny; and then the preceding argument would, of course, be strengthened. For, if in being conscious of the act of perception we are not conscious of the object perceived, then, in being conscious of the act of faith we are not conscious of the object in which we believe. But if we admit the doctrine of Hamilton and most philosophers, it does not, because, in being conscious of perception we are conscious of the object perceived, follow that in being conscious of faith we are conscious of the object in which we believe. This, in the case of objects mediately known, Hamilton denies. Yet he often speak elliptically of self-consciousness. What I conceive his phraseology, if expanded, would strictly mean, is, that we are conscious of attributes from which we immediately and irresistibly infer our selfhood. Dr. Mansel, however, expressly avows and defends the doctrine that we are directly conscious of self—that is, if it mean anything, of the substantive existence of the Ego. But even he makes the consciousness of self an exception to the law that we are not conscious of substance. He fails to prove his extraordinary position, and opens the way for the Absolutist hypothesis—which he vehemently assails—of the immediate knowledge of the Divine substance.

We believe in the Infinite God. Thus we know Him mediately but validly. As He is not presentatively given in His essence, we cannot be directly conscious of Him. We are conscious of His blessed manifestations of Himself to us and in us, and we immediately and necessarily infer His attributes, His existence, and our relations to Him. This doctrine is safe—it is one which nature and the Scriptures concur in teaching. To say that we cannot know God at all is to sweep away the foundations of religion; to say that we can think Him, with our narrow grasp of conception, is either to deny practically that we can know Him, or to make with the philosopher of the Absolute our knowledge commensurate with that of God—to raise the finite to the Infinite, or to reduce the Infinite to the finite. And in claiming this wondrous power for faith, we do not confound a knowledge of the Infinite with an infinite knowledge, a faith in the Infinite with an infinite faith. It may increase in intensity, though not in extension. It can never give more than the Infinite and that it gives now; but it may more give the Infinite and that eternally, more and more. On the other hand, Thought knows the finite. In its grand *nisus*, it will ever strive to reach the Infinite, but never will. The comprehension of conception will expand forever, but to eternity will only give the finite. Else comprehending God, we would have nothing more to know.

Glossary:—

a fortiori— "with even stronger reason." Thus: if one thing is true then it can be inferred that a second thing is even more certainly true.

Enthymeme—(from ἐνθύμημα): an argument in which one premise is not explicitly stated; or more fully, an informally stated syllogism used in oratorical debates, often relying on premises that are probably rather than certainly true, or relying on unstated assumptions that are omitted because they are already well-known or agreed upon.

ex hypothesi—in accordance with or following from the hypothesis stated

lusus naturae – A freak of nature; a person or animal that is markedly unusual or deformed.

***per saltum*—**At a leap; without passing through intermediate stages or steps.

Percept—A mental impression of something perceived by the senses, viewed as the basic component in the formation of concepts; a sense datum.

Ratiocinative—based on logical reasoning; from ***ratiocination***—the process of logical reasoning; to think or argue rationally.

Unum præ cunctis fama loquatur opus—Fame can speak of the one, and that can do for them all. From Martial, *De Spectaculis.*

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