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A CRITICISM OF SOME MODERN ERRORS.

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REV. EDMUND T. SHANAHAN, D. D., PH. D.,

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JOHN FISKE ON THE IDEA OF GOD.

Professor Fiske, of Harvard University, in discussing the idea of God as affected by modern knowledge and especially by the doctrine of Evolution,¹ makes the rather astonishing statement that St. Augustine was an anthropomorphist.² The authority of Prof. Fiske in matters historical and philosophical carries with it no inconsiderable weight in the minds of scholars, and inclines not a few to a ready acceptance of his views. Not without interest, therefore, is his present contention that the intellect of Augustine was darkened by an idea of the God-head wholly at variance with the best thinking and utterly untenable in the light and drift of modern science. The figure of the great Bishop of Hippo stands out pre-eminent in the centuries as that of a man who rose on stepping stones of his dead selves to higher things; one who, once the heights were scaled, could look with wonderment at the gradual fusion of many narrower points of view, afforded him while climbing, into the splendid vision of an orderly whole which fell upon his gaze as a mighty unity always does, corrective, impartial and inspiring. His works together with his confessions tell the story of his gradual unfettering from the thrall of environment. His retractations are nothing else than the obituary notice of his cast-off former self. Has Prof. Fiske portrayed Augustine at his prime? Is the Augustine who thought and wrote in Africa the self-same one whom Prof. Fiske has reconstructed in his pages? We propose to let Augustine's works speak out objectively for themselves and tell the story of the master-mind which penned them.

¹The Idea of God, as affected by Modern Knowledge. By John Fiske. Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Boston, 1895. ²Pp. 94, 95.

I.—PROF. FISKE'S POSITION.

Prof. Fiske is a theist who, to use his own words, recognizes an omnipresent energy, which is none other than the living God.¹ He is careful, in his preface² to the work in question, to eliminate all possible misunderstanding of his view by the explicit statement that he does not propose to divest the theistic idea of every shred of anthropomorphism.³ On the contrary, he quite agrees that this would be an utterly illegitimate proceeding for any thinker actually defining his position as theistic.⁴ Neither does he stand sponsor for the contention that personality and infinity are entirely unthinkable in combination. There is, according to him, scarcely less anthropomorphism lurking in the phrase "infinite power" than in the phrase "infinite person."⁵ He is even prepared to admit that God is spirit if the reader will but bear in mind the symbolic character of the words.⁶ Nay more, he expressly states his desire to exclude the idea of God as Force, since this latter concept calls up invariably a sort of blind necessity involved in all Pantheistic notions.⁷ What he singles out explicitly for rejection is the idea of God outlined by Augustine under the overpowering influence of Gnostic thought; an idea so unbecoming the Deity as to be in very truth a barbaric conception, suited alike to the lower grade of culture in Western Europe and to the Latin political genius which was bent upon the construction of an imperial church.⁸

"In his doctrine of original sin," continues Prof. Fiske, "Augustine represents humanity as cut off from all relationship with God, who is depicted as a crudely anthropomorphic Being, far removed from the universe and accessible only through the mediating offices of an organized church."⁹ "The God of Augustine is a Being actuated by human passions and purposes, localizable in space and utterly remote from that inert machine, the universe in which we live and on which He acts intermittently through the suspension of what are called natural laws."¹⁰ This Augustinian conception, he avers, has permeated the whole fibre of Christianity and is responsible for the cries raised nowadays by orthodoxy against every new discovery of science. To Prof. Fiske's mind all conception of a Personal God is anthropomorphic, and the idea of personality as attributed to God by most modern theologians a relict of Plato and Augustine which must be carefully toned down to be at all admissible.¹¹

In order to bring out his meaning to the full, Prof. Fiske contrasts sharply on historical lines, "cosmic" and "anthropo-

¹Preface, p. XII. ²P. XIII. ³Ibid. ⁴Ibid. ⁵P. XV. ⁶P. XVII. ⁷Preface, p. XVII
⁸P. 94. ⁹Ibid. ¹⁰P. 96. ¹¹Preface, p. 15.

morphic" theism. The cosmic theists are Athanasius, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Spinoza, Lessing, Goethe and Schleiermacher. Among the anthropomorphic theists are ranged Tertullian, Augustine, Paley, Calvin, Voltaire, and most of the modern theologians. He is, therefore, as anxious to make clear his thorough-going assent to the position of Athanasius as to have clearly understood his complete disavowal of the doctrine of Augustine.¹

Both these theistic views, according to Prof. Fiske, are polar opposites. The anthropomorphic theists conceive God as existing apart from the world in solitary, inaccessible majesty. The world itself is but an inert lifeless machine impelled by blind forces which have been set acting from without. The origin of a position such as this Prof. Fiske traces back to primitive ancestor-worship, which gradually suggested a single ghost-deity far away from the world of sense as the original ancestor of all the others. Thus was the Roman mind imperceptibly inclined to certain fixed habits of judgment concerning the Divinity which had much to do with ostracizing God from the field of natural phenomena.²

To the nature-worship of the Greeks, however, must we look to find the root-conceptions of cosmic theism. Students of the physical universe from the earliest Ionic days, the Greeks were enabled to frame the conception of God as acting in and through the powers of nature without the aid of grossly anthropomorphic symbols. The traditional idea of the sea-god and the sky-god actually at work in the upheaval of things caused them to drift further and further apart from their less fortunate Roman compeers who were led along the lines of ancestral worship to look upon the Deity as the head supreme of a world of ghosts. For the Greeks, God was never a localizable personality remote from the world, acting upon it by occasional portent and prodigy, nor was the world a lifeless machine blindly acting after some preordained method and only feeling the presence of God in so far as He now and then saw fit to interfere with its normal course of procedure. To their thinking, God was the life of the world. It is through Him all things exist from moment to moment and the world is ever hallowed by His indwelling presence.³

Thus it was that Athanasius, formed under the influences which shaped the idea of God among the Greeks, fell in with the main line of thought and naturally became a cosmic theist. Augustine, on the contrary, was the direct product of Roman mythologic influence and never rose higher than the crude anthropomorphic notions of the Deity bequeathed him as a

¹Pp. 15, 112. ²Chap. VI, pp. 87-97. ³Pp. 82, 83.

legacy of thought by previous Roman thinkers. While Athanasius looked upon God as immanent in the universe, Augustine relegated Him to some far-off sphere out of all immediate touch with the realities of nature.

The question now arises, Is this the concept of the Deity which Augustine framed? If so, we join Prof. Fiske most heartily in its repudiation. A Being characterized by human passions, localizable in space, and acting on the world by an occasional display of miraculous power, answers but meagrely the concept of a God. It is but a degree removed from pure humanity. The feebleness of such a notion is the best indication of its impropriety, and suggests some other intellect for its birthplace than the vigorous one of Augustine, when finally illumined by the light of Christian truth. Nor is such lack of fitness the only reason for this persuasion. Augustine himself in many of his latter writings has so unmistakably disavowed all doctrine such as this that it is with difficulty we are brought to realize how Prof. Fiske could have persisted, notwithstanding such explicit denials, in fastening this unworthy notion on him. The statements of Augustine on this one point in all his latter works are unmistakably clear and emphatic, and the construction Prof. Fiske puts on them shows a surprising unfamiliarity with Augustinian theology.

II.—THE POSITION OF ST. AUGUSTINE.

To understand Augustine it must be borne in mind that his mental development was after the manner of a chambered nautilus. He was forever leaving his low-vaulted past and building more stately mansions for his unresting soul. At first the study of the Aristotelian categories led him to conceive God as of bodily shape and nature. From the crude idea of a God embodied in human form, it was but natural he should drift into Manicheanism and profess, as he did for nine years, a belief in the dual principle of good and evil—a gross materialism. He seemed forever committed to a philosophy of sense, when Plato's treatise on the Logos broke on him as a light through the gloom, opening up a purer and a nobler view. The Sacred Writings, notably the Epistles of St. Paul, at length became objects of minute study. Plato and Paul argued out their respective lines in the mind of the young African. Suddenly it dawned upon his soul that both were reconcilable, Plato and Paul, scripture and reason, philosophy and revelation. He became a Christian, a priest, a bishop. Materialist, Manichean, Neoplatonist, Christian, theologian—such is the grad-

uate development of Augustine, which his works make known and describe with a vigorous clearness.¹

“ Year after year beheld the silent toil
That spread his lustrous coil.
Still as the spiral grew,
He left the past year's dwelling for the new,
Stole with soft step its shining archway through,
Built up its idle door,
Stretched in his last-found home and knew the old no more.”

Taking facts as they are, the scholar is not privileged to attribute to Augustine what he himself has most emphatically rejected as the rubbish of his pagan notions.² The Christian Augustine took great pains to refute Augustine unregenerate, and the christian, not the pagan, Augustine is at the bar of reason for judgment. Whatever Augustine may have held in his earlier years, when blown about by every wind of doctrine, the historical fact nevertheless remains that, when fuller grown, his old beliefs had vanished into mist, and in their stead there came a newer and a nobler conception of things divine and human.

III.—FAULTS OF INTERPRETATION.

Prof. Fiske's failure to indicate directly the passages of Augustine which might substantiate his view, is, we must confess, out of keeping with critical methods. If his view of Augustine be the fruit of long and careful research, it should be critically supported, not badly stated. As a consequence, therefore, we are compelled to oppose every statement Prof. Fiske makes by counter-statements from Augustine, with as little glossary as possible, preferring to allow the text itself to speak out Prof. Fiske's praise or condemnation.

In the third book of his *Confessions*, Augustine makes the following observations anent his gradual unfettering from Pantheism and the dawn of a higher and purer conception of the Divinity.

After stating his full assent in his younger days to the Manichean doctrines, he says: “I did not know that God is a spirit without members extended in length, and breadth, without matter;”³ and again: “I thought, O my God! that your grandeur and beauty were in you as accidents are in substances—for instance, in bodies—while you are your own grandeur and your own beauty. I thought that you were a lumi-

¹Cf. *Confessionum*, Lib. VIII., cap. VII.: Lib. IX., cap. I.: VII., cap. IX. Also, *Epistola* CXXXVII., cap. IV.

²Cf. *Confessionum et Retractationum Libros*, passim. Especially, *Confessionum*, Lib. VII., cap. XXI.: *Ibid.* Lib. VI., cap. V.

³*Confessionum*, liber III., Cap. VII.

nous body of enormous size, and I a small part of this body.”¹ And still further: “Yet, when I wished to think of God, I represented Him to myself only under the form of a corporeal mass, and all that was not corporeal appeared to me non-existent.”² Finally: “If there is anything more excellent than the truth, it is surely that which is God. If not, truth itself is God.³ . . . What is supreme truth, beauty without alloy, goodness itself, if not God Himself?”⁴

Thus he describes his own progress and acknowledges his debt to Plato, whose books, he says, taught him “how to seek out an incorporeal truth.”⁵

With this contention in the foreground, supported by the dictum of Augustine himself, we are now prepared to take up Prof. Fiske’s several statements and compare them with the original text.

To do no violence to Prof. Fiske’s position, the substance of his view is literally the following: “The idea of God, upon which all this Augustinian doctrine is based, is the idea of a being actuated by human passions and purposes, localizable in space and utterly remote from that inert machine, the universe in which we live and upon which He acts intermittently through the suspension of what are called natural laws.”⁶

To observe his own order, we have as first point that the Augustinian idea of God is that of a “being actuated by human passions and purposes.” We quote in opposition: “We do not adore a God who repents Himself, who is envious, who is deficient, who is cruel, who finds pleasure in the blood of animals or of bullocks, who is appeased with shamefulness and crime, whose domain has for bound a corner of the earth.”⁷ “His inerrant virtue and His divinity marvelously surpass all language human in its kind, and even in our human frailty itself, we are made aware that what is humanly said of God, appears despicable even to humanity.⁸ The knowledge which results from daily habit and which is the fruit of long experience, opens to us a way towards the sublime conceptions which are becoming to God. Thus, let me take away from human science its mutability, let me suppress the steps from thought to thought, those returns we make to impress upon the mind afresh what a little while before we had conceived, so much so that we understand things but partially and with the aid of frequent acts of memory—let me suppress, I say, those imperfections, in order

¹Confessionum Liber IV., cap. XVI. ²Ibid. Lib. V., cap. X. Compare also Lib. VII., cap. I., II., V., XIV., XX., and Lib. VIII., cap. I. Likewise: De Civitate Dei, Lib. IV., cap. XII. and cap. XIII.; VI., cap. VII., VIII. ³De libero arbitrio, Lib. II., cap. XV. ⁴Ibid. Lib. II., cap. VII., X., XIII. ⁵Confessionum Lib. VII., cap. XX. The very opposite of Mr. Fiske’s contention, which is to the effect that Augustine’s intense feelings of man’s wickedness dragged him downwards. ⁶The Idea of God, p. 94. ⁷De Moribus Ecclesie Catholicae, Lib. I., cap. X. ⁸De Diversis Quaestionibus ad Simplicianum, Lib. II., Quaest. II.

to consider solely the life-likeness of the substantial and unchangeable truth, which in one eternal vision and one only takes in the universality of things; and I will have in this wise some idea of the knowledge of God.¹ In like manner let me take from human anger its disorderly emotions in order to leave there the sole force of legitimate vengeance, and in a certain measure, I shall conceive what is called the anger of God. Or still further, if you take from pity that division-by-shares of the suffering of him whom you pity, in order to leave there but a tranquil goodness which is drawn to succor those who suffer and to deliver them from their straits, you will have, after a fashion, some notion of the divine mercy."²

Elsewhere, he calls anthropomorphic notions—"turpiter vana cogitatio."³ More pertinently still: "I ask also of my readers to pardon me where they may perceive me to have had the desire rather than the power to speak what they either understand better themselves or fail to understand through the obscurity of my language, just as I myself pardon them what they cannot understand through their own dullness."⁴ And we shall mutually pardon one another the more easily, if we know, or at any rate firmly believe and hold, that whatever is said of a nature unchangeable, invisible, and having life absolutely and sufficiently to itself, must not be measured after the custom of things visible and changeable, mortal and self-sufficient."⁵

The trail of the serpent of anthropomorphism is not traceable over these passages, that is, if human language have any power at all. Prof. Fiske, in the preface of his own work, is very careful to remind his readers of the symbolic nature of certain words and phrases.⁶ He should have given equal credit to Augustine, who, like Prof. Fiske himself, craves it indulgently of his readers.

The second point Prof. Fiske makes against Augustine is that the latter believed God "a being localizable in space." We confront this statement with the text of Augustine. "God is not somewhere. For that which is somewhere is contained in a place; that which is contained in place is a body. Now, God is not a body. Therefore, He is not *somewhere*. And yet, as He is, and is not in place, things are in Him rather than He anywhere. On the other hand, however, things are not in Him in such a way that He Himself is a place. For place is in space, that which is occupied by length, breadth and thickness of bodies, and God is nothing of this kind. All things are in Him

¹Ibid. Ibid. ²Ibid. Ibid. ³De Trinitate, Lib. XII., cap. VII., No. XII. ⁴De Trinitate, Lib. V., cap. I. ⁵Ibid. Ibid. ⁶The Idea of God, preface, page XVII. Compare also: Aug. in Ioannis Evangelium, cap. III., Tract. XIII., No. 5. De Haeresi, cap. L.

and He is not a place.¹ He who fills heaven and earth is nowhere absent, neither shut in small spaces, nor spread over large, but is everywhere whole and entire, and contained in no place."² If therefore, he says that God is everywhere without being contained anywhere, what becomes of the contention that Augustine believed God a being localizable in space?

The next statement of Prof. Fiske is to the effect that God, according to Augustine, is "utterly remote from that inert machine, the universe in which we live." The passage just quoted tells against Prof. Fiske quite pointedly here. But there is abundance of disproof elsewhere throughout his works, as when he says that God is at the same time affirmed and denied as everywhere present in order to "resist carnal thoughts and call away the mind from the bodily senses."³ What clearer than this? Augustine says the reason why some Christians make God remote is simply to prevent a gross material misunderstanding. He, it will be observed, actually explains and disavows in others the "doctrine of remoteness" which Prof. Fiske attributes to him.

Nor is this all. Augustine says most beautifully: "Who are you, oh! my God! Who are you, I ask, if not the Lord God? Exceeding great, exceeding good, exceeding powerful, all powerful, exceeding merciful and exceeding just, hidden and everywhere present, infinitely beautiful, infinitely strong, always the same, incomprehensible, unchangeable and changing all things, ever ancient, ever new, rejuvenating all that is and leading the proud unconsciously on to old age; ever active and ever in repose, gathering from all parts with need of none: upholding, filling, maintaining the creatures to which you give being, nourishment, maturity: asking without cease, though lacking nothing; you love, but without disorder; you are a jealous God, but without unease; you repent but without sorrow, you grow angry but without being troubled. You change your works without changing your plans; you pick up what you find without ever having lost anything. You are not poor and you love gain; you are not avaricious and you put out to usury.—But what are these *words*, oh! my God! my life, holy sorrow of my soul! What can one say when speaking of you? Unhappy those who hold their tongue, since even those who speak, must pass for dumb!"⁴ In passages such as these the burning heart of the African empties itself in phrase, though he assures us in the

¹De Diversis Quaestionibus, Lib. LXXXIII, Quaest. XX.

²Nusquam absens est qui coelum et terram implet, nec spatii includitur parvis magnisque diffunditur, sed ubique totus est, et nullo continetur loco. Epis. CXII., cap. XII.

³Ad carnali resistendum cogitationi et mentem a corporis sensibus avocandam. Epist. LVII. ⁴Confess. Lib. I, cap. IV.

meanwhile that his intellect is clear and the stream of his thought, crystalline-pure. In this enthusiastic analysis, Prof. Fiske's counter-view is made to vanish. A God who "changes all things, ever active, ever present in the universe, creating, maintaining, nourishing, maturing all things," is hardly seen as remote from that inert machine, the universe in which we live. Especially so, as Augustine says most clearly: "If the power of God ceased at any time from ruling what He has created, creation's kinds and all nature would immediately fall to pieces."¹

The final point in Prof. Fiske's summary statement is to the effect that God, "remote from the universe, acts upon it intermittently through the suspension of what are called natural laws." Evidently Prof. Fiske here alludes to miracles, as he speaks elsewhere of God acting upon the world by "occasional portent or prodigy."² It is with reluctance we bring ourselves to believe that an historical scholar such as Mr. Fiske unquestionably is, could imagine, much less prove, that Augustine thought God's action on the world to be merely intermittent. But Prof. Fiske's statement about the "inert universe," "man cut off *entirely* from his Maker by original sin," and the two words "intermittent" and "occasional," deprive him justly of the benefit of a doubt. They are too clear to mean anything else than that miraculous intervention was the sum total of God's activity in the world of realities. Again we appeal to Augustine for enlightenment. He says:³ "The miracle of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which He changed water into wine. is not a source of wonder to those who knew that *God* did it, For in those six vessels commanded to be filled at the wedding feast. *He* made wine who makes it every year on the vines. For as that which the servants put in the vessels was changed into wine by the work of the Lord, so also that which the clouds outpour, is changed into wine by the work of the self-same Lord. The latter we do not wonder at, because it comes to pass yearly: by constantly happening, it has ceased to be a source of wonderment. Yet it meets with more consideration than what was accomplished in the vessels of water. For who is there that considers the works of God, by which the whole world is governed and administered, and is not dumbfounded and overwhelmed by the miracles? If he consider the power of a single grain, or any seed, it is a mighty fact indeed, and palsies the investigator. But because men, on other things intent, have lost their appreciation of the works of God, in which

¹ *Virtus Dei ab eis quae creata sunt regendis, si cessaret aliquando: simul et illorum cessaret species omnique natura concideret, IV. Lib. super Genesi, cap. XII.* ² *The idea of God, p. 83: "acting upon it only by means of occasional portent and prodigy."*

³ *In Ioannis Evangelium, Tract. VIII. Cap. II., (from the beginning).*

they might give the Creator their daily praise, God, as it were, kept in reserve some unusual works of His, to bring back sleeping humanity to His worship from sheer sense of wonderment. A dead man arose and humanity wondered. Myriads come daily into life and no one notes it." If God's work in the universe, as Augustine phrases it, be as equally portentous and miraculous as His actual changing of water into wine at Cana, what becomes of the idea of a God remote from the world and acting on it by *occasional* portent?

Should anyone still doubt the mind of Augustine touching the point under discussion, there are many passages to dispel all misgiving. Among these there is in his commentaries much that is pointedly relevant. Thus, commenting on the words of Our Lord, "My Father worketh still and I work," Augustine says: "Continuationem quamdam operis eius, qua universam creaturam continet atque administrat, ostendit." And again, what more opposed to the idea of an absentee God, as Carlyle took creator to mean, than the simple decade of words: "Non fecit atque abiit, sed de illo in illo sunt."¹ Finally, what more witness of words is needed than the following passages against Faustus: "When God does anything against the usual course of nature as known to us, His works are called great or wonderful."² "At times God does something against the usual *course* of nature. But the Creator and Founder of all natures does nothing against nature. For that shall be natural to each and everything which He, the source of all movement, number, and cosmic order, shall have done. In no wise does He act against the highest law, because He does not act against Himself."³

No comment is needed on passages such as these. Miracles are not the only actions of God in the world. They are simply extraordinary events worked by the same God who changed water into wine at Cana, and who to-day changes the rain-drops of the clouds into the wine we press from the grape after vintage. Miracles are not the only government of the world, and man lives not by the bread of portent alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Such is Prof. Fiske's view of Augustine and Augustine's view of himself. Not one of the points raised can be critically established against Augustine. The idea of the Godhead which Prof. Fiske fastens upon him is without support, whether critical or hermeneutical, and we repeat our surprise that a scholar such as he should have entertained and published it.

¹Comment. ad Act. XVII. ²Cum Deus aliquid facit contra cognitum nobis cursum solumque naturae, magnalia vel mirabilia nominantur. Contra Faust., Lib. XXVI., cap. III. ³Ibid. Ibid.

IV.—ADDITIONAL FAULTS OF INTERPRETATION.

In the light of passages such as these, clear, direct, and incisive, Prof. Fiske's contention vanishes in mist. Ideas of the Godhead such as he attributes to Augustine are searched for vainly in these pages. The very absurdity of constructing God after human fashion, which Prof. Fiske endeavors so strenuously to avoid in his essay, and for which he rebukes Augustine, is distinctly pointed out by the latter and characterized as a crude and empty conception.¹ One looks in vain for passages wherein Augustine makes God so anthropomorphic as to be a monster of human passions. A certain strength of phrase and vigorousness of expression in his treatise on predestination might incline an uncritical reader to interpret Augustine's views in an anthropomorphic sense. But Augustine has so unmistakably repudiated the crudities of such a view that to still fasten them upon him is alike unscholarly and unwarranted.² Not a stray hint of meaning here and there, but the general drift of thought which tempers the extravagance of some particular turns of phrase, should be the source of a scholar's judgment.

There is, therefore, nothing clearer in Augustine than that he disavowed the constant underdrift of anthropomorphism which always lay beneath the human terms he was compelled by usage to employ. Yet Prof. Fiske quotes piecemeal, without reference or comparison of texts. His interpretation of Augustine's doctrine on original sin is likewise most unpardonable in an historical scholar. He says that Augustine imagined man cut off by original sin from all relationship with his Maker.³ Nothing could be further from the real meaning. Augustine does not father the thought that man was absolutely cut adrift from God, but only supernaturally.⁴ Created in the supernatural order, man simply lost his superadded gifts and privileges, but was left untouched in all his natural relations. Augustine would have descended to a glaring contradiction if he held what Prof. Fiske alleges, because his main drift of meaning was that God kept man in existence by a continuous exertion of divine power, without which man would have lapsed into his original nothingness.⁵ Original sin deprived man of all connection with God as the author of his supernature, but still left him dependent on Him—as Creator, Upholder, and Provider—for every breath he drew and every action he performed.

¹"Turpiter vana cogitatio; De Trinit., Lib. XII., cap. VII., no. XII. ²De Trinit., Lib. V., cap. I.

³P. 94. ⁴"Induite novum hominem, eum qui secundum Deum creatus est in iustitia et sanctitate veritatis; ecce quid perdidit Adam per peccatum." (De Genesi, ad Litt. L. 6; c. 24-26.) Likewise: De Civitate Dei, Lib. XII., 9; Lib. LXXXIII., QQ. 9, 21; Lib. II, De Peccato Orig. c. 4; In Psalmo CIII., Sermon. 4. ⁵IV. Lib. super Genesi, cap. 12.

Neither is Augustine an advocate of total depravity, for he explains most clearly that man's disposition to sin was not from nature—for then God would be the prime author of his sin—but from the fact that the grace of original justice which subjected man's animal powers to reason once removed, man found himself thereby greatly weakened when sense had no longer a higher force to curb it hard and fast under the sway of reason.¹ Mistakes like these are not expected in men of critical attainments. To infer from the fact that man was cut off supernaturally, the additional fact that he was entirely abandoned, made subsistently independent of God in his natural powers, shows lack of logic and critical insight. Again the statement of Prof. Fiske that after original sin man, according to Augustine, could regain relations with his Creator solely through the offices of an organized church, is misleading. He makes it with Augustine a political act inspired by the tendency towards an imperial church. Yet Augustine argues out his view from considerations of the Sacraments instituted by Christ and the necessity of an organic custodian of the truth which he so keenly felt in the unsatisfying philosophies through which he had successively passed in his several evolutions.² Prof. Fiske argues from an assumed condition; Augustine from fact and experience. Which shall we believe?

Still further, Prof. Fiske makes out the Bishop of Hippo the product of the Gnostic thought of the day. Which Augustine does he mean? Augustine pagan or Augustine christian? We readily admit the full sweep of Gnostic influence on the young African when a paganizing philosopher, but where is its influence on him when turned towards higher things within the pale of Christian thinking? Augustine retracted. He retracted in order to emphasize what he retained. Yet Prof. Fiske proceeds as unconsciously as though Augustine never became a Christian, or as if, what is worse, his Christianity was but Gnosticism flowering into fruit.

V.—FAULTS OF METHOD.

One's curiosity is somewhat aroused to know precisely how Prof. Fiske comes to stand sponsor for so many unwarranted statements. The answer is simple enough. His fault is mainly one of method. Prof. Fiske looks at things through an evolutionist's glasses. He studies history in the light of a preconceived idea and suggestive hypothesis, instead of confining himself rigorously at first to questions of actual fact.

¹Comparatur homo pecoribus per vitium, non pecoris vitio. sed naturae. De Pecc. Orig. c. 4. Original sin was the privation of original justice; not total depravity.

²De Doctrina christiana, prob. No. 6; De moribus eccl'es. cap. 1; De Milit. credendi, cc. 6, 7, 14, et 17; Lib. II, cap. 10, No. 27.

To look at history from an arbitrary ideal standpoint is fatal alike to facts and truth. It is a speculative method and is bound to result in extravagance. The history of philosophy has not been without showing the vices of such a mode of procedure which starts with an idea—an hypothesis, and concludes therefrom the impossibility of facts or so reshapes them as to suit preconceived requirements. Descartes started from the idea of the Infinite and found in it the distinction which marks off God from the world of limit and imperfection. Spinoza took the same idea and identified God and the world as one substance. Malebranche, arguing from the same ideal source, over-zealously gave unto God the monopoly of all activity. In like manner, Schelling looking on the content of reason as the infinite draws thence an inference in favor of free-will. Hegel follows, and with the same apparent rigor concludes from the same source as Schelling, not freedom, but universal, eternal necessity. Something evidently is wrong with the instrument of logic which turns out such contrary conclusions. Facts alone should be the starting point. The mind should not be hampered in its capacity to grasp facts as they are, by the colorings of hypothesis, which strains them to its purpose. *O'est l'a priori à outrance.*

The reason is that all hypothetical views must unconsciously be colored. The entire question is begged at the out-start, for in the point of view that everything is evolved, everything becomes connected. The subjective continuity which the hypothesis furnishes is projected into things and the same delusion takes place that is so aptly seen in the kinetoscope—objectively discontinuous images succeed each other in such flash-rapidity that consciousness looks upon them as a unified whole when in reality they are but a succession of distinct and separate pictures. The impressions made upon percipient consciousness by the kinetoscope, none the less than those made upon the intellect by the evolutionistic assumption cannot fail to make us see connection where there is but sequence, cause where there is but condition, proof where there is but suggestive hypothesis. Is it not plain to the mind's eye that where history is written in the way Hegel wrote it—namely, with a view to discover the foreshadowing of his theory in the writings of past thinkers—that what is merely a suggestion, an inkling, a vague similarity, becomes in the light of his preconceived idea, an assured fact—an undoubted exemplification?

The question is scarcely debatable from a methodologist's point of view that the attitude of the mind towards the objects of its attention especially if historic, is and should be the

simple one of action and reaction. The particular person whose works we are to study should be considered according to every circumstance contributing to his formation, in order that a just estimate be formed of the conditions in which he lived and the influences under which he labored. This no one denies. It is scientific, philosophical. In such a wise we may hit upon the general law which motivated his actions and in a measure shaped the very trend of his conclusions. We are thus carefully feeling our way from particular facts to general laws and assuring ourselves from point to point of proper footing. But when, hypothesis in hand, we look to see how facts fall in with its exactions, we forget that we are viewing things in an arbitrary light and unwittingly judging what is absolute from the pure standpoint of our own philosophic consciousness, instead of allowing the latter to be deepened, broadened and corrected by the instreaming light of the very objects themselves, as they are in their nude reality, not as they appear when refracted through the medium of an assumed idea.

Evolution as a theory is after all but a point of view, and a point of view is generally a colored glass through which we look at things. Scientists are wont to forget that though induction gives them some warrant for the principle of evolution as an hypothesis—a sort of general law of continuity—it becomes deduction as soon as they begin to use it for the conclusion of particular facts. No one would think of taking Fechner's rules of Psycho-physics for the determination of a general mean or average as a principle from which we could deduce the precise nature of particular facts, the actual time-rates of sensation or actual curve-description for any given individual. The individual is either above or beneath the mean. If he coincide with the average, it is purely accidental, not rigorously consequent on the mean as though it could be deduced precisely from it.

The reason is that the principle is not purely universal—*i. e.*, rigorously true of all things contained under it. There are leaps in the process. Whatever science may prove concerning evolution, by reading backwards through contiguous species and overlaid strata does not insure the reverse employment of the principle on a strictly universal basis of logical deduction until science has *shown*, not postulated the over-leaping of the individual barriers. Sequence is not consequence, however much it may suggest the latter. If, therefore, we employ the hypothesis of evolution to deduce the precise tenets of any particular individual's belief, in the course of the history of philosophy, we have gone beyond the

bounds which science has staked out for us and are open to the broadsides of logic and philosophy.

This is the fault of method of Prof. Fiske. He is so prepossessed with his idea of the ghost-ancestors as entertained by the Romans that he makes out Augustine not as he actually is but what he should be to suit his hypothesis. The Gnostics and Manicheans believed in a God remote from the evil world. Augustine formed under their influence must have been of like belief. He must have been in the hyposthesis, certainly. But was he in point of fact? That still remains to be proven. We should not read into facts more than we find in them, neither should we be so logically unwary as not to detect the insertion of our subjective coloring into colorless objective facts. Methods of this kind will make things more what we would have them seem than what they really are in their unadorned reality. Our logical sense is certainly benumbed, if we make the transit from a general theory to a particular fact with nothing else than an hypothetical bridge as a warrant for our transition.

Of like nature is Prof. Fiske's interpretation of Athanasius as a product of the continuity of Greek thought and a believer of God's immanence in things. As a matter of fact, both Augustine and Athanasius believed in God's immanence in things. Their absolute divergence is required by Prof. Fiske's arbitrary view of Augustine's formation on the lines of ancestral worship and that of Athanasius on the lines of an indwelling cosmic Deity, and what hyposthesis requires, he proceeds to set apart in point of fact. His method is again at fault. He forgets that the assumption of his hypothesis has settled the question from the outset. If his hypothesis be true, Augustine and Athanasius must come in line with it. The *fact* of the whole matter is quietly dropped from view. Both these great thinkers are interpreted to suit requirements. A preconceived idea, not the hard realities of facts, is the arbiter of discussion. If we have to reconstruct history because of evolution, why then we must simply admit without demur that Augustine did not know his own doctrine and that Athanasius was not understood even by himself. Is not this the arbitrary speculation Prof. Fiske repudiates in the Schoolmen? Why should we look at any man's doctrine from our point of view and not from his? Let men endeavor to gather all the additional light they can from the view of Evolution, but facts should never be brushed aside to afford their hypothesis passage.

Be it borne in mind that this criticism tells against Prof. Fiske from his own principles. I am criticising him from his own point of view, on his own principles, not mine. Evolution, if

it have any scientific worth at all, must not be made deductive. Spencer's own definition of it is incompatible with such a notion. It is only the hasty generalizers that have lifted it to a sphere in which it is out of place. My contention does not imply that I hold any theory of evolution but simply that I criticise the service to which Prof. Fiske has put it in writing history. Its utter discrepancy with facts, its scientific fault of method when made deductive, is its own refutation. Evolution is based on facts, biological and otherwise. From a consideration of facts, the idea, the hypothesis sprang to mind. At most it can give us but the general law of continuity, if you will, the formative influences of environment and the like, but the individual thinker may or may not be in keeping with these. To admit Greek thought as a formative factor and deny Revelation the benefit of any formative influence, is to take a partial and a biased view, to drop from consideration a fact of history and of thought certainly not without its share of influence.

If therefore, from a few particular facts, evolutionists conclude to an idea, what warrant is there in making the idea conclude to all particular facts, until they have sufficiently established its absolute universality? Must we not examine facts first to see if they square with our hypothesis? If we do not, we have changed our method and become untrue to our principles. Admitting the hypothesis in its sweeping generality, in the sense that all things are products of transition, we cannot conclude that any particular thing should be otherwise than it is, until we have proven it thus and so. If otherwise, hypothesis is fact and fact the production of hypothesis.

VI.—FAULTS OF INFERENCE.

Still another fault of method which brings Prof. Fiske to strange conclusions is the inference he repeatedly makes from the retention of pagan names and customs by the christian peoples. It would seem, according to Prof. Fiske, that Yuletide and Easter were adopted directly from the old nature-worship, the adoration of tutelal household deities survived in the homage paid to patron saints, and the worship of the Berecynthian Mother was continued in that of the Virgin Mary. Again his hypothesis. Because suggestions of all these Christian customs occurred in pre-Christian days, Prof. Fiske proceeds to connect them, to make the development continuous. Why omit the historic ideas of early Christianity as giving rise to these forms of worship? The statement that they are continuations one of the other requires proof, not hypothesis. There may be a similarity, a resemblance. No one

doubts it. But the question at issue is not are they viewable as similar, but are they in point of fact developments in a higher stage of older beliefs, with their roots struck fast in some prehistoric soil? Against this is the historic fact that the veneration of the Blessed Virgin was of purely christian origin. Because such veneration followed after cruder beliefs is sequence, not consequence. Prof. Fiske begs the question at issue. His contention would be good if he could prove that continuity in a given line, say of worship, was never broken, but so long as hypothesis is his sole warrant for connection, the stain of arbitrariness still attaches to his view. The whole connection is in his hypothesis, not in the facts themselves.

To argue from the retention of old pagan names to the retention of pagan notions along with them, is not of rigorous inference. It does not take into account what evolutionists should, if true to their own principles, namely, the historico-philological fact that old names are constantly pressed into service as conveyors of new and very different ideas. A sort of sacredness lingers about certain words that have long done duty as vehicles of thought. The ancients were loath to part with such, and gave a new shade of meaning to the old terms rather than invent a substitute. Even now the years come and go with all their wondrous birth of new conceptions, their myriad ways of making old things new by the magic of a turn of phrase and still the world of phrase-makers respects the consecration of years of usage and bows before the majesty of a long-used word.

Words grow in meaning as the blossom flowers into fruit. They take upon themselves varieties of significance at different times and from different writers, and so in their last stages of development it is not unnatural they should have overleaped their conventional barriers and reached a state of meaning quite at variance with their original employment. Were we to neglect this law which governs their development and take their meaning at an earlier stage as the clue to their later shade of significance, a budget of paradoxes must be the penalty of the law's transgression. For we would thus unfairly judge the mere burgeon of a blossom by the fullness of the ripening fruit.

The consecration of usage as well as the desire to keep unbroken the continuity of thought and expression, had so much to do with the employment of a worn-out terminology that the ancients would rather patch an old word with a new strip of meaning than dress out an entirely new phrase. Their words were custom made and not to order. This accounts for the retention amongst Latin writers of such words as "species," "intentiones primae et secundae," "similitudo, imago," and

the like, long after they had outgrown their original crude significance. The word "species," which the Latins used as a corresponding term to the *εἶδος* of the Greeks, originally meant a roving image, a sort of miniature picture or fire-atom (according to Democritus) which migrated into the eye from an outer object. Aristotle retained the term with scarce a vestige of its former meaning in it,¹ to signify the modification effected in consciousness by the action of an outer object, through which the soul was in some wise likened to the object it perceived. "Species was thus mustered into a service utterly out of keeping with its first rudimentary meaning. Its etymology was considerably lost in its new employment and it was no longer the ideograph—the picture-word of Democritus, but the poor conveyor of a much nobler idea. Yet men continue to argue from its etymology that scholastic philosophy is still immersed in the ignorant belief of roving images. They forget that it was retained to express an entirely new idea and that its etymology has nothing to do with the meaning which was, as it were, thrust into it by the Schoolmen.

It is certainly very difficult to realize how in these days of critical study Scholasticism should be judged from etymology and philology, with never so much as an attempt to reach the meaning, the ideas, encased as it were in a severe terminology. And it is still more difficult to realize from what logical sense those proceed who would argue from the etymology of a word to the fact that all ideas under it are but continuations of its original meaning—developments of it from stage to stage successively. We have seen that this is unwarranted, because it leaves out of consideration a by no means negligible factor, to wit: the conventional use of the term which only too often differs widely from what etymology would exact or even justify. Words are elastic. They will not infrequently bear the noblest thought if you fit them to it. And for this very reason you can but very seldom conclude from identity of term to identity of thought beneath. The continuity has been broken. Thus one would not conclude from the term "Manitou" still used by Catholic Indians to express the Great Spirit, that the idea which it formerly conveyed to the untutored savages and the idea which they learned from the lips of the black-robe were identical, for the very reason that the same term is retained to express an utterly different concept. The terms may be the same to the very letter and yet not afford logical grounds for concluding a continuous development of thought.

Thus it is that the law of evolution—at best but a very general law of continuity—cannot be applied to particular facts

¹Human Intellect, Porter; Theories of perception, heading, Aristotle.

(for these latter invariably come under conditions which nullify hypothesis and speculation), unless you have proven, not postulated, the connection. There is certainly no warrant for deriving the idea called up to-day by the word "pontiff" from its first sense of "bridge builder," although the term is identical and traceable to a pagan source. There is an enormous difference between etymological and actual significance. The former may be homogeneous, but you cannot drop from view the heterogeneity of the latter. The reason is that novel ideas are oftentimes engrafted on words and the continuity broken. We should not be etymologists merely, but philosophers also.

What difference, therefore, does it make if the Teutonic word for God be Wodan, the Roman carnival suggestive of the old pagan saturnalia, the worship of the patron saints reminding of pagan devotions to household gods, the retention of pagan names a hint at pre-christian customs? The facts we all admit. The inference we deny, at least till further proof than a sweeping hypothesis be furnished. You cannot prove the individual connection between particulars from a principle which is established as only generally true. Sound logic and scientific instinct forbid it.

VII.—ANTHROPOMORPHISM AND ANALOGY.

The apparent conviction of Prof. Fiske seems to be that the modern world owes a lasting debt of gratitude to the promoters of evolution for the death-blow which they have dealt to the old notions of the Deity. He even ventures the assertion that the Church has for centuries entertained an idea of God which it received from the Latin writers and retains to-day in almost the same crude outlines in which Augustine left it centuries since.¹ How far Prof. Fiske's statement is true concerning Augustine, we have already critically examined. We have seen that his contention is decidedly at a loss for support in the writings of the Bishop of Hippo. We now propose to examine briefly what grounds there are for believing with him that theologians, generally, have inherited the Latin genius for representing God in a human shape and after the frailties of our much-abused human nature. In doing so, we single out the prince of theologians and the peer of synthetists—St. Thomas of Aquin, whom Haureau accuses, as Prof. Fiske accuses Augustine, of constructing God in human terms and expressing in mere human relations.

Thomas of Aquin wrote in a terminology which requires considerable technical education to decipher. Years of usage

¹The idea of God, p. 35.

had given the words which he employed to express his meaning a definiteness and at the same time a rigidity which baffles the skill of the uninitiated : and we are not surprised to learn that those who stopped at the letter never reached the spirit that underlay his phrases. So many strange and 'bizarre' doctrines have been attributed to him by those who study his views in second-rate sources, that a succinct outline of his manner of conceiving the Godhead will dispel forever the false imputation of his having entertained anthropomorphic ideas and will evidence the perfect fitness of his view even in the light of the rigorous demands of modern science.

St. Thomas and Herbert Spencer, arguing from the same source, are both agreed that the human mind is compelled to admit something "self-existent." St. Thomas says:¹ "In physical things we find a series of efficient causes, without finding, without the possibility of finding, that any given thing is the cause of itself. For, on the supposition that anything was its own cause it would have to exist prior to itself, which is impossible. Now an infinite series of efficient causes, on the other hand, is likewise impossible: because in a series of efficient causes, the first is the cause of the intermediate, and the intermediate is the cause of the last, whether the intermediate be one or many. Therefore, on the supposition that there is no first cause, there will be no last effect, nor any intermediate causes: an inference counter to experience. Whence the necessity of admitting an efficient First Cause which is God." Spencer says in the same vein:² "We cannot think at all about the impressions which the external world produces on us without thinking of them as caused, and cannot carry out an inquiry concerning their causation without inevitably committing ourselves to the hypothesis of a First Cause."

Thus far they are agreed, St. Thomas and Herbert Spencer. Both start from the same considerations. According to both, no inquiry concerning the facts of nature can be carried out legitimately without the eventual admission of an Absolute First Cause.

But Spencer drew back from the concept, thus thrust into his observations of nature and magnified by him into an insuperable difficulty—namely, the concept of self-existence. He felt and saw that we can have no adequate, comprehensive conception of self-existence. A concept of this kind, manifestly impossible under the finite conditions of human intellect, he made the goal of his efforts and the object of his mental research. Naturally he was baffled in his quest of a comprehensive notion of self-existence which He alone can fully for-

¹Summa Contra Gent., Lib. I. cap., XIII, prope ad finem. ²First Principles, p. 37.

multate who is self-existence itself. His fault was in putting too much into the concept itself as we know it and thereby belying experience. When he said that self-existence was literally unthinkable, he meant that it was such according to the peculiar tenets of his own philosophy. If the acts of the human intellect be nothing more than certain refined effects of organic impressions and all human thinking reduced to ideographs reproducible in and by imagination, we certainly cannot conceive of self-existence, if to conceive of it be equivalent to picturing it on the retina (if one may so speak) of the imaginative faculty. In such a view which is his, all universal concepts would be alike inconceivable. If, in addition, eternity be nothing else than infinite past time, which he asserts it to be, eternal self-existence is a conceptual impossibility.

But Spencer's difficulties are of his own making. He makes no distinction between "comprehending a thing thoroughly" and "conceiving it at all." He sets up ideal requirements and because the concept which he actually has concerning self-existence falls short of the arbitrary one he imagines he should have, he proceeds to fritter away into the unknowable the little knowledge we actually do possess concerning the Absolute. Instead of holding hard by the concept, such as experience furnishes it, he endeavors to criticise it away by subjecting it to tests which are foreign to it—namely, comprehensiveness and the imagination's power to reproduce it. But his criticism is valuable in so far as it emphasizes the recognition of an old truth that "something self-existent is somewhat conceivable." If it were not, his elaborate criticism would have a more than Hegelian nothingness for its point of rebuttal, and so much ado about nothing would certainly not be very flattering to the philosopher of Down.

The ways between the two are not long in dividing. Spencer dwells upon the meagreness of detail which the concept of self-existence contains and relegates it to the sphere of the unknowable. St. Thomas, however, holding to the fact that such a concept is actually given, essays the analysis of its content. The necessity of a First Cause, which Spencer deems unavoidable, the great Dominican takes as the ground-stone on which to rest his subsequent reasonings. The concept of a being wholly uncaused and wholly independent, to which human reason is impelled by reflection on the data of experience, is for him in very reality a concept of self-existence. On this he lays stress and upon its elaboration he concentrates his attention.

With him, the domain of such a concept is the intellect. An after-idea such as this is not pictureable in the imagination, neither is it essentially cognizable nor fully and intimately

known. Nay more, a comprehensive concept of such an existence is not only not had, but is impossible, whether in this life or in the vision of the blessed. In its full nature and essence, self-existence is beyond the ken of human thinking. In this sense he agrees with Spencer that the Absolute is unknowable. But all the while he never once loses sight of the great known fact, to which all searchers of nature are irrevocably committed, that there is a self-existent Being, surely though inadequately known, really though inadequately conceivable. For comprehension is not the only kind of knowledge but the highest, and the knowledge which we actually have concerning self-existence cannot be rejected on the grounds that such knowledge is not full, all-embracing and thoroughly comprehensive.

Thus Spencer's impossibility of infinite past time is irrelevant. The concept of self-existence, by the very fact that it is inadequate, does not set forth and explicitly express the duration of such a being. The nature of its duration is implicitly discoverable in the fact that the laws of empirical phenomena and of change cannot apply to an existence unique and apart from theirs. The conception of indefinite possible time is very easy when we reflect on the possibility of an indefinite series of successive changes before or after any given moment. But to say with Spencer that self-existence implies the conception of actually infinite past time is to measure the unchangeable continuance of a self-existent being after the manner of beings subject by their very nature to the vicissitudes of change. It is an unphilosophic attempt to apply the same standard of measurement to two essentially distinct kinds of duration. After all, succession is essential to the proper conception of time, and where there is and can be no succession, time is an impossibility. The concept of self-existence which excludes succession cannot therefore be measured by time, whether finite or infinite, actual or possible. A self-existent act is not guageable by the standards of imperfection. Agnosticism at its best is but an extravagant confusion of the monotheistic position.

Thus while Spencer's analysis is an attempt to judge self-existence by conditions which are utterly foreign to its concept, St. Thomas remains within the sphere of the legitimate idea afforded him by experience and proceeds calmly to the work of its elaboration. Induction is his basis, deduction his guide to further conclusions.

Agreeing with Spencer that the Absolute is not fully comprehensible as to its innermost nature and, therefore, in this sense unknowable, he does not, like the latter, lose sight of the one great fact that the existence of the Absolute is demanded

by experience as a necessity and is known and formulated through the agency of a painstaking analysis. He does not commit the logical fallacy of asserting that because God is not comprehensively knowable in the intimacy of His essence, His existence is likewise unknowable. Had he done so, he would have shut his eyes to a truth into which all causal research must eventually resolve itself.

After establishing that God is inadequately conceivable and as inadequately knowable, St. Thomas notes that God and creatures each exist: the one as demonstrably uncaused, the other as demonstrably caused: the one with the full reason of His own existence within Himself, the other with the reason of its existence in another from which it must needs borrow its every shred of reality. He proceeds forthwith to compare these existences and ends in the assertion that both are in some wise similar.

Here lies the rock of scandal for many. The word "similarity" calls up anthropomorphic shudderings into the consciousness of those who are unacquainted with the delicate meaning of the term. What is the nature of this similarity? Let us turn again to the great Dominican for answer.

From what has just been said it can be nothing else than a similarity in existence. The question is thus reduced to tangible form by the statement that both God and creatures are real actual existences. We are using, it will be observed, but two ideas, both guaranteed by clear experience—the caused existence of things, the uncaused existence of the Creator, which these very things in the mind of Spencer himself imperatively demand.

Nor can we be accused of fault of method when we thus compare the Creator and His creatures. We have first argued from the data of experience and reached an idea of the Uncaused Reality. We have postulated nothing, neither have we begged the question at issue when so doing. For it is only after reaching an idea of the Absolute, *i. e.*, of God, that we have begun to compare our ideas each with the other, God with creatures. In doing so we have the products of two analyses, and on the comparison of these two products the nature of similarity must now be made to rest.

From a comparison of these two analytic products it is clear that the similarity of existence is neither specific nor generic. Self-existence stands in an order peculiarly its own, and is therefore unclassifiable, for it can have no generic or specific agreement with objects which necessarily involve a received and borrowed existence. The similarity, therefore, in exist-

ence can be none other than analogical—namely, a real proportional relation.

St. Thomas proceeds to elaborate the notion which induction and deduction have furnished by showing that the similarity between the world and God is not reciprocal, that is, the reverse is not true of God with regard to things. Nor should this surprise us. Similarity between two things is reciprocal when each possesses properly and fully some common quality. But where one thing alone possesses the quality to the full and the other only an imitation, a participation of it, the latter is similar to the former, although the converse does not hold good. A painted portrait is like the hero which it represents. The hero himself, we would not think of saying it strictly, is like the portrait. Thus creatures have through a deficient participation that which God has in all perfection—namely, existence. And so it is that though things be like unto God, it does not follow that God is like unto things.

From this it is clear that the likeness, the similarity is imperfect. Creatures are like unto God in so far as they represent His perfections, and at the same time are very unlike Him, because their perfections are found in God in a vastly different way and according to a self-existent, not a finite nature. In the light of similarity such as this, the spectre of anthropomorphism is made to vanish.

Here is the very essence of the Catholic notion of God's knowableness—analogue proportion of existence between creatures and God. The similarity, the likeness of creature to the Creator is, properly speaking, expressible only in an agreement of two proportions. Creatures: Their existence:: God: Pure self-existence. In this manner alone is the great problem of the Absolute to be studied. The knowableness of the Absolute depends upon a similarity of proportions, just as if one were to put it mathematically $6:3::100:50$. The greater or lesser distance between the perfections of different natures does not affect the proportionality,— $2:1::6:3$ remaining unaffected, should we choose to write it $2:1::1,000:500$. When men begin to realize the force and beauty of reasoning such as this they will be spared a great many, and alas! too frequent logical pitfalls. To say that this view fritters away the idea of God to a mere abstraction, is to acknowledge one of two impossibilities, either that we, as finite, should be better able to grasp the infinite, or that the infinite should become finite for the sole sake that we might compass it with knowledge.

The knowableness of God corresponds to this analogical similarity between creatures and Creator. We conceive the perfections of creatures to be in God originally and superabundantly.

Originally: because, as all efficient causes contain their effects in the active power they have to produce them, self-existence which is really and conceptually the source of all, must of necessity hold all within itself after the manner of its own sublime nature. For existence is the perfection of all things, whether substance or quality, attribute or property. Superabundantly: that is, without imperfection and in the most noble manner.

The imperfections of creatures do not come from God as cause, but result from their original nothingness, and the fact that they borrow existence from Another who could not create an infinitely perfect being for the reason that infinity and created reality are, in combination, self-destructive, impossible. The infinite power of God is not exhausted in creation, any more than the power of an atom of oxygen loses its efficiency to enter into combinations though it may have done so for ages. If a simple atom does not lose an iota of its power by the constant work it is perpetually accomplishing, what a lesson for us concerning the infinite power of Him, who is a boundless sea of essence and existence! He has without imperfection the perfections of all superabundantly.

Again, we have said, God contains all perfections of creatures in a most noble manner, that is, in the highest possible degree. For there is nothing to limit His existence, and what is scattered piecemeal through a multitude of effects, is united in Him in one completely rounded whole of pure and infinite actuality. In this sense is God truly remote from all and dwelling in inaccessible majesty.

From all this it is clear that the perfections of creatures, whatever they be, cannot be attributed to God in the deficient manner in which they are found in creatures. The imperfection of the mode is denied of God; the perfection, whatever it is, is affirmed of Him in the highest degree. We will go further. There are certain perfections in things which conceptually involve no defect, as wisdom, goodness. Such as these are, with all propriety, affirmable of God, who, in one simple existence, possesses all perfections unitedly, fully, and absolutely. Here it may be remarked that the metaphysical reason back of the attribution of all such perfections to God, for example, wisdom, is not the sole derivation of wisdom from the fountain-head of the Deity—the cause has nothing from the effect—but the imitation by creatures of the Divine Wisdom itself. The motive of this observation lies in the fact that God was intelligent and full of wisdom before creatures sprang into existence and did not acquire this attribute from them, but reflected it in them.

Other perfections there are which imply in themselves a certain amount of modal imperfection as the direct result of their finite nature. Such, for instance, would be the attribution to God of the powers of sight, understanding thereby a knowledge of visible objects through a faculty conjoined with an organ of sense. These cannot be affirmed of God except in a metaphorical sense. The reason is that, though perfections in their way, they are not pure, and result directly from finite and less noble conditions. All that pertains to the nobility of creatures does not pertain to the nobility of the Creator, who exceeds all beyond measure. Ferocity ennobles the lion. It would rebound to man's conceptual discredit, even though he be the lion's superior as the centre-piece of creation.

Thus it is that the Angel of the Schools weighs well in the balance of a critical reason his every statement concerning God. He has left us page after page in his *Summa Theologica* of careful discernment between the words and ideas through which we stammer out our notions of the Deity. So far from being anthropomorphic, he carefully discriminates against any such interpretation. His two ways of expressing God, to wit, by denying all imperfections and by affirming all perfection, cover the ground required in the problem.

Perhaps the criticism Hamilton made of the argument from analogy might strike some readers of these pages as weakening the position we have been sustaining. To such as these we would suggest a consideration of the following. According to the doctrine which we have just been exposing, God is known by affirmation and denial. By affirmation, God is known from those perfections *which He is*¹ and by negation He is known from those things *which He is not*.² The latter is, as apparent, the chief mode relied upon in our investigations of the concept of God. We affirm perfection and at the same time deny its mode, its limit, its condition in creatures. We remove all imperfection entirely from Him and in this wise essay to reach some glimmering knowledge of God's eternal self-hood.³

This would appear to make God, as Hamilton said, a product of negative thinking, a bundle of negations. Let us look critically into the worth of this statement.

It is a well known fact of logic that the more we penetrate into and discover the differences of any object from all others, the more perfect knowledge do we reach of the object itself. Whence, in establishing its definition, we first classify the genus and then add the differences which mark it off from all others.

¹Ex iis quae est. ²Ex iis quae non est. These striking expressions are from St. Cyril of Alexandria. *De Sancta et Consubst. Trinit.*, Dial. I. ³For theory of analogy in St. Augustine, cf. *Aug. in Ioannem*, III., tract. 39, No. 7; *Ibid.*, tract. XIII.; *Ibid.*, Sermo de verbis Apostoli; *Lib. contra Mendacium*, cap. X.; *De Trinitate*, Lib. V., cap. XIII.

In this wise we acquire complete knowledge of the object's nature. But as this is impossible with the Divine Nature, which is above all classification and irreducible to any genus or species, we cannot distinguish it from other objects by affirmative differentiations. Thus when I deny of God that He is corporeal, a body, I distinguish him from all such. If I deny again that He is an accidental being, I affirm implicitly that He is something else. Proceeding thus, I come to know what God is not. But all the while I am denying, I am implicitly affirming, just as when I deny that man is a lion, I do not deny all reality of him, but that only which is comprised in a lion's nature. A residual product is left over after denial—namely, He is not the particular object denied, but something else. I do not deny perfections of God in order to exclude them from Him, but to demonstrate His sublimity and excellence. If I did not know something of God, I could not deny anything of Him, because affirmation must precede denial.

If therefore, I affirm before I deny, what is the result? I first affirm wisdom and I say that God is wise. But as wisdom is in God in a more perfect way than in creatures, I deny that God's wisdom stops at the nature of human wisdom such as I see it. Does not this mean that God is over-wise as compared to creatures? The negation does not destroy what has been said in the affirmation, but simply denotes that the thoughts expressed in the affirmation should be understood in a sense more noble than we are prepared fully to comprehend. In this wise, so far from destroying our positive knowledge negation perfects it, because in the denial of an imperfection a greater perfection is indirectly affirmed.

Consideration of thoughts such as these cannot fail to impress us that in St. Thomas we are dealing with a genius who was acquainted with every inch of ground over which the human intellect is forced to travel carefully and slowly if it would be sure of firmest footing. Once the nature of the similarity between creatures and Creator is sifted down to proportional analogy, no fear need be entertained that we are constructing God after human fashion or projecting Him without warrant out of our own finite consciousness. Close reasonings there are and must be in such a problem. But these in no wise impair the discussional worth and objective validity of the position of St. Thomas.

Such is the nature of similarity, such the basis of attributing to God the perfections of creatures in a way compatible with His self-subsisting nature. God is not reconstructed through the principle of analogy as though he were a sum total of abstractions, but the concept of self-existence which expe-

rience intrudes upon us is broadened, deepened, rounded out by such considerations. Nor should this surprise us. The nature of the human mind is such that it understands the simplest realities by breaking them into a multiplicity of partial considerations, and by piecing these latter together again into the synthesis of a whole. The piecing together is a mental process, an aid to a further conception. It is as serviceable and as useless as a scaffolding; serviceable and necessary in reaching the heights we would attain unto; useless once the goal is reached.

VIII.—THE CREATION-IDEA AND MODERN SCIENCE.

The underdrift of modern science is toward an all-pervading unity. Powerful research work has called forth from the depth of things an answer which Augustine received long ages since from the flowers of the field when they bade him seek their cause above and beyond their floral selves. The scattered fragments which mere analysis yields up to the painstaking observer will not remain apart. They are beaded together in a rosary of relations. The more one plunges into the consideration of realities for the sole sake of the pleasurable knowledge afforded by the plunging, the more does one feel that each apparently separate reality reaches out to some other of its kind by a hidden bond that makes for unity and suggests the presence of some great polarizing power. The spectrum has made the heavenly bodies tell their mute story of themselves and assert their kinship with the elements which we know and see more immediately about us. The ether acts as a vast telegraphic system between the wheeling worlds, flashing the quivers of the one into the very heart of the other. Purpose is seen in the steady march of the universe towards its goal, and is discernible under the petals of the meanest flower that blows. In the midst of variety, do what one will, order thrusts itself into consideration. Events that seem the furthestmost apart are on deeper search found to be in close communion. Analysis has at last made evident the need of its consort, synthesis; men are gradually beginning to realize what St. Thomas struggled to express some centuries since, that the vast network of interacting objects which men call Nature is throbbing with the unison of a mighty purpose and impelled ever onwards toward the goal, dramatically, irresistibly.

Considerations such as these, suggestive of an all-pervading Unity actually at work in the heart and fibre of the world, have impressed modern theistic thinkers with the solemn

thought that the idea of God hitherto entertained needs radical reshaping. The fact that in the midst of so much change there is constancy of development, in the midst of death, decay and apparent confusion there is the steady march of purpose, has burst upon some minds with all the brilliancy of a new revelation. When examined critically, however, it all turns out to be an old truth arrived at by new avenues, the mere accentuation of an old belief, not the trumpet-blast of a new discovery. The hypothesis of evolution in the minds of many has brought God closer to things, has made it impossible to banish Him from the field of phenomena. To read the writings of such men and to note their insistence upon God's presence in nature one is tempted to think that the whole world was of opposite persuasion.¹ The notion seems prevalent among such that the doctrine of creation carries with it the idea of a God who completed the world in the twilight of the ages and remained away from it ever since lost in the compass of His own infinity. Fabulous derivations of the creation-idea are peddled out in the guise of scientific hypotheses and men are urged to reject it on the ground that it no longer answers the needs of science which demands a Deity that has actually something to do with the world of realities in which we live, who is its heart, its life, the controller of its forces, the goal of its destinies.

Nothing could be further from the truth than the thought that Creation implies subsequent inertia on the part of the Creator, a sort of "divine absenteeism," to paraphrase Carlyle's sneering allusion.

Creation, rightly understood, gives to the idea of God the one essential characteristic which saves the divine Being from gross confusion and identity with the force and matter of the universe—the characteristic of complete distinction from it in nature. It implies none of the crudities to which Prof. Fiske refuses to subscribe. Distinction does not mean God's absence, nor does creation imply utter inactivity. God's separation from the world by nature does not involve his separation from it in power, guidance and continuous development.

A creator who is not also an upholder, a conservator, is a myth. There is as much absurdity in admitting continuous existence of reality without continuous creation, as there would be in admitting actual sunlight from a sun that had ceased to irradiate. When conservation is called perpetual creation, it

¹One of the great sources of misunderstanding nowadays is the new terminology which has come into use. The old phrases seem weighted down with a meaning they can no longer carry. Especially is this seen in economics and philosophy. Perhaps a new St. Paul will come to tell men that the God whom they have hidden under phrase and thus made unknown is the God of patristic and christian conception.

is not meant that things are constantly dropping out of existence and as constantly returning to it. This would be the height of absurdity. It simply means that if there is nothing in things to warrant our belief in their power of self-production—nothing to warrant their eternal existence of themselves, there certainly is nothing to make us scientifically believe that a reality which owed the entirety of its being to another for the first moment of its existence, does not remain debtor to the same power every additional moment that such existence continues to endure. If the sun produced illumination of the atmosphere centuries since, it must continue its action to-day, else all actual illumination is impossible.

The Creation-idea has all the virtues of the other cosmic theories with none of their vices. It rejects emphatically their one most ignoble feature. It excludes God as the formal cause or formal constituent of this universe of realities. God is the efficient and the final cause, the Beginning and the End. He hurled the universe into existence, and He has as much to do with it to day as on creation's dawn. Out of His power, infinite and eternal, things that were not, came to be. They came from no preëxistent, except the preëxisting power of God, the infinite actuality of which they are but meagre participations. It rejects God as part of things, as compounded with them, as identical with their fleeting, finite selves. It does not preclude His presence, His power, His actual working in things. It rejects Pantheism as ignoble, a sort of blind necessity and gross confusion. It lays down the facts that God made things exist that were previously non-existent, that He upholds them by His power, that He rules their actions, supplies them with actuality to be and power to do, that there is not a shred of reality in them that is not of His pure giving. But it denies that things are God or that God is things. He is distinct from them as all-perfect reality must be from the finite and imperfect, as the Giver from the gifts of His hands.

But it admits all the while that He is intimately present in them, that He has more to do with their workings than they have themselves, that their myriad individual natures act of themselves through Him and He in them. He is not a far-off deity, but a God creating, conserving, provident and predestining. The existence of the tiniest atom as well as every particle of its force comes from Him. The outlay of its little store of power is by virtue of His infinite reservoir of self. He gives without losing. Things receive their nature, their powers, their every act from Him, are moved by Him in every operation, remain within the bounds He set them, and march ever onwards toward the purpose that He wills. Everything they

have is borrowed, yet none the less is all reality real without being the reality of God, and God is real without being the reality of creatures. The crudity is in Professor Fiske's conception, not in the traditional idea that has come down to us from the Christian Era.

Things and God act simultaneously. Two causes are at work—the Creator and the creature. The universal and the particulars. Every finite effect is due to both, referable to both, though unequally and in different measure. There is unity in the individual causes when at work, because He gives the power to work and the instinct that seeks the goal particular, and thus contributes the quota of light and shade to nature's picture of purpose. He is everywhere, though not contained in space. He acts everywhere a pulse of life is beating or a coral reef is forming in the depths of a silver sea. He is in all, acts in all, moves all, guides all, controls all, yet is He none of the works of His hands, though the universe is a purposeful activity and the heavens a rosary strung with beaded stars.¹

He is infinitely distant from them in nature. But this does not imply absence from the field of phenomena. It means that despite His presence He is the pure actuality infinitely different in His constitution from the petty realities which are but as nothing in His sight.

¹Some of Professor Fiske's conceptions of the "Dark Age" theology are, to use his own word, barbaric. He says (page 103): "To conceive of physical forces as powers of which the action could in any wise be substituted for the action of the Deity would in such a case have been absolutely impossible." Such a conception involves the idea of God as remote from the world and acting upon it from outside. The whole notion of what theological writers are fond of calling "secondary causes" involves such an idea of God." First of all, no philosophic writer of the "Dark Ages" would dream of saying that physical forces were powers whose action could be substituted, etc. Only in our own day have the distinct notions of force, power and action been grossly confused, to the real detriment of science. (Cf. The Correlation of Physical Forces, by Grove, pp. 13, 15, and 33.) Professor Fiske reads into the scholastic notions the peculiar phases of Mill's Philosophy of Causes. He judges the Schoolmen from Mill's point of view without first ascertaining theirs. We know no scholastic writer of repute who conceived of physical forces as powers whose action could be substituted for that of God. Action is the exertion of power. Force, properly speaking, is the amount of the exertion, or the quantity of the action, as measured by the effect it is able to produce. To say therefore that forces were powers was past all scholastic belief. But what is more unworthy still is Professor Fiske's view of the then current theologic position. No one ever dreamt of holding that the actions of secondary causes were substituted for those of the Deity. Professor Fiske simply describes a past that never was a present. The doctrine held then as now is simply this: God and creatures are not partial causes. They are two complete causes, each producing the same effect, but in a different manner. The effect is due to both, but the mode of producing it is different in each. God acts as the universal cause. Creatures act as particular and finite causes. It is the same philosophic fact that underlies the production of a statue by a sculptor and his chisel. Both contribute to the effect, each in the proper way. The thought that the creature's action was substituted for that of God no more crossed the imagination of a scholastic than the thought that the action of a chisel is substituted for that of the sculptor would be entertained nowadays. How could they hold such a view when the keynote to the position of St. Thomas on God's indwelling in nature is such that he gives expression to his thought in the following: "The first cause exerts more production on the effect of the second cause than the second cause itself." (*Causa prima est vehementioris impressionis supra causatum causae secundae quam ipsa causa secunda.* IV. Dist. 12, art. 1. ad. 2.) The second cause was never a substitute for the first. Such an idea is puerile and unphilosophic. Yet Professor Fiske says it is common. He gives no reference and cites no authority. He may not believe in cause as implying the notion of production, since he follows John Stuart Mill's system, which Jevons (*Pure Logic and Other Minor Works*, p. 201) does not hesitate to characterize as an incubus of bad logic and bad philosophy. But because he does not believe in cause as implying production is no reason why he should judge those who do believe such, by the standard of those who do not. Professor Fiske is stating a position, and should state it fairly, not invent it.

Without creation, distinction is impossible. Without distinction, Pantheism is the legitimate outcome. Prof. Fiske distinguishes in vain when he makes out the God of the Theist different from that of the Pantheist, on the score that he is not blind force but omnipresent energy. What is this energy at the heart of the circling worlds? Is it the very cosmic energies themselves or something apart and distinct from them? If it be these very energies, no process of reasoning can make his position other than Pantheistic. Recourse to omnipresent energy as against blind force is a makeshift. For intelligent or blind, force is force still, energy is energy, and if God be either, the world is God, however much subtlety may distinguish or ingenuity substitute.

Theism is removed from Pantheism in words, in formula only and not in the thought that lies at the heart of each. And if Prof. Fiske objects to this view as foreign to his considerations, he must simply be struggling to express what the nobler stream of thought within us all must outpour eventually—the idea of a God which Augustine outlined and Thomas of Aquin developed to the highest—Eternal, Infinite, Personal Intelligence, Will and Power, back of all phenomena, under the petals of the meanest flower, nowhere absent, everywhere at work, the source of all phenomena, because the cause of them, yet not identified with any single phenomenon, for the reason that they are not made out of Him but by Him, are not emanations from Him, but productions of His infinite power.

Such a concept is the only one worthy of science, of philosophy—of religion. It is not anthropomorphic, unscientific, unphilosophic. It would need no modification even if Evolution had made good its myriad claims. The very insufficiency of all other concepts of God to realize Him satisfactorily is a lasting monument to the victorious truth of the Creation-idea. Such a God alone is one whom scientists can afford to adore and whom knowing not, their very struggles at expression reveal and their meagre makeshifts proclaim as the only legitimate outcome of modern science. Lest this latter statement be thought a burst of fervor merely, or as some would view it, the trumpery of a defunct metaphysic, we append in conclusion the scientific suggestion of the Creation-idea by Prof. Clerk-Maxwell, F. R. S., the eminent English mathematician and natural philosopher.¹

¹This quotation furnishes us with interesting and suggestive considerations. No one disagrees with Mill when he says that by reasoning from the facts of experience we can never rise to the conviction that the specific elementary substances of things (i. e. the elements) are created out of nothing, for the reason that they are not known to us as beginning to exist, but as constantly enduring throughout all changes. To argue thus is faulty in the admission of all. The method pursued by St. Thomas is to argue from experience to a First Cause of changes.

“The molecule, though indestructible, is not a hard, rigid body, but is capable of internal movements, and when these are excited, it emits rays, the wave-length of which is a measure for the time of vibration of a molecule. By means of the spectroscope the wave-length of different kinds of light may be compared to within one ten-thousandth part. In this way it has been ascertained not only that molecules taken from every specimen of hydrogen in our laboratories have the same set of periods of vibration, but that light having the same set of periods of vibration is emitted from the sun and from the fixed stars. We are thus assured that molecules of the same nature as those of our hydrogen exist in those distant regions, or at least did exist when the light by which we see them was emitted. . . . Light, which is to us the sole evidence of the existence of these distant worlds, tells us also that each of them is built of molecules of the same kind as those which we find on earth. A molecule of hydrogen, for example, whether in Sirius or Arcturus, executes its vibrations in precisely the same time. Each molecule, therefore, throughout the universe, bears impressed on it the stamp of a metric system as distinctly as does the metre of the Archives of Paris or the double royal cubit of the Temple of Karnac. No theory of evolution can be formed to account for the similarity of molecules; for evolution necessarily implies continuous change, and the molecule is incapable of growth or decay, of generation or destruction. None of the processes of nature, since the time when nature began, have produced the slightest difference in the properties of any molecule. We are therefore unable to ascribe either the existence of the molecules or the identity of their properties to the operation of any of the causes which we call natural. On the other hand, the exact quality of each molecule to all others of the same kind gives it, as Sir John Herschel has well said, the essential character of a manufactured article, and precludes the idea of its being eternal and self-existent.

Thus we have been led, along a strictly scientific path, very near to the point at which science must stop. Not that science is debarred from studying the internal mechanism of a molecule which she cannot take to pieces, any more than from investigating an organism which she cannot put together. But in tracing back the history of matter science is arrested when she assures herself, on the one hand, that the molecule has been made, and, on the other, that it has not been made by any of the processes

which Spencer says is an inevitable conclusion. Once this First Cause is established, it is in order to inquire into its nature and the relations between the primitive elements of matter and the First Cause itself. Such a procedure is soundly methodological. Yet Mill attacks at great length the former method, forgetting, evidently, that in so doing he strikes no antagonist. The quotation from Clerk-Maxwell is from: *A Lecture on Molecules delivered before the British Association at Bradford*.—*Nature*, September 25, 1873.

we call natural. Science is incompetent to reason upon the creation of matter itself out of nothing.¹ We have reached the utmost limit of our thinking faculties when we have admitted that, because matter cannot be eternal and self-existent, it must have been created. That matter, as such, should have certain fundamental properties, that it should exist in space and be capable of motion, that its motion should be persistent, and so on, are truths which may, for anything we know, be of the kind which metaphysicians call necessary. We may use our knowledge of such truths for purposes of deduction, but we have no data for speculating as to their origin. But that there should be exactly so much matter and no more in every molecule of hydrogen is a fact of a very different order. . . . Natural causes, as we know, are at work, which tend to modify, if they do not at length destroy, all the arrangements and dimensions of the earth, and of the whole solar system. But though, in the course of ages, catastrophes have occurred, and may yet occur, in the heavens; though ancient systems may be dissolved, and new systems evolved out of their ruins, the molecules out of which those systems are built, the foundation-stones of the material universe, remain unbroken and unworn. They continue to this day as they were created, perfect in number and measure and weight, and from the ineffaceable characters impressed on them we may learn that those aspirations after accuracy in measurement, truth in statement, and justice in action, which we reckon among our noblest attributes as men, are ours because they are essential constituents of the image of Him who, in the beginning, created not only the heaven and earth, but the materials of which heaven and earth consist.”

EDMUND T. SHANAHAN.

¹It is competent, however, to furnish the philosopher with all the materials of such a reasoning, as this very passage clearly shows.



