

A CAUTION AGAINST ANTI-CHRISTIAN SCIENCE.¹

“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.”—*COLOSSIANS*, ii. 8.

EVERY Christian should be familiar with the fact that the human mind, as well as heart, has been impaired by the fall. Men “so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body.” From the nature of the case, the misguided intellect is unconscious of its own vice; for consciousness of it would expel it. Its nature is to cause him who is deceived to think that error is truth, and its power is in masking itself under that honest guise. Why, then, need we wonder that every age must needs have its vain and deceitful philosophy, and “oppositions of science, falsely so called?” And how can the Christian expect that uninspired science will ever be purged of uncertainty and error, by any *organon* of investigation invented by man? Even if the *organon* were absolute, pure truth, its application by fallen minds must always ensure in the results more or less of error, except in those exact sciences of magnitudes where the definiteness of the predications and fewness of the premises leave no room for serious mistake.

Even when a body of honest and sincere men, like this Synod, attempts to apply certain common principles to questions of moral and ecclesiastical detail, their differences betray the fact that the operation of their reasons is imperfect. Yet these are the men to whom the church looks to teach the way of salvation. Now we demonstrate in our very church courts the fallibility of our minds when we are left to ourselves. How then can any man be willing to entrust to us the guidance of a soul, which is

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worth more than the whole world, and whose loss is irreparable? No thinking man will commit himself without reserve, in this thing, to any human direction. We must feel our need of an unerring guide; and hence the superiority of that religion which gives us as prophet and teacher that Christ who is "the image of the invisible God, born before all creation" (ch. i. 15), "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," (ii. 3); and "in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," (ii. 9). How blessed is the man who is "complete in him!" He has an infallible guidance, and no other is sufficient for an immortal soul.

The Colossian Christians were enticed to leave this prophet for a shadowy philosophic theory of their day. This was a mixture of Oriental, Rabbinical and Greek mysticism, which peopled heaven with a visionary hierarchy of semi-divine beings, referred the Messiah to their class, and taught men to expect their salvation from their intercession, combined with Jewish asceticisms and will-worship. Thus we are taught, both by uninspired, but authentic history, and by intimations of the holy apostle in the Epistle itself. This fanciful scheme was supported by the "traditions of men"; that is to say, by the inculcation of favorite masters of this vain philosophy; and by "the rudiments of the world," by this world's first principles, instead of Christ's declarations. But the apostle solemnly reminded them that this philosophy was vain and deceitful; and moreover, that the price of preferring it to the Christian system was the loss of the soul. Thus, the real aim of the seducer was to despoil the soul of its salvation, and to make it a captive to falsehood and corruption.

The prevalent vain, deceitful philosophy of our day is not mystical, but physical and sensuous. It affects what it calls "positivism." It even makes the impossible attempt to give the mind's philosophy a sensualistic explanation. Its chief study is to ascertain the laws of material nature and of animal life. It refers everything to their power and dominion; and from them pretends to contradict the Scriptural account of the origin of the earth and man. Does it profess not to interfere with the region of spiritual truth, because concerned about matter? We find, on the contrary, that physical science always

has some tendency to become anti-theological. This tendency is to be accounted for by two facts: one is, that man is a depraved creature, whose natural disposition is enmity against God. Hence this leaning away from Him, in many worldly minds, perhaps semi-conscious, which does "not like to retain God in its knowledge." The other explanation is, that these physical sciences continually tend to exalt naturalism; their pride of success in tracing natural causes, tempts them to refer everything to them, and thus to substitute them for a spiritual, personal God. Again, then, is it time for the watchman on the walls of Zion to utter the apostle's "beware." Again are incautious souls in danger of being despoiled of their redemption by "vain deceitful philosophy." To enforce this caution, I urge:

I. The attitude of many physicists at this time towards revelation is threatening. I perceive this in the continual encroachments which they make upon Scripture teachings. Many of you, my brethren, can remember the time when this modern impulse did not seek to push us any farther from the old and current understanding of the Bible cosmogony than to assert the existence of a pre-Adamite earth, with its own distinct *fauna* and *flora*, now all entombed in the fossiliferous *strata* of rocks. To meet this discovery no harder re-adjustment was required than that of Drs. Pye Smith and Chalmers, who proposed to amend the expositions of Moses by supposing that between "the beginning" and that epoch of void and formless chaos immediately before the six days' work, there was a lapse of myriads of years; of which Moses tells us nothing, because the creatures and revolutions which filled these ages had nothing to do with the history of man's redemption.

But now we are currently required by physicists to admit that the six days' work of God was not done in six days, but in six vast tracts of time.

That the deluge did not cover "all the high hills which were under the whole heaven," but only a portion of Central Asia.

That man has been living upon the globe, in its present dispensation, for more than twenty thousand years, to say the least, as appears by some fossil remains of him and his handiwork; and that the existence of the species is not limited to the five

thousand nine hundred years assigned it by the Mosaic chronology.

That the "nations were not divided in the earth after the flood by the families of the sons of Noah;" and that God did not "make of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth;" but that anatomy and ethnology show there are several distinct species, having separate origins.

That God did not create a finished world of sea and land, but only a fire-mist, or incandescent, rotating, nebulous mass, which condensed itself into a world.

And last, that man is a development from the lowest type of animal life.

Can the Scriptures, my brethren, be shown plastic enough to be remoulded, without total fracture of their authority, into agreement with all these views?

Again, the whole posture and tone of this class of physicists towards revelation is hostile and depreciatory; their postulates, with their manner of making them, imply a claim of far more authority for human science than is allowed to inspiration. Thus, the attempt to restrain any corollaries, however sweeping, which they may draw by the teachings of Scripture is usually resented. But in any other field of reasoning, if two lines of seeming argument lead to contradictory conclusions, men always admit the rule that truths must be consistent among themselves, and, in obedience to it, they surrender the weaker line to the stronger, thus removing the collision. But these physicists never dream of surrendering a deduction simply to the Bible contradiction of it. Thus they betray very plainly whether they think human science more certain than revelation. The very attempt to bring the truth of their scientific conclusions to the test of the Bible is resisted as an "infringement of the rights of science," an unjust restraint upon the freedom of their intellects. Now these men will scarcely claim for a man a right to argue himself into the belief of demonstrated falsehoods. The implication is, that the Scriptures really settle nothing by their own testimony; that is, that they have no true authority with these scholars. The public mind has become so habituated to this imperious attitude of physical science, that it is hard for you to take in its full significance. To enable you to measure it, I will ask you to represent

to yourselves that some of us theologians should raise the corresponding outcry against the physicists: that we should be heard exclaiming, "We resent the intrusions of physical science upon our divine science, as an infringement of the rights of theology; and we resist them wherever they contradict our inferences, as an unjust restraint upon the freedom of man's intellect, when expatiating in this noblest of all its domains!" Realize to yourselves the astonishment with which scientific worldly men would listen to our outcry. They would deem it the extravagance of lunacy in us! And, indeed, we should be rather fortunate if you also did not sympathize a good deal with the charge! It is, in this matter, just as it is in all other cases where Christians and the world meet on common, social grounds. Everybody thinks it obviously reasonable that where a collision would arise, the Christian people must concede, in order to avoid giving offence to the worldly. But should the Christians in any case require the world to concede anything in order to avoid giving offence to the church, in the common social *arena*, although the Christians pay just as good money as the world does for their share, their claim would appear excessively queer, indeed foolish, and wholly out of the question! Why, what are Christians for, if not to make sacrifices and be imposed on? But, if two coördinate sciences impinge against each other, the equality of their authority gives the advocates of the one just as much right of complaint as the advocate of the other, until special inquiry has settled where the fault of the contradiction lies. The feeling which I have above described shows that, in this case, the sciences of nature and of redemption are not thought coördinate, and that the latter is regarded as of inferior authority.

We hear the physicists, again, very condescendingly, lamenting the imprudence of the theologians in thrusting the Scriptures into collision with their sciences. They regret, they tell us, the damage which is thus inevitably done to the credit of religion. They are, indeed, quite willing to patronize the Christian religion as a useful affair, provided it is sufficiently submissive in its behaviour. But their conception about the collision between it and physical science is just that of the engine-driver upon the collision between a child and his mighty locomotive: it was a catastrophe much to be lamented, but only on the child's

account! Sometimes we are told that theology has nothing to do with science; that our imprudence is like that of Hophni and Phineas, in risking the ark of God in their war with the pagans. But what if the Philistines invade the very sanctuary? Shall the ark of God, at their bidding, be expelled from its home on earth? And if the price of its quiet is to be, that it shall have no Shekinah of glory to dwell upon its mercy-seat, and no tables of testimony within it, written by the finger of God, we may as well let the enemy take the empty casket. Now, all these assumptions betray too obviously the belief of their authors that the Bible is fallible, but science infallible.

Again: While I do not charge infidelity upon all physicists, the tendency of much of so-called modern science is skeptical. The advocates of these new conclusions may plead that they only postulate a new exposition of Scripture, adjusted to the results of the "advanced modern thought." But I ask, can any exegesis make our Bible speak all the propositions which I enumerated above, and all the rest which it may please the adventurous innovators to announce, without damaging its authority as a sure rule of faith? The common sense of most men will conclude that such a book is only a lump of clay in the hand of priestcraft, to be moulded into such shape as may suit its impostures. We freely grant all that can be said in favor of caution and exhaustive study, in placing a meaning upon the words of Scripture; but a Bible which does not assert its own independent meaning, as fairly interpreted by itself; a Bible which shall wait for distinct and changing human sciences to tell us what it shall be permitted to signify, is no sufficient rule of faith for an immortal soul. Those who know the current tendencies of the physical sciences well know that we utter no slander in saying that they are towards disbelief of revelation. We have the explicit testimony of an eye-witness in the scientific association of the year, held at Indianapolis, that the great majority of the members from the Northern States openly or tacitly disclaimed inspiration; and this, while many of them are pew-holders, elders—yea, even ministers—in the Christian churches. When asked why they continued to profess a religion which they did not believe, some answered that the exposure and discussion attending a recantation would be inconvenient; some, that it would be pain-

ful to their friends; some, that Christianity was a good thing for their sons and daughters, because of its moral restraints.

Both in the British Isles and in this country, the very worst and most reckless of these physical speculations now receive the most mischievous diffusion. They are inserted in popular textbooks, and taught to youth, as though they were well-established scientific truths and veritable organs of mental discipline; and that, even, in some colleges professedly Christian. They are hawked about at second-hand, by popular lecturers, as though they were the commonplaces of science. We find them strained, in feeble but malignant solution, into the magazines which intrude themselves into our families as suitable reading for the Christian household. So that college lads can cultivate, under their father's own roof, by this aid, a nascent contempt for their fathers' Bibles, along with their sprouting mustaches; and misses can be taught to pass judgment at once on the blunders of Moses and the triumphs of Parisian millinery. Worse than all, we sometimes hear of their utterance from the pulpit by ministers, who treat of "Man in Genesis and Geology," intimating, in no doubtful way, that the former record of man's origin is to be corrected by the latter.

Beware, then, my brethren, lest any man spoil you through this vain, deceitful philosophy. Bethink yourselves what is to be done. Are you ready to surrender the infallibility of your Bibles? The advocates of these new opinions may plead that we are not to assume in advance the inspiration of the whole Scriptures, when, as they say, the very question in debate is, whether their sciences do not prove them fallible in part. Even if we granted this, it is still time that we knew where we stand. It is high time that the true quality of this antagonism were unmasked. Let us no longer say, "Peace, peace, if there is no peace." Consider how disastrous it may be to have these new opinions asserted without contradiction. It may be that your son, or daughter, or young pupil, is just now experiencing the bitter struggle of the carnal mind against the calls of the sanctifying Spirit, or that inflamed appetite is panting to overleap the odious but wholesome restraints of the revealed law. How dangerous, at this critical hour, to have them taught that philosophers have found, amidst the stony *strata* and musty fossils

which they explore, undoubted evidence of mistakes in Moses, Paul, and Christ! I tell you that this has become a case under that general truth of which the apostle so faithfully warns us, that "the friendship of the world is enmity to God." You must resist, or you must practically surrender your Bibles. You will have to "take sides" for or against your God. You will find yourselves under a necessity of forbidding the inculcation of this intrusive error to your children, and its entrance into your families, as though it were established truth; no matter what *odium* you may incur, or what institutions or men, styled Christian, may follow the fashion of the times; else, if things go as they now do, the church will have a generation of infidel sons.

II. And this is the position on which the Christian pastor should stand. Unless our Bible—when cautiously and candidly interpreted by its own light—is inspired and infallible, it is no sufficient rule of faith for an immortal soul. Such the Bible is, notwithstanding all the pretended discoveries of vain philosophy. Modern events have not loosened a single foundation stone of its authority, nor can any such discoveries, from their very nature, affect it. But in asserting this confidence, it is not necessary for the theologian to leave his own department, and launch into the details of these extensive, fluctuating, and fascinating physical inquiries; nor shall I, at this time, depart from my vocation as the expounder of God's word, to introduce into this pulpit the curiosities of secular science. We have no occasion, as defenders of that word, to compare or contest any geologic or biologic theories. We may be possessed neither of the knowledge nor ability for entering that field, as I freely confess concerning myself. We have no inclination to deny that these physicists have displayed a surprising industry in their researches; that they have accumulated a multitude of observations; that they have speculated upon them with amazing ingenuity, or that they have actually deduced many useful conclusions. My business is in another field; that of moral evidence. My effort shall be to set forth the nature and conditions of that evidence, as bearing upon the question of the Bible's inspiration and authority; and I shall endeavor to show you that the kind of physical speculations under review, whether they be more or less ingenious or probable, can never reach the level of that higher question.

First, then : Modern physical science is not to be allowed to boast entire immunity from error, or certainty of results, any more than the physical science of the scholastic ages. I am well aware of the proud claim which its votaries now make. While they join in exposing and ridiculing the pretended physics of the middle ages, and even glory in the vast mutations which the natural sciences have undergone, our present physicists always assume that the Baconian *Organon* has given them an immunity from mistake. Henceforth, they boast, the progress of science is firm, yea, infallible, and destined to no reverses or contradictions, but only to continual accretions, upon the impregnable basis laid by the inductive logic. We are living, say they, not in the age of hypotheses, but of experimental demonstration. Those who come after us will never have any such rubbish to remove from our systems, as the calxes, and phlogiston, the Ptolemaic astronomy, and the baseless maxims, such as that "Nature abhors a *vacuum*," which we have cast out of the old philosophy.

Now, while rejoicing in the belief that physical science has made many solid advances, we are skeptical as to the realization of this boast. It is overweening and unreasonable. Man is a fallen and weak creature, impaired in all his faculties. As I argued at the outset, so I insist here : that this finite, fallen, imperfect reason is incompetent to invent an infallible method of investigation, or to apply it with unflinching correctness, if it were given to us. Partial error has marked all the results of our forefathers' speculations ; and if we should arrogate to ourselves an entire exemption from similar mistakes, this vain conceit of ourselves would be the strongest ground for prognosticating our failure. "That which hath been, is that which shall be." Physical science will remain, in part, uncertain and changeable, for the simple reason that it will still be the work of men—men like the predecessors whose science we have convicted of uncertainty. It is true that Lord Bacon called his method a *Novum Organum* ; but he who supposes that the publication of this new method is to make modern science infallible shows himself a sciolist indeed. Did Bacon invent a logical faculty, or only describe a use of it? He who supposes that any more than the latter was done is as absurd as tho-

one should say that the drill-master invents legs. Nature makes legs, and also teaches their use by instinct; men managed to walk before ever a drill-master existed, by the impulse of nature's teaching. All that the drill-master does is to teach men to walk better, and oftentimes he cannot even do that. So, our creator gave us the faculty of reasoning, and men syllogized before ever Aristotle described the syllogistic process, and made inductions before Bacon analyzed their canons. If you suppose that the experimental method was never known or valued in physics until Bacon's day, you are much mistaken. In truth, Aristotle, who is called the "Father of Logic," analyzed its laws as really as he did those of the syllogism. But had he not, Nature, man's kindly teacher, would have taught him to appreciate the experimental method; and all men who have reasoned have appealed to it, because it is one of the methods of common sense. Again, if you suppose that all the speculations of the modern sciences are conformed to Bacon's method, you are much mistaken. Sins against its rigor and simplicity are by no means limited to the days of old. Men still forget that hypothesis is not proof; and the same motives, so natural to a fallen soul, which caused mediæval physicists to depart from the safe and rigid processes of experimental logic—haste, love of hypothesis, vain-glory, prejudice, disgust of a proud and overweening heart against the humble, modest, and cautious rules of that method, still mislead men's minds. The assumption that henceforth physical science is to be trusted, and to be free from all uncertainty and change, is therefore simply foolish.

This verdict is more solidly confirmed by facts. Indeed, how can one doubt its general justice when he beholds the sciences of the day in a state of flux before his eyes? Geologic theories change in some particulars with every decade. New facts come to light, such as the supposed discovery of human fossils near Amiens, in France; and of skulls in California, in older *strata* than had been supposed to contain any such remains; or as the deep sea soundings which have lately shown that formations determined, as was asserted, to be older and newer, lie beside each other in the ocean cotemporaneously. These discoveries, inconsistent with previous hypotheses, impose to-day a labor of modification upon geologists, and we must be excused

for our lack of confidence in their new structures of theory, with so recent an example of error before us, and with so manifest a pride of opinion influencing the reception reluctantly given to the new facts. Again: we are told that the chemistry taught to-day is different from that which was taught us in the colleges and university thirty years ago—so different as to require a new nomenclature. What reflecting man would deny that unproved hypothesis enters largely into the current physical sciences? Let us mention, for instance, one of the most beautiful, and one which, in parts, has received almost a mathematical accuracy, the science of optics. Is light, itself, a distinct, imponderable substance, as was suggested by Newton to be possibly true? Or is it a molecular function only, of other transparent substances? The latter supposition, we are informed, is now the fashionable one, but has it ever received an exact and exclusive demonstration? Does any one claim for it more than this, that it is a supposition which *may satisfy* all the observed facts about light, so far as we yet know? This is all, we presume, which any careful physicist will assert. Yet how often do we find writers on optics proceeding on this supposition, as though it were demonstrated, to other conclusions and assertions? We are told that the atheistic astronomer, La Place, suggested the “nebular hypothesis” for the origin of our globe, as a possible solution; resting its plausibility on the appearance of nebulous clouds of light among the fixed stars. But since the chief ground of plausibility has been removed by Lord Rosse’s gigantic telescope, resolving some of these *nebulae* into clusters of fixed stars, do we hear our clerical cosmogonists who have adopted this supposition prate any the less glibly about it? Not a whit. And last, as though to convince every sober mind that much of the current physical speculation is but a romantic dreaming, engendered of the surfeit of an over-prurient age, comes Darwinism, and engages a considerable number of the most admired names of physicists for this monstrous idea, that the wondrous creature, man, “so noble in reason, so infinite in faculties, in form and moving so express and admirable, in action so like an angel, in apprehension so like a God,” is but the descendant, at long removes, of a mollusc or a tadpole. No prophet is needed to predict that some, at least, of the current science of our day

will be swept away by the innovations of future physical science itself, as we have discredited much that preceded us.

The supposed conclusions, which seem adverse to the Scriptures as understood by common Christians, are parts of an unstable, because an incomplete system. And I will venture the assertion, without other faculty or acquirement than the light of common sense, that these conclusions are far short of that perfect, exclusive demonstration which would be necessary to unseat the Bible from its throne of authority. A faithful scrutiny would detect sundry yawning chasms between facts and inferences; sundry places where the proposition which, when introduced first, can be called no more than a "may-be," is afterwards tacitly transmuted into a "must-be." Nor is this surprising when we remember the novel and fascinating quality of the observations, and the multiplicity of the premises given by the fruitful variety of nature. Here is a trying labyrinth indeed, to be threaded by the most patient, modest, humble, cautious, finite reason. But are humility, modesty, and caution the characteristics of modern advanced thought? When, for instance, some ethnologists argue that the roots of the different families of languages indicate separate sources for the original tribes of men; when Sir J. Lubbock argues, from presumed social laws, that our civilization has raised man out of a primeval savage state; when Bunsen reasons that man has been more than twenty thousand years upon our globe, from the supposed coincidence of some human fossils with older deposits: do you suppose that their proofs are of that character which, in a court of justice, would stand the test of adverse counsel at law in every link, and remain so conclusive beyond all doubt as to justify an honest jury in taking a fellow creature's life? The inventors themselves would doubtless recoil with a shock from such a responsibility!

But the Bible, by reason of its demonstrative evidences from the independent fields of history, criticism, miracles, fulfilled prophecy, internal moral character, and divine effects on human souls, is in prior possession of the ground of authority. We hold the defensive. The burden of proof against us rests with the physicists. Nothing is done to oust the Bible, until they construct a complete, exhaustive demonstration; not only that

created things *may have* arisen, as modern science surmises, but that they *must have* arisen thus, and not otherwise. Let us suppose that we saw a group of ingenious and well-informed mechanics around a steam engine which bore no maker's label or mark. The question is: where and by whom was it made? They are certain that it might have been made in Philadelphia; they tell us that they know the skilled labor, the appliances, the metals are there for the production of just such a machine; and adding certain marks which are like those communicated to such work by the builders of that city, they are about to conclude that this engine came thence. But now there steps forth a sturdy, respectable Englishman, whose word no man has any right to doubt, and says: "Yes, it might have been made in Philadelphia; yet it was not, for I brought it from London." Is not mighty London confessedly equal to the production of just such a work? Then here is a case in which the Englishman is undeniably competent to testify, and if he is also found credible, the hypothetical reasons of the ingenious mechanics are *wholly out of place* if advanced to rebut his testimony, because the truth of what he testifies does not in the least clash with the grounds of their surmise. He can say to them, with perfect truth: "Gentlemen, I do not impugn your knowledge or skill; I do not dispute a word which you testify of the resources of your city; your surmise, hypothetically, is perfectly reasonable; as far as at first appeared from the machine itself, it *might have been made* in Philadelphia; and yet, in point of fact, it was made in London, as I know." Thus: if there is an all-wise, Almighty God, it must be allowed that he is fully equal to the production of this earth and its organisms. However fair, hypothetically, the surmise may be, that they were produced by other agencies, if there is a credible, independent witness that, in fact, they were made by God, the testimony is relevant, and the supposititious inferences wholly irrelevant to rebut it.

Finally, no naturalistic arguments from observed effects to their natural causes, however good the induction, have any force to prove a natural origin for any structure older than authentic human history, except upon atheistic premises. The argument usually runs thus: we examine, for instance, the disposition which natural forces now make of the sediment of rivers. We

observe that when it is finally extruded by the fluvial current into the lake or sea where it is to rest, it is spread out horizontally upon the bottom by the action of gravity, tidal waves, and such like forces. The successive deposits of annual freshets we find spread in *strata*, one upon another. Time, pressure, and chemical reactions gradually harden the sediment into rock, enclosing such remains of plants, trees, and living creatures as may have fallen into it in its plastic state. The result is a bed of stratified stones. Hence, infers the geologist, *all stratified and fossil bearing beds of stone have a sedimentary origin*, or other such like natural origin. Hence winds and waters must have been moving on this earth long enough to account for all the beds of such stone on the globe. Such is the argument in all other cases.

Grant now that an infinite, all-wise, all-powerful Creator has intervened anywhere in the past eternity, and then this argument for a natural origin of any structure, as against a supernatural, creative origin, becomes utterly invalid the moment it is pressed back of authentic human history. The reason is, that the possible presence of a different cause makes it inconclusive. Now, I well know that this conclusion, simple and obvious as it is, awakens a grand outcry of resistance from physicists. "What," they exclaim, "do not like causes always produce like effects? This principle is the very *fulcrum* of the lever of induction; unsettle it, and you shake all science; remove it, and all her exploits are at an end." Very true; all these illegitimate exploits in this region of a past eternity, whose solemn romance so piques the curiosity and inflames the enthusiasm of the human mind, in which science vainly seeks to measure strength in the dark with an inscrutable omnipotence; all these delusive exploits are ended. But within the proper sphere of science, we leave her the full use of her foundation principle, and bid her good speed in its beneficial use. And that is the sphere of practical inquiry, within the historical past, the present, and the finite, terrestrial future, where we can ascertain the absence of the supernatural.

But to show how utterly out of place the principle is in the past eternity, in which it must meet an Almighty First Cause, and meet him we know not where, let me add two very simple

thoughts: "Like causes always produce like effects?" Yes, provided the conditions of action remain the same. But is it forgotten that *a proposition does not prove its converse?* The admission, that like causes always produce like effects, is not enough to demonstrate that all similar effects have come from the same causes. Suppose we are compelled to grant the presence of another, independent, unlike, yea, omnipotent cause; and suppose we are compelled to admit that it may have intervened at any time prior to actual human history, as all except atheists do admit? Now, in the presence of this vast, *unlike cause*, where is your valid inference, from like effects to the like causes? It is wholly superseded. It may be asked: "Must we then believe, of all the pre-Adamite fossils, that they are not, as they obviously appear, organized matter; that they never were alive; that they were created directly by God as they lie? The answer is, that we have no occasion to deny their organic character, but that the proof of their pre-Adamite date is wholly invalid, when once the possibility of creative intervention is properly admitted, with its consequences. For the assumed antiquity of all the rocks called sedimentary is an essential member of the argument by which geologists endeavor to prove the antiquity of these fossils. But if many of these rocks may have been created, then the pre-Adamite date of fossils falls also. Moreover, when we are confronted with an infinite Creator, honesty must constrain us to admit, that amidst the objects embraced in his vast counsels, there may have been considerations, we know not what, prompting him to create organisms, in numbers, and under conditions, very different from those which we now term natural. After the admission of that possibility, it is obviously of no force for us to argue, "These organisms must have been so many ages old, supposing they were produced, and lived, and died under the ordinary conditions known to us." This is the very thing we are no longer entitled to suppose.

But hear the other thought. Grant me any creative intervention of a God, in any form whatsoever, and at any time whatsoever, then it is inevitable that any individual thing, produced by that intervention, must have presented, from its origin, every trait of naturalness; for it was produced by a rational Creator for the purpose of being—if inorganic—a part of a natural

system, to be providentially governed through the laws of nature; or—if organic—to be, moreover, the parent of a species or race of organisms like itself. The inference is as sure as geometry; for if the first, the parent organism, had not all the properties natural to the species, how could it generate that species? What is the definition which science itself gives of identity of species? It is the aggregate of those properties, precisely, which are regularly transmitted through natural generations. Then, the first organism, made by the Almighty to be the parent of the species, must have been endued with all the properties natural to the species, or to its subsequent members. Now, then, if the argument of our physicists to a natural origin is universally valid—that the like effects must be from the like natural causes—it is valid to prove that this first supernatural organism was also natural. But, according to our case as agreed on, it was not natural. And from this reasoning there is no possible escape, save in absolute atheism.

As this is a conclusion of fundamental importance, let us make it still clearer by applying it in a fair instance. We will suppose that within the lifetime of Seth an antediluvian physicist appeared, investigating the origin of the human species precisely upon the modern principles. He exhumed the remains of Abel and of Adam, and submitted them to a critical examination. He also enquired of Seth what was his belief concerning the origin of the race. That patriarch answered, that the testimony of God, delivered by the venerable Father of Man, Adam, perfectly cleared up the matter; that he, his murdered brother Abel, the unnatural murderer Cain, were all the natural progeny of a first pair, who were themselves the supernatural, adult productions of the Creator, without human parents. But to this simple account of the matter the man of science necessarily demurred; for he had examined Adam's bones, and found them exhibiting every mark of growth from a natural infancy. He had, for instance, possessed himself of that very arm-bone with which, as the unphilosophic myth of Seth would fain teach, Adam had cultivated the primeval garden. Our naturalist had sawed out a transverse section of this bone; he had polished it down to a translucent film; he had poured a pencil of microscopic light through it; and lo, there appeared plainly, as in any other bone,

the cellular tissue filled with that earthy salt, phosphate of lime, which gives to all natural bones their rigidity. And then our naturalist exclaimed, "Why, Seth, the very microscope contradicts you. We have learned from human physiology that all bony matter is thus formed by nature: first, the cellular tissue grows, and then the infant's little frail, flexible bones acquire a gradual solidity by the deposition of phosphate of lime in the cells, until, as the child becomes a mature adult, the full charge of this earthy substance gives the density and firmness of the bone of the sturdy man. Now, you observe that this bone of Adam has that density. By the unfailing maxim, that 'like causes produce like effects,' I know that this bone must have been thus produced; that it was once the flexible, gelatinous structure of the *fœtus*, then the soft bone of the babe, and at length, by gradual growth and deposition of the earthy salt, the mature adult bone which we see. Hence, science must pronounce your story untrue, when you say that this person's body had no natural parentage, but was produced in a mature state by a Creator." To this beautiful induction the common sense of Seth doubtless objected; that God told Adam, for all that, he had made him without natural parents, the first of his kind; a testimony which Adam's own recollection confirmed, in that, from his earliest consciousness he had been a grown man, and there had been no older human being with him at all. Seth doubtless protested, that this testimony he should believe in spite of seeming science. And we may imagine that our naturalist grew quite impatient with his stupid obstinacy, and, as he thrust the microscope under his nose, exclaimed, "Why, man, look here; seeing is believing; your own eyes will tell you that this is natural bone, and so must have grown naturally."

Yet, still the naturalist was wrong, and Seth was right. He could have proved it even without claiming Adam's testimony; he could have reminded this naturalist that, if his reasoning necessarily proved that Adam had a parent, then the same reasoning, applied to a bone of Adam's father, would prove with equal certainty that *he* had a father in his turn, and then that there must have been a grandfather, a great-grandfather, and so backwards forever. But now it is a conclusion of science itself, that an infinite series backward, without original cause outside of itself, is an impos-

sible self-contradiction. This conclusion is of geometrical rigidity, and is recognized by all modern philosophers, even the most anti-Christian. The denial of it is, moreover, blank atheism. Now, then, if the antediluvian naturalist cannot hold this absurd and atheistic history of an infinite series of human generations literally, without beginning from past eternity, he must admit that somewhere in the past there was the *first man*. But his arguments from the natural properties of that first man's remains must inevitably be false in that case. Well, then, he might just as well admit that the argument from Adam's bone was worthless in his case. Seth's testimony is found, after all, strictly competent to the question; and, if his character is seen to be trustworthy, perfectly decisive of it. Seth could, moreover, have supported his own credibility by most weighty experimental facts: such as the exceeding fewness, in his day, of those very bones and other remains of dead human generations; the scantiness of the members of the human family, compared with their evidently prolific powers, and the obvious marks of recency attaching to the whole condition of the race.

Now I claim that my instance is fair; the parallel defect will appear in every attempt of modern science to push the Creator's intervention back of the earliest human history by such inductive reasoning. And I ask, with emphasis, if men are not in fact reaching after *atheism*; if their real design is not to push God clean out of past eternity, why this craving to show his last intervention as Creator so remote? Why are they so eager to shove God back six millions of years from their own time rather than six thousand? Is it that "they do not like to retain God in their knowledge"? It is not for me to make that charge. But have I not demonstrated that the validity of their scientific logic, in reality, gains nothing by this *regressus*?

Once more: let men explicitly relinquish the horrible position of atheism; and they must admit, somewhere in the past, the working of a Being of "eternal power and Godhead." And that admission contains another: that this eternal, sovereign Maker was, of course, *prompted by some rational design* in making what he then chose to make. That is, in the language of natural theology, God must have some *final causes* for what he does, of some sort or other. While we may not audaciously

speculate as to what they were, yet so much is obvious, that in this vast and inscrutable counsel of the Maker's purpose, amidst all the wide designs of the Infinite Reason, the material is intended to subserve the spiritual. As the body is for the mind, and not the mind for the body, so the whole world discloses thus much of its Maker's purpose, that the irrational creation is for the sake of the rational. Shall philosophers be the men to impugn this? They cannot. All nature would cry shame on them for doing so. For what is their preferred glory over the rest of us common men? It is the superior use of their reason.

Now God is manifestly so infinite in wisdom and power, that any creative exploit to which his own final causes might prompt him is as easy to him as any smaller one. Suppose that he may have had rational ends to gain from the production of a world already organized and equipped for the home of a reasonable race of his servants. Then it was no more fatiguing or inconvenient to him to produce such a world six thousand years ago, in all its completeness, than to produce, six millions of years ago, simply a nebulous, incandescent mass of vapor, out of which to grow a world. But, it will be said, is not that statement purely hypothetical? I reply, yes; in advance of revealed testimony, it is. But its legitimate use is *to show that there is a competent and relevant case here for just such testimony*. Now, then, if such a witness appears, and his credibility has sufficient moral supports, his testimony is good. And this view of the matter is as really the most scientific as it is the most Christian.

Hence, brethren, I hold that there is, and there can be, no proper collision between the most explicit and authoritative theistic testimony and sound natural science. They cannot clash, because wherever, in travelling backwards, the domain of creative Omnipotence is met, there true natural science stops. Let us hold this ground, and we have no need to debate any particular hypothesis as to the origin of organism, or to choose this rather than that. We have no call to leave the sphere of morals and theology to plunge into the secular disputes of anatomists or mineralogists. Neither have we any need to force a strained exegesis upon God's record of his own omnipotence in order to conciliate uncertain and fluctuating human sciences.

The best antidote, my hearers, for all this naturalistic unbe-

lief is to remember your own stake in the truth of redemption ; and the best remedy for the soul infected is conviction of sin. "Beware lest any man despoil you through a vain, deceitful philosophy." Of what will they despoil you ? Of a divine redemption, and a Saviour in whom dwell the divine wisdom, power, love, and truth, in all their fulness ; of deliverance from sin and guilt ; of immortality ; of hope. Let naturalism prove all that unbelief claims, and what have you ? This blessed Bible, the only book which ever told perishing man of an adequate salvation, is discredited ; God, with his providence and grace, is banished out of your existence. But is consciousness discredited, which assures you that you are a spiritual and responsible being ? Is sin proved a fancy and death a myth ? Alas, no. These imperative needs of the soul still remain, and crush you as before ; but there is no deliverer. In place of a personal God in Christ, Father, Friend, Redeemer, to whom you can cry in prayer, on whom you may lean in your anguish, who is able and willing to heal depravity and wash you from guilt, who is suited to be your portion in a blessed immortality, you are left face to face with this eternal nature, impersonal, reasonless, heartless. Her evolutions are but the movements of an infinite machine, revolving by the law of a mechanical necessity, and between her upper and nether millstones the corn is this multitude of human hearts, instinct with life, and hope, and fear, and sensibility, palpitating, writhing, and bleeding forever under the remorseless grind. Yes, for aught you know, forever ! for this dreary philosophy cannot even give you the poor assurance of annihilation. Even though it should banish God from your creed, it cannot banish the anticipations of immortality from your spirit. Naturalism is a virtual atheism, and *atheism is despair*. Thus saith the apostle : "They who are "without God in the world" are "without hope." (Eph. ii. 12.) Young man, does it seem to you an alluring thought, when appetite entices or pride inflates, that this false science may release you from the stern restraints of God's revealed law ? Oh ! beware, lest it despoil you thus of hope and immortality. Remember those immovable realities, sin, guilt, accountability, which no vain, deceitful philosophy will be able to hide in the hour of your extremity. Look at these great facts in that light

in which, as you well know, death, "that most wise, eloquent, and mighty teacher," will place them. How poor and mean will all these pretentious sophisms appear in that hour?

Hence, I am not afraid to predict an assured final triumph for the Bible in this warfare. In the end, the spiritual forces of man's nature must always conquer, as they always have conquered. Look back, proud Naturalist, upon history; your form, and all other forms of skepticism, have been unable to hold their ground, even against the poor fragments and shreds of divine truth which met you in Polytheism, in Mohammedanism, in Popery. Man, however blinded, will believe in his spiritual destiny in spite of you. Let proud Naturalism advance, then, and seek its vain weapons groping amidst pre-Adamite *strata* and rotten fossils. The humble heralds of our Lord Christ will lay their hands upon the heartstrings of living, immortal man, and find there always the forces to overwhelm unbelief with defeat. Do men say their propositions are only of things spiritual? Aye, but spiritual truths are more stable than all their primitive granite. These imperishable truths rest on the testimony of consciousness, a faculty more valid than sense and experience: because, only by admitting its certainty can any perception or experience of the senses claim validity.

Centuries hence, if man shall continue in his present state so long, when these current theories of unbelief shall have been consigned, by a truer secular science, to that *limbus* where the Ptolemaic astronomy, alchemy and judicial astrology, lie condemned, the servants of the cross will be winning larger, and yet larger, victories for Christ, with the same old doctrines preached by Isaiah, by St. Paul, by Augustine by Knox by Davies.