TRACTS

CONCERNING

CHRISTIANITY.

BY

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REMARKS

ON THE

MODERN GERMAN SCHOOL OF INFIDELITY.
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When the preceding tract was first published, it was accompanied by a note with a title answering to that above given. This note I afterwards had occasion to illustrate and defend in a separate publication. But the characteristics and tendencies of German infidel philosophy have since been more fully developed. It has thrown aside the veil of pretended Christianity. A visible process of deterioration has been going on; and the effects of that philosophy are now manifest, not only in every department of thought and literature, but in the political and moral condition of Germany.

In what follows, I have preserved, with great additions and changes, the illustrations which I formerly gave. The account thus formed may,
perhaps, possess some historical value, as afford-
ing a general view of a state of transition from
crude, unreasoning belief in traditionary relig-
ious errors, to a virulent, unreasoning rejection
of all religious truths. The aspects which the
human mind assumed during this transition
state are well worth the attention of him who
is studying the causes and character of false
opinions. During this period there was a rank
growth of such opinions, of which the harvest
is now gathering in. Our purpose will confine
our attention principally to those concerning
religion; but they spread through every de-
partment of thought.

When I first wrote (about thirteen years
ago), the school of theology on which I re-
marked, with its peculiar characteristic, the
attempt to amalgamate Antichristian opinions
with Christian language, was still, apparently,
in full vigor. It had been gradually develop-
ing itself and spreading for more than half a
century. But it contained within itself a prin-
ciple of decay. The partial disguising of opin-
ions in unsuitable language; the keeping up
the show of a religious purpose in undermining
the foundations of religion; the making a dis-
play of mystical feelings, and even of factitious
enthusiasm, the cover of heartless unbelief; the
ambiguous use of words and propositions in senses very different from their established meaning; the seeming assertion on one page of what is contradicted on another; the playing fast and loose with the reader,—all this required a certain degree of ingenuity, and produced the impression of superior wisdom and insight in the writer. But the amalgamation attempted was impossible. One extravagant after another was put forth, till it became evident that nothing new was to be said. It was a field in which no fresh reputation was to be gathered. Irreligion under this form had done its worst; and absurdity could go no further. In Germany, therefore, this school of Antichristian theology began rapidly to decline, from about the time when the preceding tract was written. Even the work on Christian Doctrines (Christliche Glaubenslehre) by Strauss, published in 1840–41, cannot be considered as properly belonging to it, since that writer relinquishes all pretence of inculcating any religious truth. His book is a controversial attack on what he represents as being, or having been, the doctrines of Christianity, simply and thoroughly irreligious, without disguise. The barrier which the former infidel theology of Germany had imposed upon itself, formed
out of some remains of Christian faith and feeling, and the abuse of Christian language, has given way. In Germany the school has fallen into discredit; and the boldest of its writers, and of their immediate successors, such as Strauss, are regarded by many with little respect, as men who busied themselves about obsolete prejudices.

In much of what follows, therefore, it has become proper to speak of that as past and historical, which but a few years ago might be spoken of as existing. The interest of the subject, however, has not passed away. The cloud in which it was enveloped has been dispelled, and we now see distinctly the steps by which men, at the present day, may be conducted to the rejection of all religious belief. The present state of speculation in Germany — we cannot say of religion or philosophy — is the complement of the past; and they are to be viewed in their connection with each other. What exists now, removes all doubt concerning the essential character of what preceded and produced it. But out of Germany the change has not apparently been so great among the disciples of the German school. By many, the first stage, the stage of religious mysticism and of the abuse of religious language, has not yet been passed through.
The remarks which follow relate principally to what, with reference to the distinction just made, may be called the introductory school of German infidel theology. As may appear from what has been said, the writers of this school are not to be confounded indiscriminately with those who have succeeded them. While it prevailed, the air was full of poisonous miasmata, but the worst symptoms of the pestilence they were breeding had not appeared.

That infidelity should have taken for a disguise the name of Christianity is a remarkable phenomenon, which may be explained in part by the fact, that the principal leaders of the Antichristian school were placed in circumstances in which the profession of Christianity was required, either by the nature of their offices, as professedly Christian teachers, or by a regard to decorum and their worldly interests. But they were surrounded by unbelief. It had thoroughly pervaded the metaphysical philosophy of their country. It had been at work throughout the literature of Continental Europe; and they had neither deep piety, nor moral strength, nor power of comprehension and reasoning, to resist its influence. Christianity they abandoned to its enemies. They
joined those enemies. But it was necessary to have something that might be called Christianity; and they accordingly gave that name to multiform and unstable speculations of their own, unconnected with any established facts or principles; and in framing which it seems to have been forgotten, that what is proposed for belief requires some evidence of its truth.

These speculations were favored by existing modes of thinking and writing. In rude times, when the mind is struggling with half-formed ideas, those claiming superior wisdom have usually affected an obscure, enigmatic, paradoxical style, full of words and figures remote from the apprehension of the vulgar. Dark sayings are characteristic of one stage in the progress of the human intellect. The meaning which is not clearly understood by its propounder is thus sheltered from investigation, and his oracles are enabled to escape from confutation in the darkness. His teachings are magnified by mystery; and the disciple thinks himself initiated in some esoteric doctrine, too profound for common minds. Instead of the care with which a true philosopher endeavors to express real knowledge in the most perspicuous manner, there is a constant striving to disguise
trivial, erroneous, and extravagant conceptions in unusual forms of language.

The same phenomena are likely to occur whenever any great revolution takes place in men's opinions. In such seasons mysticism flourishes. The mind loses its customary landmarks, distrusts its former belief, renounces its former guides, and, leaving the beaten path, becomes the bewildered follower of him who professes most boldly his acquaintance with the unexplored region on which it is entering. It is confused between new and old opinions, and sees nothing distinctly. Words lose their former meanings, and acquire no stable significations instead; old errors and essential truths are abandoned in common, and paradoxical novelties are enunciated in a new language, understood neither by those who use nor by those who listen to it.

I shall, therefore, in further pointing out some of the characteristics of the German infidel school of theology, begin by remarking on confusion of thought and unmeaning language, connected with the theory, that Christian faith has its origin in the mind itself, independently of the Christian revelation, and with the denial of the truths of religion.
These characteristics will be apparent throughout the passages which I shall have occasion to quote or refer to, but may be first illustrated from the writings of Dr Wette. Perhaps no theologian of the German school had more direct influence on opinion out of Germany, though this influence was somewhat disproportioned, I believe, to his reputation among his countrymen. He is, however, a fair, or, rather, a favorable representative of the school. One of his last publications on the theory of religion appeared in 1834, in a theological journal.* It is a review of a work in defence of the genuineness of the writings of the New Testament.† Its purpose is to show that, as regards establishing the truth of Christianity, all works of this kind are equally unnecessary and fruitless. A Christian’s faith, according to him, is not to be founded on reasoning. It is the result of intuition, of a consciousness of the truths of religion; and certainty is therefore of its essence. But reason deals with probabilities, and can afford no certainty. In this article he gives a professed ex-

† "Nachweis der Echtheit sämtlicher Schriften des N. T.," by Olshausen.
position of what he calls the "New Theology," which it had been the main purpose of his theological life to establish. It might be supposed that he must have reflected much on the subject, and have been able to give an intelligible exposition of it.

"The greatest and most pregnant idea of the New Theology," he says, "and one the establishment of which is the main business of my theological life, is, that the doctrine of faith must contain no metaphysics, or at least only so much as is necessary for a clear understanding of the faith; that its essence is not in scientific propositions, but in the pious consciousness scientifically purified and enlightened." *

The shadowy and shapeless meaning of the sentence I have quoted escapes in any attempt to grasp it. But this fact may not be universally admitted. He whose own conceptions are vague and inconsistent is not sensible of the want of definiteness or meaning in what he

* "Es ist die grösste und fruchtbarste Idee der neueren Theologie (und deren Geltendmachung ist die Hauptaufgabe meines theologischen Lebens), dass die Glaubenslehre keine Metaphysik oder doch nur soviel davon enthalten darf, als zur klaren Verständigung des Glaubens nöthig ist, dass ihr Wesen nicht in wissenschaftlichen Sätzen, sondern in dem wissenschaftlich gereinigten und erleuchteten frommen Bewusstseyn besteht." — Theologische Studien und Kritiken, first number for 1834, p. 137.
reads. He attaches some unformed notions to words that in fact convey no coherent ideas; and may regard himself in consequence as a profound thinker, able to discover a meaning which less wise men cannot see.

Let us examine the passage more carefully. Giving to the particular words any sense which we can suppose to have been intended, no comprehensible meaning can be disentangled from them.

"The doctrine of faith" (that is to say, what is proposed for religious belief) "must contain no metaphysics, or at least only so much as is necessary for a clear understanding of the faith": — We can ascribe no sense to any of these words but their obvious one; and, this being the case, there is no intelligible meaning in the proposition. All the objects of religious faith, — God, the human soul, the spiritual world, the principles of moral action, — and every other, with all the questions that arise concerning them, belong to the province of metaphysical science. The proposition with its concluding qualification is equally without meaning, as if one were to say, that a geologist, in explaining his doctrine concerning the changes which the earth has undergone, should introduce no physical ideas, or introduce them only so far as
is necessary to a clear understanding of his theory. The word "metaphysics" seems to have been used with no regard to its proper meaning, but only in reference to the accidental and false associations which it may carry with it,—associations, natural enough in the mind of a German scholar, of something adverse to the common sentiments of men, enveloped in barbarous terms of science, which seem used to mystify, not to explain,—something crabbed, obscure, and unintelligible; whereas the true science of metaphysics is only good sense applied to the highest objects of thought; and good sense is always intelligible.

But to proceed.—"The essence of the doctrine of faith" (that is, what is essential in the doctrines of religion) "does not consist in scientific propositions":—Every faith, or belief, however attained, consists in the belief of truths, real or supposed; and these real or supposed truths are to be expressed in words; and these words form propositions. Every doctrine is a proposition,—or a number of propositions, that is, if the word "doctrine" be used in the singular to denote a body of doctrines. If the sentence, therefore, have any meaning, it must depend entirely on the word "scientific."
But science is only knowledge, or what is believed to be knowledge, digested into a system. A scientific proposition is a proposition making part of such a system, one connected with and confirmed by other propositions supposed to be true. It is asserted, then, that what is essential in religious belief does not consist of propositions, that is of truths, having any such relation to each other as to admit of their being arranged into a coherent system. This is what is actually asserted; what was in the mind of the writer, when putting forth this assertion, cannot be conjectured with any confidence.

So far from consisting in scientific propositions, "the essence of the doctrine of faith consists in the pious consciousness": — The "essence of the doctrine of faith" must mean the essential truths which are the objects of faith. What is affirmed, therefore, is, that those truths consist in "the pious consciousness," — namely, of those truths. It is evident that words cannot be put together more illogically with any show of meaning. One may conjecture something of the intended purpose of the writer, not from what he here says, but from the theory which he elsewhere maintains. This theory, as I have before said, is, that the truths of religion
are directly apprehended as such by the mind through a faculty which he sometimes calls consciousness, sometimes presentiment,* and sometimes feeling. With this imaginary faculty of apprehending these truths he confounds the truths themselves. The indistinct meaning which he had in mind was, I suppose, something like this, — that what is properly to be called religious faith does not rest on truths which may be proved through the exercise of reason, but consists in a faculty of the mind through which the truths of religion are intuitively discerned.

"The essence of the doctrine of faith con-

* "Ahnung," presentiment: — As used for a scientific term, Krug (in his Dictionary of Philosophy) states it to mean, "the idea of an object which has not yet entered the consciousness with clearness, but which is beginning to approach it," — die Vorstellung eines Gegenstandes, der noch nicht mit Klarheit in die Bewusstsein getreten ist, sich aber demselben schon zu nähern beginnt. I suppose that, in strictness, the word denotes a pretended faculty of perceiving such ideas, rather than the ideas themselves. It seems meant to express "a dim premonitory consciousness of a truth before it is clearly discerned."

Apparently this conception was introduced into the new theology from the philosophy of Epicurus, who rested his belief in the existence of the gods, according to his idea of them, on what he calls the "anticipation" (anticipatio, πρόληψις) of them in the human mind, the pre-existing notion of them (praeotio), — existing before instruction, and common to every nation and every class of men. (Cicero, De Naturâ Deorum, Lib. I. §§ 16, 17.)
sists," that is, the essential truths which are the objects of religious faith consist in "the pious consciousness, scientifically purified and enlightened":—We may translate this proposition into words that apparently express its intended meaning thus:—The mind when in a pious state has intuitions, or is conscious of certain ideas, which, when scientifically purified and enlightened, become the truths of religion. Certainly, men in a pious state of mind have religious conceptions and feelings. But this unquestionable fact affords no support for a new theory concerning the grounds of belief in religion. According to the theory under consideration, the only proper and secure ground of belief in religion is consciousness of its truths. Consciousness is absolute certainty. To qualify it with the epithet "pious," as if something more than simple consciousness were necessary, shows a confusion of mind in which the writer did not discern his own meaning. But it must be not only pious, it must be scientifically purified and enlightened. It appears, then, that consciousness, or intuition, our only source of certain knowledge, requires to be corrected and modified by some other knowledge digested into a science.
Such is the account which was given by one of the most conspicuous teachers of German theology, of the doctrine which it had been the main purpose of his theological life to explain and defend. But I have not quoted the passage for the sake of illustrating De Wette's character as a writer, but for the more general purpose of illustrating the prevailing character of modern German works of speculation. Everywhere in these writings we find like confusion of thought, and a similar unintelligible use of language. Propositions are so vaguely expressed as to present no meaning on which the mind can rest. We read on in the hope that what follows may afford an explanation of the intended sense; but what follows, instead of throwing light on what we have gone over, is itself involved in equal obscurity. It is like pursuing a pretended algebraic process, in which the value of an unknown term in one equation is to be determined by the value of another equally unknown in the equation which succeeds, and so on to the end.

But this sort of writing is of great antiquity, has been very prevalent, and finds many admirers, who are struck with wonder at the marvels which may be produced by the abuse of words. It consists not merely in putting together words
whose sense is known in such a manner that nothing intelligible is the result of the combination; but in employing words, often newly fashioned, or newly applied, with undefined and undefinable meanings,—familiar words with senses new and old which are confused together,—and many-sided words, of which sometimes one and sometimes another aspect is presented to the reader.

In the German language, the significations of many words are more unsteady and uncertain than in our own, or in the Southern languages of Europe. Their outline is undefined and varying. Words have not been determined to precise meanings by habits of accurate usage and associations long connected with them. They do not, equally as with us, when standing in certain relations to other words and ideas, present invariably and instantaneously the true sense required by the connection. The associations and implications connected with one signification of a word become confused with those connected with another; and even significations widely distinct are confounded together. Thus, to illustrate by an example, the same German word, Wunder, signifies either a miracle, or merely a wonder, “a wonderful natural object or event”; and the
rejection of the miraculous character of Christianity has doubtless been facilitated by the ease with which the mind may pass from one of those opposite meanings to the other, on account of their being both expressed by the same word. So, likewise, the word Glaube denotes at once faith, religious faith, and belief, that is, the belief of any supposed truth whatever, and more especially the belief of self-evident or intuitive propositions; and, together with this, it is used to denote also an imaginary faculty by which we assent to such propositions, which have been called "the convictions of pure reason." Hence has followed great confusion of thought. I will give one example more from the science of metaphysics. Each of the German words sinnlich and sensual — the latter of which almost seems to have been adopted into the language for the sake of the equivocal — combines the meanings of "sensible," that is, belonging to or perceptible by the senses, and of "sensual." It has been attempted to introduce into our language the barbarism of using "sensual" as if it meant sensible, or founded on the senses; and hence, through a series of errors, we have heard of the sensual philosophy of Locke, — an epithet which from its associations is so utterly
inappropriate, that, even if it had the meaning given it, good sense and good taste would forbid its use. As I have elsewhere remarked, almost all the words expressive of religious ideas have had a new sense put upon them, in which they are familiarly used.* The abuse has made inroads into our own language, and thus it has become necessary jealously to guard it, or its whole meaning in the higher departments of thought will be broken down, the cultivation and growth of centuries will be destroyed, and it will be reduced to a waste in which the wildest speculations may flourish.

Of words which have been used without any definite or settled meaning we have a notable example in the passage quoted from De Wette. It is the word "consciousness," Bewusstseyn. The German word has a nebulous meaning, of which that of "consciousness" forms only the nucleus. "Consciousness" in our language denotes a "knowledge of what passes in one's own mind"; † or a knowledge of the present state of one's own mind. It carries with it the idea of absolute certainty. This is its only proper meaning. But the German word, Bewusstseyn, comprehends the sense of "percep-

* See the preceding tract, p. 240. † Locke and Johnson.
tion" in its metaphysical use, of "sentiment" considered as a judgment founded on or connected with feeling, and of "imagination" operating to produce belief more or less distinct, as when it becomes synonymous with Ahnung, "presentiment." In theology it has been used, as we have seen, to denote an imaginary faculty of directly apprehending the facts of religion as such, or, to use another term, the supposed apperception of those facts. It is not here the place to speak of its vague use in popular language, in which it has become almost a cant word, often occurring with a meaning only to be conjectured. But to all the senses that have been expressly mentioned, the idea of certainty which belongs only to its proper signification has continued attached, and those senses with this false association have, through the influence of German speculations and phraseology, been transferred into our own language and given to the word "consciousness." In further explaining the subject I must continue to use this word as the representative of the German Bewusstseyn.

The history of its introduction to its present use as a theological term is given by the ecclesiastical historian Neander in a discourse delivered by him (in 1839) before the University at

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Berlin in commemoration of the institution of the Protestant Church in the Mark of Brandenburg.* He represents the religion taught by the Reformers as “pervading the minds of men, and producing among the people a certain common consciousness of Christian truth,” which is “the witness of Christian truth.” “The name I use,” he says, “Christian consciousness, is indeed new; and to have formed it in correspondence with the nature of the subject, and to have introduced it into common use, is not the least among the great merits of the sainted Schleiermacher, whom we reverence as the teacher of Germany.” He quotes the words of his colleague Steffens, who had said: “There are expressions which in themselves have a great historical significance.” By the introduction of this term, “it was as if through Schleiermacher the conception which all men were seeking suddenly became clear to all, as if he had found out the right word of the riddle.”

What the riddle was is not explained, and I can offer no conjecture concerning it. But from this account it appears that its solution, the fortunate discovery of the mot d’énigme,

* Commentatio de Georgio Vicelio.
"consciousness," had for a time the happy effect of composing religious differences in Germany and bringing men to an agreement in its use. This agreement in the use of the word—in a great variety of senses—has continued at least till a very late period; but the other good effect of its introduction has not been lasting. According to Neander, "Christian consciousness" signifies "a consciousness of Christian truth" which is "the witness of Christian truth"; that is, an intuitive knowledge of those facts which concern man as an immortal being, and of which it has been supposed that no assurance can be obtained except through the revelation by which God has made them known. The existence of this form of intuition, heretofore unknown, should have been proved before so much importance was attached to it. What it attests as Christian truth should have been defined. According to Neander, it bore testimony to the doctrines of the early Reformers, especially of Luther, and was the occasion of their rapid spread. If this were its true office, it must have lost much of its efficacy in modern days.

However that may be, the doctrine of the new theology was, that on consciousness, on the intuitive perception of the facts of religion,
Christian faith rests as its only sure foundation, or is identical with it. "Faith, as such," says De Wette, "is free from doubt. If connected with doubts, how could it produce resolutions, afford consolation? Resolution as such, consolation which is real, are both directly opposed to doubt and to the deliberation which is ever more or less connected with it, and exclude them, or, more correctly, presuppose that they are never in a state to shake the feeling of faith."* Whatever else may be thought of these sentences as rendered into English, they are perhaps sufficiently intelligible in respect to the point for which I have quoted them.

"Faith, as such, is free from doubt": — We cannot suppose that in these words, which are the foundation of all that follows, nothing more was meant than to assert the truism, that perfect faith or belief on any subject excludes all doubt; or to maintain that a Christian may and should, through the exercise of his reason, attain full assurance of the truth of his religion. Neither proposition can afford any ground for a new theory of religion. The meaning intended is, that religious faith, as such, is

* Article before quoted, p. 136.
intuitive certainty; and the purpose of what follows is to maintain, that what may be called faith, or religious belief, is not true faith, unless it possess this essential characteristic.

The doctrine that the mind possesses a faculty of intuitively discerning the truths of religion is not only utterly untenable, but the proposition is of such a character, that it cannot well bear the test of being distinctly stated. It is the fundamental proposition to be maintained in those speculations, the end of which is to set aside equally the exercise of our reason and the authority of God's revelation, as the foundation of our religious belief; yet its defenders shrink from presenting it in broad daylight. They are disposed to keep it out of view behind a cloud of words. The question respecting the existence of such a faculty is not difficult to be decided. We are not conscious of possessing any such faculty; and there can be no other proof of its existence. We are conscious that we possess no such faculty; and there can be no more conclusive proof of its non-existence. It is unnecessary in strict reasoning to add anything more. The bubble which has been blown up into so glittering a theory, with such changeable colors, bursts at the first touch of truth.

But much more may be added. An error
which has taken possession of the mind, especially an error which has no foundation in reason, and consequently has never been subjected to the test of reason, can hardly be dislodged by a single argument, however decisive. Let us then go on a little further. Consciousness or intuition can inform us of nothing but what exists in our own minds, including the relations of our own ideas. It has no cognizance of external facts. It is, therefore, not an intelligible error, but a mere absurdity, to maintain that we are conscious, or have an intuitive knowledge, of the being of God, of our own immortality, of the revelation of God through Christ, or of any other fact of religion.

That such a faculty belongs to the human mind, that men have within them such a sure guide to religious truth, is a doctrine that stands in direct opposition to the whole history of the working of men’s minds on the subject of religion,—to our knowledge of the gross ignorance and of the degrading superstitions that have prevailed throughout the world, and are still conspicuous in every part of it. But the doctrine, or some one equivalent, has flourished amid all the confusion of opposing creeds. The claim to a power, natural or supernatural, enabling its possessor clearly to discern the truth
without the exercise of reason, has been made with equal confidence by men asserting contradictory errors. It is not an invention of modern times, though the application which has been made of it may be novel. In maintaining error, it is an obvious, and often the only plausible course, to confront reason with a claim to infallibility.

One point remains, not important as an argument against this imaginary faculty, but deserving attention as illustrating the character of German speculation. De Wette, in the Introduction to his "Manual of Christian Doctrines," treats of the essential character of religion, and lays down the elements of his system. His purpose is to show, that religious ideas arise in the mind through a process of self-development. After giving an account of this process he says: "God, freedom [man's freedom in action], and immortality cannot be proved, but only shown to be necessary ideas in [of] the reason." †

"The truths of religion cannot be proved":—No attempt, therefore, is made to prove them. That ideas or conceptions of the objects of re-

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* "Lehrbuch der christlichen Dogmatik."
† Vol. I. p. 9, 3d ed.
religion arise in the mind from any cause whatever, supposing that they do so arise, is no evidence of the real existence of those objects. We cannot argue from the former fact to the latter, in this any more than in any analogous case. We might as rationally infer the existence of fairies and mermaids from the existence of our ideas concerning them, or that of the gods of Epicurus from the "presentiment" of the Epicureans, or the reality of the objects of Grecian or Hindu mythology from the conceptions of them developed in the minds of the Greeks or Hindus.

"The truths of religion cannot be proved": — What is meant by this? A truth is proved of which we have sufficient evidence. For the truths of religion, according to the theory we are considering, we have the evidence of consciousness, and what evidence can be more decisive? Is it supposed that, while we have an undoubting belief through our consciousness, the understanding may remain unconvinced? There is no hope of finding meaning or coherence in a doctrine which rests on such irreconcilable propositions.

"The truths of religion cannot be proved": — This aspect of the theory has been recognized by many of its disciples. They have, in conse-
quence, been inclined to consider religious faith as an act of the will. The truths of religion, according to them, are to be discerned only by the "pious" consciousness. They are addressed, not to the understanding, but to the heart. They are not subjects for examination and reasoning, but objects of feeling. They are to be received with childlike docility. The state of mind insisted upon as requisite for their admission may bring to one's recollection the exhortation of St. Paul: — "Be not, brothers, children in understanding; be as free from malice as children, but in understanding be men." *

But it would have been strange, if even a German theorist had left his system so wholly unsupported as that of De Wette appears in the last quotation from him, and in the expositions of many who may seem to have adopted it. He does not do so. In common with more orthodox makers of religious systems, he provides it, in the absence of any help from reason, with supernatural aid. He says: —

"Man, as we have seen, carries with him the germ of religion in the faculties of faith and sentiment. We may call this a natural capacity, since it certainly falls into the series of the in-

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* 1 Corinthians xiv. 20
ner phenomena, and belongs to the inner nature, but more properly a supernatural gift of God, since it is the highest of all inner phenomena, placed above all arbitrary will of men, and pro-
claims itself to be a property of our self-subsis-
tent, eternal essence. We discern (ahnen) in it a spark of the divine spirit, for God in his rela-
tion to nature is first to be discerned by us in our own nature. We call this the inner divine revelation.”

Through the mockery of meaning which this passage presents, we discover what may be con-
sidered as a final account of the words “faith,” “presentiment,” and consequently of their equivalent, “consciousness”; namely, that they denote a supernatural faculty belonging to the human mind, which assures us of the truths of religion. Should any one holding the doctrine of Calvin respecting the natural inability of man to apprehend the truths of religion as such, maintain that, through special grace, he has supernatural assurance of those truths, we might easily believe him to understand himself and to think what he says; but if one discussing the subject, as a common man with com-

* Lehrbuch der christlichen Dogmatik, I. 20, 21.
natural assurance of any truth whatever, the case may be regarded as one of those the symptoms of which are not likely to be allayed by reasoning. Non

"Sunt verba et voces, quibus hunc lenire dolorem Possis."

According to De Wette, what are represented in history as revelations, so far as they have any title to that character, are manifestations of "the inner divine revelation," made by inspired individuals (Begeisterte), who are messengers of God. But such revelations have all been mixed with error, and what those individuals have taught is to be subjected to the test of the "inner divine revelation," and has no authority but what it derives from its accordance with it.* The connection between faith and historical Christianity consists in the fact, that the influence and spirit of those truths which are internally perceived by faith were developed in Christ, the pattern or model man, who founded a community, to which he transmitted that influence and spirit, and in which they have continued to be developed. His history is properly no object of religious faith. No new warranty of those truths is given by their hav-
ing been taught by him. The earlier Christians did not believe them for this reason.*

* Speaking of the earliest times of Christianity, he says: "The warranty of these truths did not consist in their having been taught by Christ; for how seldom does the Apostle Paul appeal to the declarations of Christ. . . . . A properly historical knowledge and examination of what Christ may have taught belonged not at all to the conditions of the original Christian faith." The last sentence is distinguished as emphatic by the mode of printing in the original. See the article by De Wette, in the Theol. Studien und Kritiken, pp. 143, 144.

There are, according to De Wette, two things to be considered respecting Christ’s teaching as recorded in the Gospels, — one, whether it is truly reported, the other, whether considered in itself it is true; whether it "authenticates itself to the pious spirit as divine revelation." The latter consideration is wholly independent of the former. The truth contained in his teaching as reported, "whether Jesus taught it or not, carries its validity with it. Is the unity and holiness of God more true because Jesus proclaimed it?* By no means. His name can as little add anything to the truth of this conviction* as take anything from it; and had he denied it, we should not believe him." — Ueber Religion und Theologie, 2d ed., p. 177.

According to De Wette, our Saviour taught the unity and holiness of God, and these doctrines are to be received because they "authenticate themselves to the pious spirit." According to later and more advanced philosophers of the German school, he taught, or should have taught, pantheism, the doctrines of Spinoza or of Hegel, doctrines which commend themselves more effectually to the pious consciousness. If indeed he had anticipated Spinoza, Schleiermacher might have transferred to him the famous eulogy (to be hereafter noticed) which he bestows on the latter.

* It becomes necessary to observe, that here and elsewhere the translator is not responsible for the want of grammar, or the misuse of language.
The outline of his history is true; but, as regards the accounts in the Gospels, there is much that is questionable, when critically examined. These accounts are to be regarded morally and spiritually, rather than in their literal meaning. They are to be viewed as symbolical of the *ideal* in religion, by which De Wette means the truths of religion as recognized by consciousness. Thus the accounts may have ideal truth without historical reality, and, apart from all inquiry into their authenticity, may serve for spiritual edification. The ascription of a symbolical character to the Gospel history is a characteristic of the speculations of De Wette, borrowed from Kant; and, in adopting and applying this principle, he was one of the theologians who prepared the way for the extravagances of Strauss.

De Wette says, in a passage already quoted:—

"Is the unity and holiness of God more true because Jesus proclaimed it? By no means." This assertion can have no bearing on the point which he is endeavoring to maintain, till it is converted into a general proposition, as follows:—The truths of religion are not more true because they were taught by Christ. One may add, with De Wette, Certainly not; — that is, he may do so if he is able to connect any
REASONING with the assumption of making a truth
more true. But this assumption is not what is
needed to sustain the statement unless the writer
is endeavoring to maintain. A very different
state of things.
It is true that the mere evidence of
the science of the matter itself, of the facts
of religion, can be admitted by a resolution from
that. It must be maintained that we are al-
ready fully possessed of evidence which, being
considerable in itself, undermines the value of all
other. Yet the minute subjects I have adverted
at, and truth is not more true because it was
taught by Christ has been current; though I
do not believe to have seen a full forth by an
English writer of any note.

On what ground then did these theorists
assert that their doctrines were to be called
Christianity? — for they insisted on retaining
that name. It was this: — according to them,
their doctrines were the teachings of "the inner
divine revelation": and with these teachings the
doctrines of Christ, so far as they can
be ascertained, may be considered as coincident.
I say, so far as they can be ascertained; for
we are told, that "one finds himself entangled
in great difficulties in attempting to ascertain
the true doctrine of Jesus from the Gospels":
that "it is very differently and ambiguously re-
ported by the Evangelists"; that, "according to John, it was not the same as according to the first three Evangelists"; — and that, in regard to his history as given in the Gospels, there are similar difficulties; that "we find in it many contradictions, chasms, enigmas, and mysteries"; that "but few at the present day can receive the miracles as such, and that there is great difficulty in separating the miraculous aspect [of a relation] from the proper fact [which was the foundation of it], and in comprehending how the Apostles should have seen miracles where there were none";* that, "in sum, these pretended contemporary relations are very far from approving themselves as such by their internal character; and that they trans-

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* I leave this sentence standing as translated from the first edition of De Wette's work (page 151), which was published in 1815, not having the second, which appeared in 1821, at hand when I first wrote. In the second edition it reads thus: — "There are many of the marvels (Wunder) related by them [the Evangelists], that but few now-a-days can receive as pure historical facts, and there is great difficulty in one's forming for himself a living, original view of them (eine lebendige ursprüngliche Ansicht davon)." The words relating to the Apostles are omitted. It is apparent that in the earlier written of the two sentences the word Wunder denotes a miracle, in the later written, a marvel, corresponding to the ambiguous meaning of the word before pointed out. A comparison of them together, likewise illustrates the gradual progress from less to more open scepticism which characterized the theology of the times.
mit to us the history of Jesus in a form in which we cannot readily receive it."

Such was the relation of the new theology to Christianity. — a relation which afforded no reasonable, nor even intelligible, motive for assuming its name, or for representing the doctrines taught by that theology as coincident with those of Christ. But the absurdity of calling the new theory by the name of Christianity did not stop here. It was further pretended, that this theory alone furnished the internal evidence of our religion in the testimony of consciousness, and that this was the only evidence on which it could rest. But this pretense of placing Christianity on unassailable ground, upon what was falsely called its internal evidence. — this theory, that the facts which it reveals are directly perceived by the mind, — was utterly inconsistent with any belief in Christianity as a revelation from God. The language of religion has been so abused by the writers of this school, that it may be worth while to say that I use those words in their customary and proper sense. No rational man can suppose that God has miraculously revealed facts which the very constitution of our nature enables us directly to perceive.

SCHOOL OF INFIDELITY.

Some of the earlier English Deistical writers (Lord Herbert may be cited as an example), though repelled from Christianity by the errors which in their day were incorporated in the representations given of it, still maintained doctrines which are essentially truths of religion, and consequently thus far coincident with the teaching of Christ. Had this been the case with the infidel theologians of Germany, there might have seemed to be some pretext for calling their systems by the name of Christianity. But such was not the case. Their doctrines on the most important subjects, the doctrines maintained by the most noted of their number, were not in accordance with, but in opposition to, the truths taught us by God through Christ.

If there be any fact of which we are assured by revelation, it is that of man’s capacity of attaining an immortal existence. “I am the resurrection and eternal life,” * said our Saviour; “whoever believes in me, though he die, shall live.” On this truth the whole fabric of Christianity rests. The doctrine of immortality was the foundation of all that he taught his disci-

* Ἰωάν, — which cannot properly be expressed in English, but by the terms “eternal life,” or “eternal blessedness.”
ples, of all his presentations of duty, his exhortations, his encouragements, and his warnings. He draws no motives from merely earthly considerations. He does not speak as a merely human teacher. There is a single passage which may seem, at first sight, to form an exception to these remarks; but its seeming, not, I think, real incongruity, only serves to illustrate more strongly the essential, distinguishing character of his teaching.* Without the belief of this doctrine there can be no religion; — for

* I refer to the passage, Luke xiv. 7-11, in which our Lord directs a guest to take the lowest seat at an entertainment, that when his inviter comes he may be told by him to go up higher, and may thus be honored in the presence of the other guests. This is not, I conceive, a literal direction. It is called by the Evangelist a "parable"; and I am not aware that that name was ever applied to a simple precept or maxim of conduct to be understood literally. So to use it would be contrary to its etymology, which implies a comparison.

The occasion and meaning of this parable may be thus explained. Like many other parables of our Lord, it referred to, and was apparently suggested by, something immediately present. The Pharisees and Teachers of the Law were, doubtless, those who, after their fashion, chose out the higher places at table. They likewise considered themselves as being, through their sanctity, entitled to the highest places in the kingdom of Heaven. The blessings of this kingdom are often spoken of under the figure of a feast, as they are in this chapter, in the fifteenth verse and what follows it. It was against the peculiar claim to those blessings which they thought themselves to possess, that the parable was, as I conceive, directed, — against their arrogance and presumption.
what can any truths of religion, any truths relating to the eternal and the unseen, concern the feelings and the conduct of beings whose existence is limited to a few years in this world of the senses?

What, then, was the doctrine of the new theology on this subject? De Wette, in his work "On Religion and Theology," treats of the soul and of "its immortality, or more correctly," as he says, "its eternity," — an eternity, as he explains himself, having equal relation to the past and the future. Its nature can be apprehended only by the consciousness, by "presentiment" and "faith," not by the understanding. So apprehended, it appears free from all relations to time and space, it "presents a living point of the eternal being." If he understood himself, and I understand him, he teaches that eternity is an essential attribute of the soul. The importance of conceiving of it as having no relation to time and space is strongly insisted upon, though it is not explained what meaning this can have, except that it does not exist anywhere, or during any time. Forgetting his own precept, that the doctrine of faith must contain nothing metaphysical, or at least only so much as is necessary for its clear explanation, he involves the subject in the gross ob-
curity of German transcendental philosophy. "The doctrine of Kant," he says, "concerning the subjectivity of the forms of time and space, is of immeasurable importance for the clear view of religion." This alone can free us from doubts concerning the eternity of the soul.

But, upon emerging from this darkness, we find the propositions which concern this fundamental truth of religion plainly expressed, or rather, I should say, with so much plainness that their bearing is quite intelligible.

"The idea of a continuance after death," he says, "is very common," but "death destroys our temporal and local existence, and after it, therefore, our eternal being must pass out of space and time." "We must not imagine that after death we shall commence a new period of existence like the present, and still less, that we shall have a like, though more noble and splendid, dwelling-place." "If we speak of the continuance of the soul after death in time and space, we are compelled to inquire after its preëxistence. For an existence a parte post supposes an existence a parte ante; and the latter presents even more difficulties than the former. Did we exist before birth, why have we no remembrance of it? And, if no consciousness of this state remain to us, how will
a consciousness of our present earthly life remain to us after death? And yet this is precisely what the most of men are concerned about. They wish to take with them their consciousness, their remembrance of this life into the other. The pious man who has a clear understanding of his faith . . . . . can only laugh at the solicitude about the consciousness, as we should laugh at the child who should be afraid that when grown up it could no longer play with dolls.” “In death we shall lose this consciousness, which is only the growth of the world of the senses, and is connected with it, and shall receive instead a higher consciousness, of which we have now no conception.” “The idea of the immortality of the soul should as little serve for indicating to us in the prospect a compensation for this life when we are obliged to quit it, as for filling us with superstitious hopes concerning a much happier life hereafter; . . . . it should teach us to live here every moment in eternity, and to think and conduct ourselves worthily of it. And to that end we should not direct a curious or longing glance to what may await us after death, but, fixing our eyes steadily on death and on our perishable lot, and going forward to meet it calmly, find already here the eternal and un-
changeable, namely, in our own breasts, in the higher worth of our spiritual essence." *

The concluding sentences of this extract afford a specimen of a common characteristic of writers of this class,—an attempt to connect the nobler feelings which true religion inspires with the doctrines that they have substituted in its place,—a sickly glimmering of sentiment that shows amid the surrounding darkness like the phosphoric light generated by corruption.

Throughout the speculations of the new theology, as in what we have just quoted, we find the conception of the eternity of the soul disconnected from the belief of the personal immortality of individual men,—an eternity in which the soul has undergone and will undergo a succession of essential changes. There has been current both in ancient and in modern times a vague notion that the same soul may pass through different states of existence, losing its consciousness and acquiring a new one at each transition, and thus form a succession of individuals, each with a distinct personality. But, in maintaining this doctrine, there has been no attempt to answer the question, What constitutes it the same soul? Till this ques-

tion is answered, the doctrine is only a confusion of words without meaning.

The soul of a man is the man himself. It is the feeling, thinking, conscious being. Whatever may be affirmed of an individual as a perceptive, intelligent, conscious being may be affirmed of his soul,—and nothing else. To maintain that the same soul may constitute a different individual, is equivalent to maintaining that an individual remaining the same may become another individual. It is possible, however, as we have seen, for one to form an imagination, though not a rational conception, of his soul as existing separate from himself. Proceeding, therefore, on this imagination, we may ask, What personal interest can any one have in the future fate of this soul, which is not himself?

Such was the teaching of the new theology in opposition to that truth which it most concerns men to believe. The pretended religion of consciousness, of the feelings, and of "faith," tended directly to the destruction of all rational belief in religion, and of all true religious feeling and principle. Its tendency was obvious from the first, and soon became clearly developed in its workings. It passed, by scarcely sensible degradations, into the grossest forms of
irreligion. In its earliest stages it connected itself with attacks on the credibility of the Gospels, and with the denial of the possibility of miracles. It even allied itself with the pantheism of Spinoza, and of the later German metaphysicians, the successors of Kant. Still talking about Christianity, and still claiming to be a sort of religion, it made some show of itself in the works of such writers as Strauss;—till at last this school of speculation has arrived at its final result in the abnegation of all religious principle, and the contempt of morality, which are the boast of many of those who form the party calling itself "Young Germany."

The character of the new theology made itself manifest in its effects on the popular literature of Germany contemporary with it. Goethe was then its acknowledged head. His ideas of religion, as he professes in his autobiography, were derived essentially from the system of Spinoza, of whom early in life he was, as he says, "the enthusiastic disciple, and the most decided worshipper."* He professed himself to be a believer in the immortality of the soul;—in what sense of those words we

* Aus meinem Leben, Book XIV.
shall immediately see. I doubt much that in his writings one can find an unequivocal recog-
nition of the truth of that doctrine in any sense whatever; but his opinions are to be gathered
from some records of his conversation preserved by Falk and Eckermann. According to Falk,
on the day of Wieland's funeral, "there was a tone of solemnity in Goethe which one rarely
witnessed"; and "our conversation on this oc-
casion turned on topics out of the sphere of the
senses, which he generally avoided, if he did not
regard them with contempt." Wieland's soul
he conceived to be possessed of too high powers
ever to perish. He gave his theory of souls,
probably, I think, improvised for his admiring
listener. Borrowing a term from Leibnitz, as
one adapted to express the most simple form of
being, he represented all souls as "monads,"
which monads, he taught, are the animating
and formative principles of all that exists.
There are monads of the sun and of the stars.
"I should be little surprised," said Goethe, "if
thousands of years hence I should meet with
this Wieland as the monad of a world, as a star
of the first magnitude." The monads are con-
stantly transmigrating. "I am certain," he
continued, "that as you see me here I have ex-
isted a thousand times already, and I have good
hope of coming back a thousand times more.” The conception of the soul's retaining its personality seems to be here excluded; though Goethe had said before, that “how much or how little of its personality* is worthy to endure, is a question and a point to be left to God.” Of the monads some are powerful, and form the “monads of worlds, souls of worlds”; others are weak, such as “monads of ants, souls of ants.” “The more powerful draw into their sphere all that approaches them,” — including weaker monads, — “and convert it into something appertaining to themselves, as into a human body, a plant, an animal, or, still higher, into a star.” Inferior monads thus absorbed become monads of parts of the body formed, subject to the chief monad. Thus there are monads of the hands and fingers, which in playing on the piano-forte are compelled to labor for the gratification of the chief monad, not their own. The forms in which the monads clothe themselves are often but imperfectly developed, and may be called larvæ. Such are the forms of the

* Persönlichkeit; — not “individual existence,” as rendered by Mrs. Austin; — but the alteration is unimportant as regards the expression of any meaning; for it is as much without meaning to speak of a partial preservation of individual existence, as to speak of personality as being partially retained.
lower animals. "The annihilation of a monad is not to be thought of; but the danger of its being intercepted by a more powerful, but at the same time a meaner monad, is a serious consideration,"—an apprehension which, as Goethe says, his observation of nature, on which his whole speculation is professedly founded, could not enable him entirely to put aside. While thus speaking, he was interrupted by the repeated barking of a dog in the street. He flew to the window, and called out:—"Take what shape you will, larva, you shall not master me!"*

This discourse of Goethe on the immortality of the soul was delivered when he was in a solemn and philosophical mood. The same cannot be said of another passage of his conversation preserved by Eckermann. This latter was occasioned by some mention of Tiedge's Urania, a religious poem. "I have had to suffer," he said, "not a little from Tiedge's Urania; for there was a time when nothing else was sung or declaimed. Wherever you went,

* The lot to which the weaker monads or souls are exposed may remind one of Pope's description of some "vile straw that 's blown about the streets";—

"now loose, now fast,
And carried off in some dog's tail at last."
you found the Urania upon every table. The Urania and immortality were the topics of every conversation. I would by no means dispense with the happiness of believing in a future continuance of being; nay, I would say with Lorenzo de’ Medici, that all those are dead even for this life who hope for no other; but such incomprehensible things lie too far off to become an object of daily consideration and of speculation which confounds us. . . . . I found stupid women, who were proud of believing in immortality with Tiedje; and I was obliged to submit to be examined by many of them on this point in a very conceited manner. But I scandalized them by saying I could be well content, that after the close of this life we should be blessed with another, but I would beg not to have there for companions any who had believed in it here. For in that case, what vexation would await me! The pious would come round me and say, Were we not in the right? Did we not predict it? Has it not happened? And so there too I should be bored without end. — It is for the higher classes, and especially for women of quality, who have nothing to do, to busy themselves with ideas of immortality. But an able man, who thinks that there is something to be done here, and who, there-
fore, has every day to strive, to fight, and to work, leaves the future world to itself, and is active and useful in the present. Ideas of immortality, moreover, are for such as have not attained the best fortune here; and I would wager that if the good Tiedge had had better luck, he would have had better thoughts.”

The loose, disjointed talk of the passages I have quoted, the irreligious flippancy of the last, the ignorance or disregard of the actual condition of mankind, few of whom “attain the best fortune here,” and the insensibility to the character and wants of all who aim at something better than leading an animal and worldly life, were characteristic of Goethe, and through him infected that literature of which he was for a long time the central orb. It was a literature suited to the low state of society by which it was produced and admired, and to the wants and tastes of a people to whom any form of intellectual refinement in their own language was a novelty. It was a literature from which the influence of religion was excluded. We may hardly at once comprehend how much is expressed by those words. But

with the conceptions derived from religion, as affecting the heart or the imagination, regarded either as true, or as what may be true, are connected all that gives nobleness and moral beauty to the character of man,—all that is at once earnest, genuine, and disinterested in his affections toward his fellow-men,—the sentiments which have their origin in his spiritual nature, and the motives which cannot be resolved into natural impulses, or modifications of selfishness. To one who has withdrawn himself from the influence of religion, the spiritual world is annihilated. Infinity and eternity become of no concern to him. His view is contracted to what lies about him in this world. All that is venerable and holy disappears; and the substitute offered for it is what has been called "Hero Worship." Nothing true to our higher nature was to be expected from the literature which excluded all consideration of our higher nature. It was of the earth, earthy.

The influence of Goethe and of the literature to which he gave its tone may be inferred from the constituents of his character. He was a thoroughly selfish man; seeking his own gratifications, and caring for others only as his followers, admirers, or patrons, as those who might in some way contribute to his celebrity,
rank, or means of self-indulgence. He had, as appears from his autobiography, little feeling even for such as had been most foolishly or most improperly connected with him, except so far as the expression of their sufferings might annoy him. He was an Epicurean, not such as we may imagine Atticus, the friend of Cicero, or Epicurus himself in his little garden at Athens, but according to the less refined habits of a small German court. His admirer, Falk, tells us that he commonly avoided all conversation respecting “super-sensible” topics, “perfectly,” as Falk believed, “on principle, since, conformably to his natural inclinations, he preferred to confine himself to the present and to the lovely appearances which art and nature afford to the eyes and the contemplation in spheres which are accessible to us.”

Goethe’s view was confined to this world, and to its apparent interests. He did not regard men as spiritual beings. With such a character one cannot estimate nor understand what is morally excellent in others, nor the capacity of such excellence. He cannot be wise in his knowledge of mankind, nor exercise a beneficial influence on his readers. He sees only a small part of human nature, and that the inferior part of it. He can neither deline-
ate it truly as it exists, nor contribute to its advancement. Thus it is that the personages whom Goethe introduces into his works of fiction have no power over the sympathy of an honest mind. No one out of the class which he has influenced can feel an interest in the characters or the fate of Werther, or Wilhelm Meister, or Faust. His personages do not appear as real, living beings, acting and speaking from natural motives, but as theatrical puppets moved by wires, whose voice is at once recognized as that of the prompter. The philosophy of life (as it has been called), which runs through his works, is baseless and vague; often put forth with an oracular obscurity, which serves at once to impose on a credulous worshipper, and to veil from others what might appear to them as commonplaces, or niaiseries. In his writings there is no expression of genuine religious principle or sentiment. They contain much which is irreverent and profane; though what bears this character is marked more by a pagan deadness of feeling, than by a spirit of hostility to religion. They recommend, directly or indirectly, nothing pure or high in morals, but are worldly, licentious, and indecent, often addressed to the coarser part of man’s nature, dealing with common notions of
duty as belonging to a "sickly religiousness" (kränkliche Religiosität), and thus preparing
the way, at least, for that school which has signalized itself by teaching the doctrine of the
"Emancipation of the Flesh," * — a doctrine the character of which is indicated by its name.

* See in the Conversations-Lexikon der Gegenwart (1838) the article entitled Emancipation des Fleisches. By those who know the character of the writings of Henri Heine, the spirit of this article may be judged of from a remark of its writer, that "Heine was the first who decidedly uttered the Gospel of the Emancipation of the Flesh."

In a book ("Uncle Tom's Cabin"), which, to the honor of our community, has been read by many thousands among us, it is said: — "The gift to appreciate and the sense to feel the finer shades and relations of moral things often seems an attribute [seem to be attributes] of those whose whole life shows a careless disregard of them. Hence, Moore, Byron, Goethe, often speak words more wisely descriptive of the true religious sentiment, than another man whose whole life is governed by it." — On Moore and Byron I have no remark to make. In minds of a higher order, however bewildered or corrupted, the recognition of the higher nature of man is likely to show itself in some form or other; but I am not aware of any such manifestations in the writings of Goethe; — of any thing affecting or elevating as an expression of religious or moral sentiment. There is in his Faust what his admirers have called a "pregnant," "a sublime and celebrated passage," though at the same time describing it as altogether of a "pantheistical tendency and character," * in which Goethe is supposed by them to express his own sentiments concerning the belief of a God. It is put into the mouth of Faust, as addressed by him to the poor, simple girl whom he had debauched through the instigation of

His countrymen have complained of Goethe, that, in the fearful struggle in which Europe was engaged during his lifetime, he had no feeling for Germany, no patriotism; that his voice was not heard. But the complaint should have been expressed in more general terms. His indifference to the condition of Germany was only a branch of his indifference to the

Mephistopheles. Its doctrine is incongruous, being, first, that the name of God may be given to the incomprehensible power that surrounds us, and then that it may be given to the feeling which the contemplation of this power produces: —

"Fill thy heart with it, large as it is,
And when thou art wholly blest in the feeling,
Then name it what thou wilt,
Name it happiness, heart, love, God.
I have no name for it,
Feeling is all."

Faust had just before, in a discourse with Mephistopheles, expressed his feeling toward the unhappy woman in a very coarse manner: —

"Namne nicht das schöne Weib!
Bring' die Begier zu ihrem süßen Leib
Nicht wieder vor die halb verrückten Sinnen!"

In the line, "Name it happiness, heart, love, God," instead of "love," another word is required to preserve consistency of meaning, — a word for which love is sometimes used as synonymous by writers of this class.

In speaking of the opposite spirit with which different kinds of literature may be imbued, the book I have mentioned will furnish an example. One capable of estimating its merit will dwell little
condition of the world, so long as it did not affect him. During the sack of Weimar, the French commander had a guard placed round his house.*

Upon some occasion, when Falk was discoursing of Goethe, as "floating with sublime indifference above the sport of the world," Herder interrupted him with a speech, which he has recorded, apparently without comprehend-

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on its imperfections and oversights, though he may regret that toward the conclusion it is marred by incidents and characters such as belong to an ordinary novel, and not to the real picture of actual life which is presented in far the greater part of the narrative. It is a work of uncommon power: but its power, though we may admire the genius shown in it, rests on the solid foundation of moral truth. The mind of the writer is guided by that strong sense of right and wrong which invigorates the intellect scarcely less than the affections. Her book is true to human nature in the manifold phases of it which she brings before us, and true in its presentation of human duties in their relation to the whole of man's existence,—true, to use her own words, to "a life which, once believed in, stands as a solemn, significant figure before the otherwise unmeaning ciphers of time." It belongs to a very different class of literature from any thing produced in the school of Goethe, — to one far nobler and more perceptive.

* The same year (1800), induced by his "respect for the moral law of marriage," as one of his biographers says, he married in his fifty-seventh year a woman who had long been his mistress; and, during the interval between the sack of Weimar and the expulsion of Bonaparte from Germany, he gave his time to the study of natural science, especially to his work on optics, which was to overturn the theory of Newton, and to the composition of the most licentious of his novels, his "Elective Affinities."
ing its truth or its terrible severity: — "This is all very well. But whether a man should here mount to that region where pictured and real sufferings become the same to him, where he ceases to be a man, though not to be an artist, where the light only shines, but neither warms nor quickens, and whether these maxims, if received, would not produce a general depravation of character, — this is another question." He compares such men to Nero, who played on the lyre after setting fire to Rome, regarding it as a splendid picture, and pleased himself with tasteful designs for rebuilding it. "What did it concern Nero’s architect that the tears of women and children were flowing in the burning city? That is an old story. . . . . We are artists, gods, Neros." *

The philosophy of Germany gave still another character to the popular literature of Germany. It transferred to it its obscurity. In reading many works, equally in one department as the other, a mist seems to gather over our eyes. We discern strange appearances, but not with a distinct outline. Of this Goethe is again a prominent example. It was his pleasure to be regarded as a mysterious writer, full

* Falk’s Goethe, pp. 142 – 144.
of hidden meanings. He addressed the "presentiment" rather than the understanding of his readers. Of Wilhelm Meister it is said by an admirer: — "What Goethe intended in it remains a mystery. . . . . Nevertheless Meister must ever be considered one of Goethe's most admirable works, for in that and in Faust are combined all the universality of his genius." * Of Faust it is said: — "The mysterious depth of this great poem, in which the world is reflected, gave occasion to many explanations differing from one another, and to the most opposite views; and both mysticism and the contrary doctrine of Hegel were believed to be reproduced in it." † "Faust," said Goethe himself, "is altogether something incommensurable, and all attempts to bring it nearer to the understanding are vain. . . . .". But this very obscurity excites men, and they labor upon it, as upon all insolvable problems." ‡ "We must not," says one of his reviewers, "look for Goethe's life in his autobiography. His entire life is in his works. They are so many different reflexes of different states of his own outer and inner being. . . . . He might have revealed

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* Characteristics of Goethe, III. 233, 234.
† Conversations-Lexikon (1834), Art. Göthe.
‡ Eckermann, II. 170.
himself more distinctly; but mystery was with him the object of a sort of reverence, or the result of a system." * His friend, Von Müller, in a eulogy delivered upon him after his death, says: — "From his love of secrecy [in common affairs] proceeded his not less ruling inclination to the enigmatical, which not unfrequently is an obstacle to the enjoyment of his writings. This inclination formed itself in him into deliberate maxims. I have heard him often maintain, that a work of art, especially a poem, which leaves nothing to divine, is not a true work, is nothing thoroughly worthy; that its highest purpose ever is to rouse to reflection; and that it can become truly a favorite with the spectator or reader only when it forces him to interpret it according to his own mode of thinking, and, as it were, to complete and make it over again." †

Hence Goethe has been called "the most suggestive of writers." A suggestive writer is one who presents some important truth in a clear light, which is reflected from other truths connected with it, and brings them into view; not one who perplexes his readers by involving them in attempts to solve his meaning, or to de-

* Characteristics of Goethe, III. 40.
† Goethe in seiner ethischen Eigenthümlichkeit (1832), p. 19.
termine whether he has any. Suggestions give
light, not darkness. A suggestive writer con-
ducts us to a point of view from which we can
see what was before hidden from us, without its
being expressly pointed out by him. A writer
who has a strong tendency to the enigmatical
carries us upon a barren heath where different
footpaths present themselves, and suggests that
one or other may lead us right. The affectation
of profundity is a common disguise of pov-
erty or want of thought.

Among the evils of which the German school
of speculation has been at once the sign and the
cause, unintelligible writing, if not one of the
greatest, has been one of the most obvious.
We find it in every form,—in professed works
of disquisition, and in professed works of senti-
ment, pervading masses of metaphysics, and
spreading an uncertain light over immoral nov-
els. This unmeaning use of language indi-
cates and corresponds to great confusion of
thought. It is one result of the want of settled
principles, and of the anarchical and ever-vary-
ing state of opinion, which are characteristics
of our times. It affords no ready means of
conviction; for it is hard to convince of error
those who do not understand themselves, who
are without any definite purpose but a negative
or destructive one, who have no distinct and fixed meaning, but whose pretended meaning disappears in proportion as you give an intelligible sense to the words which they use. Perspicuity is the great enemy of error. Commonly, a false opinion, when stated in plain words, either reveals its character, or can easily be shown to be what it is. When one is bewildered by obscurity of style, there is a strong presumption against the value of any meaning that may be put upon the words. He who writes what is worth reading must think clearly; and it is a rare case that he who thinks clearly wants the ability to express himself intelligibly.

From a literature lying out of the light of religion, all the sources of the highest beauty and interest were excluded; all those belonging to our spiritual and more excellent nature. It was necessarily conversant with meaner objects, with the palpable and familiar things of vulgar life, with the ordinary passions of men, to which there is often an attempt to give interest by a strong seasoning of licentiousness, or by exaggeration and extravagance, or by exhibiting them in combinations which have no counterpart in nature. Hence followed a general depravation of taste, a confinement of its sphere,
a belittling of its character. The terms of praise, terms which have passed into our own language, became the words "æsthetic" and "artistic," neither of them expressive of moral feeling, the first being used to signify very little or nothing more than "agreeable as a work of art," and the other denoting only the skill of the artist. A person very intimately connected with Goethe once remarked, that "he was not an artist; for he was conscious of moral preferences." The consequent deficiencies and offences in German literature have been such, that, though there are many translations from it into our own language, there are but few works which have secured the permanent regard of English readers. *

* To attempt to illustrate these remarks by exemplifications would lead us much too far; but I am induced to give one illustration, which is to be found in the last chapter of the third edition of Strauss's noted work (it is omitted in the fourth edition), — especially as the passage has a bearing on various topics which have been adverted to. Strauss, after laboring to show that there is very little to be credited in the history of our Lord, as all that is miraculous is to be unhesitatingly rejected, and to reduce him to little more than a mythical or allegorical personage, takes in this concluding chapter a new position, as being in some sort a Christian, and asserts that Christ, as the founder of Christianity, ranks above the other founders of different religions. Such is the fact, he says, so far as regards the past; but whether this superiority will continue is another question. In the discussion of it, which it
Thus we have seen something of the character and effects of German theology, connected as it was with German speculation on all related subjects. I use the epithet not invidiously, but because all its most distinguishing peculiarities, in matter and form, were fully developed in Germany, were not received there from abroad, but have made their way thence elsewhere. This they continue to do, even while they are dying out on their native soil, and leaving only their calamitous effects behind. I have spoken particularly of De Wette, not from any intellectual superiority on his part, but because he is a favorable specimen of a large class of German theologians, and one of those best known out of Germany. But, excepting out of Germany, there are now, I believe, very few

is not worth while to attempt to make intelligible. Strauss cites examples of great men,—such as Cesar and Bonaparte,—the earlier of whom in point of time have been excelled by the latter, not through any superiority of individual qualities, but because their successors lived in a more advanced state of the world. Thus Shakspeare stands higher than Homer or Sophocles because he wrought upon a more developed consciousness of humanity, and had to solve deeper, or, at least, more complicated problems; —as again, in this same respect, Goethe is above Shakspeare. "—Shakspeare and Goethe! The comparison is between Prospero, with his wand of power, controlling the spirits of the elements, and Mephistopheles drawing infernal wine by boring holes in a wooden table with a gimlet.
SCHOOL OF INFIDELITY.

who would regard his name as any authority, or consult his works for guidance in regard to the character of religion.

I shall now illustrate this theology still further from the most celebrated and popular work of one who was in his day, perhaps, the most distinguished of its leaders, though in the interval since his death, in 1834, his celebrity and influence among his countrymen have declined as rapidly as De Wette's. I mean SCHLEIERMACHER.

It is now fifty-three years since Schleiermacher first published his "Discourses on Religion." * In a tone of pretension very foreign

* ""Ueber die Religion." — This work was originally published in 1799, when the author was thirty years old. In 1806, a second edition appeared, in the Dedication of which the author professes to have revised it throughout, for the purpose, among others, of removing all occasion for the gross misunderstandings to which it had been exposed, causing him to be represented as a fanatic by infidels, and an unbeliever by bigots. In 1821, a third edition was published, again revised, with many changes of expression, and accompanied with copious notes, to explain more fully the writer's opinions. And in 1831, three years before his death, a fourth edition was issued, being that which I use. In the Preface to the third edition (which is retained, without any additional notice, in the fourth), he again refers to "the numerous and in part very wonderful misconceptions" of his meaning, and to the consequent
from the common character of intelligent men, he professes to have written it, not "through any determination of his judgment," but through "a divine call," a "heavenly impulse." It is a system of pantheism, wrought up in a highly declamatory style, in which the language often soars beyond meaning, and in which there is scarcely an attempt at what may be called reasoning. Religion, according to him, is the sense of the union of the individual with the universe, with Nature, or, in the language of the sect, with the One and All. It is a feeling; it has nothing to do with belief or action; it is unconnected with morality; their provinces are different; it is independent of the idea of a personal God. The idea of a personal God is pure mythology. And the belief and desire of personal immortality are "wholly irreligious," as being opposed to that

charges of atheism and mysticism which had been brought against him "almost in the same breath." One would think that it must be felt as a great misfortune by a writer earnest to propagate what he thinks the truth concerning religion to be unable to express himself intelligibly, and, in consequence, to be grossly misapprehended, and to be charged with unbelief and fanaticism, with atheism and mysticism.

* See particularly pp. 48, seqq.
† Pp. 53, 54.
‡ Pp. 110, seqq.
§ Pp. 91, seqq.
|| P. 59.
which is the aim of religion, "the annihilation of one's own personality," "the living in the One and All," "the becoming, as far as possible, one with the universe."* The writer whom I have quoted partook of the sacrament on his death-bed, as a Christian. We may have a striking apprehension of the relation in which his system stands to Christianity, if we imagine the words of Jesus struck out from the Gospels, and his teachings substituted in their stead.

Schleiermacher introduces into his work a glowing eulogy on Spinoza. It is an elaborate specimen of his eloquence. "Reverently," he apostrophizes, "offer with me a lock of hair to the manes of the holy, the proscribed Spinoza. Him the high World-spirit pervaded; the infinite was his beginning and end, the universe his only and eternal love; in holy innocence and deep humility he beheld himself mirrored in the eternal world, and saw how he too was its loveliest mirror. Full of religion was he, and full of a holy spirit, and hence he stands alone and unapproached, master in his art, but raised above the profane fraternity, without apprentices and without burghership."†

Cousin, who may be reckoned as belonging to the German school of metaphysicians and theologists, likewise pronounces a panegyric on Spinoza; but it looks pale by the side of Schleiermacher's. I will quote a few sentences:—

"The book of Spinoza, all bristling as it is after the fashion of his time with geometrical formulæ, — so dry and so repulsive in its style, — is at the bottom a mystic hymn, a soaring and longing of the spirit directed toward Him who alone is authorized to say, I AM THAT I AM. . . . . Spinoza is an Indian yogi, a Persian sufi, an enthusiastic monk; and the author whom this pretended atheist most resembles is the unknown author of the 'Imitation of Jesus Christ.'"

* Elsewhere, however, he says that, according to the doctrine of Spinoza, "God can be only a substance, and not a cause, — the perfect being, infinite, necessary, the immutable substance of the universe, and not its producing and creating cause."† This language is very inaccurate; for Spinoza repeats often, that God is the only cause of all things, teaching as a fundamental doctrine that the "substance of

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* Fragments Philosophiques. Œuvres (Bruxelles, 1841), Tom. II, p. 178.
the universe," which alone has an independent existence, produces all finite beings as their immanent cause,—that is, as I shall hereafter explain, produces them from itself. But he also teaches, as we shall likewise see, that this substance, or God, as it is called in his vocabulary, produces them without purpose, having no providence over them. The absurdity of supposing a mystic, devotional hymn, the enthusiastic breathing forth of the spirit, to be addressed to such a being either as Spinoza conceived of, or as Cousin reports him to have conceived of, is, perhaps, not aggravated by representing this hymn as composed in geometrical formulae, whatever may be the meaning of those words. But this mistake is not the only fundamental error respecting the system of Spinoza that appears in the passage from which I have last quoted. Cousin says, that "in Spinoza's philosophy man and nature are only pure phenomena, simple attributes of the only and absolute substance," and repeatedly uses the word "attribute" in a similar manner. But by an "attribute" Spinoza explains himself as meaning that which constitutes the essence of a substance. According to him, the only attributes of the one substance of the universe, his God, which are comprehensible by man, are in-
finite extension and infinite thought. These are not finite things; man and nature are not these attributes, as Cousin asserts. But all finite things are, according to Spinoza, modes of these attributes. Between these modes which constitute finite things, and the attributes which constitute the infinite substance, Spinoza of course makes a wide distinction. Perhaps, however, the doctrine is no more an object of the understanding in its proper form, as it appears in Spinoza, than in that in which it is presented by Cousin. To illustrate the difference between them by a particular example,—according to Cousin, the sun, a finite thing, is, in Spinoza's system, an attribute of God; according to Spinoza himself, it is a mode of infinite extension, which is one attribute of the universal substance; for the other attribute, infinite thought, is out of the question.

Before the time when German speculation began to flourish, Spinoza had been almost forgotten. His works had never been collected, and were separately difficult to be procured. But in the last quarter of the last century his fame began to revive in Germany, it spread rapidly, and his influence on German metaphysics and German infidel theology soon became very great, and generally recognized. Within four
years after Schleiermacher's eulogy, Paulus, another German theologian of about equal note, published the first edition of his collected works (in 1802–3). In the preface to the second volume he says, that "the superstitious and ridiculous horror of the atheism, so called, of Spinoza, was shaken off by his countrymen earlier than by the intelligent elsewhere." To deny the atheism of Spinoza is merely to deny that the word is to be used in its common and established sense, as expressive of disbelief in an intelligent and designing Creator.

In 1830 a writer named Gföörer (I speak of him thus, because, though he has written much, I suppose his name is familiar to very few of my readers) put forth another edition of Spinoza's collected works; and in 1843 another cheap edition, edited by Bruder, was stereotyped at the press of Tauchnitz. Gföörer, in speaking of Spinoza, emulates the lofty tone of Schleiermacher. He says, among other things: — "Should you consider the force of his genius, you may scarce regard him as a man, but as some new nature, which by itself alone effected all which might be effected by the joint efforts of the forces of a thousand mortals. You might equal him to an age; for during a period, now of almost two centuries, what
advance has been made in philosophy, in which he did not lead the way and break the road! or what improvement has there been in theology, which was not derived from his storehouses?" * "In treating sacred history who was more acute, and more free from all the prejudices which his own age not only defended, but madly cherished; so that to this day whatever sound doctrine has been promulgated on this subject appears to have had its source in the writings of Spinoza?" † "Spinoza maintained that the universe, or the eternity of the laws which operate in the world, is God; and this doctrine very many affirm to be most gloomy and horrible, as it seems to be inconsistent with Divine Providence and the special care and love of God for pious men. But let them consider how calm and how cheerful Spinoza always lived. . . . . And in truth nothing can be called gloomy or cheerful except under some particular relation, and it may well be, that what seems dreadful to one may be most agreeable to another who judges the thing differently." ‡

What is said in such passages concerning the atheistic, or, if any one prefer the word, panthe-
istic, doctrine of Spinoza may be offensive to our feelings, but in the present state of opinion it is well they should be written. It is desirable that the nature of the discussion with the later speculatists of Germany and those of the same school elsewhere should be distinctly and generally understood; that it should be made as evident as it has been made, that the question at issue is, whether there is or is not any ground for the existence of religion among men.

Bruder does not profess himself to be so enthusiastic an admirer of Spinoza as some of those whom I have quoted. He mentions the declaration of Lessing, that "there is no other philosophy but the philosophy of Spinoza"; he speaks of his influence on the principal German metaphysicians subsequent to Kant; he quotes at length Schleiermacher's eulogy upon him, and then remarks, that "it is not strange that at the present day, when there is the most eager discussion of philosophical subjects, and of the weightiest questions in politics and literature, the philosophy of Spinoza should be brought forward and cultivated with new ardor as a primary source, and even that particular courses of lectures on his doctrine should be delivered in some of the universities of our coun-
try." "The credit of Spinoza," he says, "began to prevail when, in the beginning of the nineteenth century, Schelling and Hegel at last inclined to many of his opinions, each according to his own system, so that he may be accounted the source of the philosophy of our age."*

Such being the influence of Spinoza on modern German metaphysics and theology, it is necessary to a just conception of them to have some acquaintance with his leading doctrines, and his manner of thinking and writing.

According to Spinoza there is but one substance existing.† All the phenomena of what

† To this substance Spinoza repeatedly ascribes "infinite attributes." In the sixth of the Definitions with which he commences his Ethics, he says: — "By God I understand an absolutely infinite being, that is, a substance consisting of infinite attributes." In the First Part of this work he speaks of all the attributes of God, and uses other expressions implying more than a duality of attributes. But one would not in consequence be justified in stating that the ascription of infinite attributes to the one substance of the universe made a part of Spinoza's system. His language appears to be used either through confusion of mind, or in accommodation to the common belief concerning the attributes of God, whose name he has transferred to the infinite substance. Whatever he may have asserted in general terms, Spinoza expressly states that but two attributes of this substance can be known by man, — one, infinite extension (extension being considered by him as the essence of matter), and the other, infinite thought (thought being considered by him as the essence of all thinking beings).
we call the created universe — that is, all finite beings, with their properties, acts, and affec-
tions; with their moral qualities, good or bad; with their joys and sufferings, — are but modes
or modifications of the attributes of this sole substance, or, in other words, of this substance
itself. This substance has existed without begin-
ing. It could be produced by no other; for one substance cannot produce another; —
creation is impossible.* It is "the immanent
cause of all things, not a transitive cause." †
These terms are technical, and require explana-
tion. An immanent cause is that which produ-
ces effects only in or upon itself. A transitive
cause is that which passes out of itself, as it
were, to produce, or to act on, something else.‡

These two attributes only are specified in his Ethics; the consider-
eration of these alone, with their "modes," enters into his sys-
tem; on these two attributes that system wholly rests, and that
these alone can be known he affirms in his sixty-sixth Letter,
where, after discussing the subject, he says: — "And so I con-
clude that the human mind can attain a knowledge of no attribute
of God except these." — Opp. I. 673, 674, ed. Paulus.

* These principles are stated in the first fifteen Propositions of
the First Part of his Ethics, in which Part he treats of God.
† Ethics P. I. Prop. 18. Opp. II. 54.
‡ "Causa immanens dicitur, quae producit effectum in seipsâ.
. . . . . Causa transiens dicitur, quae producit effectum extra se."
Burgersdicii Institut. Metaphys. The words were in common use
in these senses by the scholastic writers before and after the time
of Spinoza.

29 *
The sole substance of the universe is the God of Spinoza.

To this substance, considered in itself, distinct from the effects produced by it in itself, and as the cause of those effects, he gives the name also of *Natura naturans*, which may be explained by the equivalent term, *causal Nature*; while to the modifications produced by it in itself, that is, to the phenomena of the universe, he gives the name of *Natura naturata*, for which we may substitute *phenomenal Nature*.

To this substance considered in itself, to his *Natura naturans*, that is, to his God, regarded

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* As this is an important point in his theory, I quote the passage at length in which he explains his views:

"Antequam ulterius pergam, hic, quid nobis per Naturam naturantem et quid per Naturam naturatam intelligendum sit, explicare volo, vel potius monere. Nam ex antecedentibus jam constare existimo, nempe, quod per Naturam naturantem nobis intelligendum est id, quod in se est et per se concipitur, sive talia substantiæ attributa, quæ aeternam et infinitam essentiam exprimunt, hoc est, Deus, quatenus, ut causa libera, consideratur. Per Naturam autem intelligo id omne, quod ex necessitate Dei nature, sive uniuscujusque Dei attributorum sequitur, hoc est, omnes Dei attributorum modos, quatenus considerantur, ut res, quæ in Deo sunt et quæ sine Deo nec esse, nec concipi possunt." — Ethices P. I. Prop. 29, Schol., pp. 61, 62.

By *causa libera* Spinoza means nothing more than a cause unconstrained by any other; as he explains in the demonstration of the seventeenth Proposition of the First Part, and in the corollaries to it, pp. 51, 52.
as the cause of all things, he expressly denies both intellect and will, and argues at length against ascribing them to God. "I will show," he says, "that neither intellect nor will belongs to the nature of God." *

"If intellect and will belong to the eternal essence of God," says Spinoza, reasoning against the supposition, "certainly something must be understood by each attribute different from what men commonly mean. For the intellect and will which would constitute the essence of God must differ entirely from our intellect and will; nor could there be any correspondence between them except in name; that is, no other correspondence than exists between the constellation called the Dog, and a dog a barking animal; which I will thus prove." †

The purpose of Spinoza is to prove that we cannot ascribe intellect and will to the Deity in any intelligible sense of the words, in any sense in which we use them, and therefore that it is irrational to ascribe them to the Deity at all. He gives the following as the conclusion of his reasoning: — "Therefore the intellect of God, so far as it is conceived of as constituting the

* "Ostendam, ad Dei naturam neque intellectum, neque voluntatem pertinent." — Ibid. Prop. 17, Schol., p. 59.
† Ibid. p. 53.
divine essence," that is, so far as it is conceived of as an essential attribute of God,* "differs from our intellect both as respects its essence and existence, and can agree with it in nothing but in name, which it was my purpose to prove." It was of course the purpose of Spinoza to prove ultimately the proposition which he had laid down at the commencement of his argument, that "neither intellect nor will belongs to the nature of God."

But though the denial of intellect to the Deity is a fundamental characteristic of the system of Spinoza, there are other positions in his system which seem, at first view, irreconcilable with it. As I have before observed, Spinoza supposes that but two attributes of his God can be known by man, and these are infinite extension and infinite thought. In the Second Part of his Ethics, (in which it is to be noted that he is professedly treating, not of God, but of the human mind,) his first Proposition is: — "Thought is an attribute of God; or God is a thinking thing," res cogitans, — which strange expression should be remarked. He says that God understands or knows himself, seipsum

* In the fourth of his Definitions (Part I.) he says: — "By an attribute I understand that which the intellect perceives concerning a substance as constituting its essence."
He repeatedly speaks, in this Part and elsewhere, of the intellect of God. He says that “God loves himself with infinite intellectual love.”† And what is remarkable, he makes no express attempt to reconcile these apparent contradictions. But the solution which he does afford, without expressly recognizing the contradiction, is altogether consistent with his denying intellect to God, considered as the cause of all things.

This solution I shall first state in my own words, thus: — All nature, the universe considered as an effect, consists only of infinite modes or modifications of the one infinite substance, the God of Spinoza. But whatever may be affirmed of the modes or modifications of any being, taken collectively, may be affirmed of that being itself. *Phenomenal Nature* (Natura naturata) is as truly God as *causal Nature*. Now in the infinite universe there are infinite thought and intellect, and a knowledge or understanding of God (for according to Spinoza, there is nothing else to be known or understood but God ‡); and all this may be predicated of God,

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*Ethices P. II. Prop. 3, Schol., et alibi.
† Ibid. P. V. Prop. 35.
‡ “Intellectus actu finitus, aut actu infinitus, Dei attributa Deique affectiones comprehendere debet et nihil aliud.” — *Ethices P.*
considered, not as a cause, but as *phenomenal Nature*. I shall now quote to this effect the words of Spinoza himself.

"Actual intellect," he says, that is, intellect actually existing,* "whether finite or infinite, as also will, desire, love, &c., must be referred to *phenomenal Nature* (ad Naturam naturatam), not to *causal Nature* (non vero ad naturantem).†

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I. Prop. 30. Spinoza here, as commonly, uses *debet* in the sense of *must*, as implying logical necessity.

I add the forty-seventh Proposition of the Second Part (p. 120):

"Mens humana adequatam habet cognitionem aeternae et infinite essentiae Dei."

* In scholastic language the terms *actual* and *potential* existence are used technically. A being is said to exist *actually* when it really exists; to exist *potentially*, when it does not really exist, but its existence is possible. Thus, for example, the rose lying on the table before me has *actual* existence; the same rose, last winter, had *potential* existence, or, in other words, its existence was *possible*. The term *actual* is expressed in scholastic Latin by *actus*, in *actu*, (existentis being understood,) or *actualis*, and *potential* in a similar manner by *potentiâ*, in *potentiâ*, or *potentialis*. Thus it is said: — "Per essentiam Ens est id quod est, et per existentiam acta est quicquid actu atque extra suas causas est." "Esse potentìâ est posse existere, ut tamen acta non existat."

In a scholium Spinoza remarks that he uses the term *intellectus actu*, that his meaning may be perfectly clear; not because he allows the existence of any potential intellect (*non est quia concede ullam dari intellectum potentìâ*); — that is, he does not allow the possibility of the existence of any intellect in the universe but what does exist.

† Ethices P. I. Prop. 31, p. 62.
This ascribing of intellect to *phenomenal* and not to *causal Nature* is a main point in the system of Spinoza; and from ignorance of it, or inattention to it, I suppose his doctrine concerning God to have been often misunderstood. I shall, therefore, produce other passages to the same effect as that just quoted.

"Will and intellect have the same relation to God as motion and rest, and generally as all natural phenomena (*omnia naturalia*), which are necessarily determined by God to exist and operate in a certain manner. . . . . .

"Will does not more pertain to the nature of God than other natural phenomena, but has the same relation to it as motion and rest, and as all other natural phenomena." *

That is, will and intellect may be affirmed of God only as motion and rest may be affirmed of him; that is, only of God considered as *Natura naturata*, phenomenal Nature.

In the Second Part of his Ethics there are many passages that involve the main idea of the following.

"A knowledge of whatever takes place in the human mind necessarily exists in God, so

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* Ibid. Prop. 32, Coroll. 2, pp. 63, 64.
far as he constitutes the nature of the human mind.” *

Though the expression of the following passage is in some respects obscure, it is clear as regards our present purpose.

“It appears that our mind, considered as intelligent, is an eternal mode of thought, which is limited by another eternal mode of thought; and that again by another, and thus to infinity, so that, altogether, they [that is, human minds, or minds like the human] constitute the eternal and infinite intellect of God.” †

“I think,” he says, in a letter to his disciple De Vries, “that I have clearly and evidently shown that intellect, though infinite, belongs to phenomenal, and not to causal Nature.” §

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† To explain Spinoza’s words, “eternal mode of thought,” we must recur to the fact, that he regards all human minds as modes or modifications of the eternal and infinite attribute of cogitation or intellect which he ascribes to his God, and as partaking of the eternity of that attribute. “Any thing,” he says, “which necessarily follows from the absolute nature of any attribute of God cannot have a determinate duration, but through the same attribute is eternal.” — P. I. Prop. 21, Demonstr.
We have passed far beyond the bounds of meaning; but I must advert to this passage hereafter in another connection.
‡ P. V. Prop. 40, Schol., p. 297.
§ Epist. 27. Opp. I. 524.
There is no doubt, therefore, that Spinoza denies to his God, considered as the cause of all things, both intellect and will. But he also gave the name of God to what we call the created universe, to all finite things regarded collectively, to the modes of the infinite substance produced in it by itself, to nature considered as an effect; and to this he ascribes infinite intellect, not as an attribute of a personal being, but meaning by that term the infinite aggregate of intellect which exists in the totality of finite, thinking beings.

The expositors of Spinoza who regard him as an authority in philosophy and religion have been perplexed by his seemingly opposite assertions concerning God as an intelligent being; but have none of them, I believe, proceeded further in reconciling these assertions than one of the latest of their number, Sigwart, who says: — "The contradictions [contradiction] which some at the present day find in the circumstance, that Spinoza on the one side speaks of a self-knowledge of God, of an idea which God has of his being and its necessary consequences, and on the other side places intellect, even infinite intellect, in the sphere of phenomenal Nature, Natura naturata, are [is]
not altogether insolvable. . . . . But this is
not the place actually to give a solution of it;
the less so, because Spinoza himself affords no
clew for such a solution."* But without aff-
fording any satisfactory, or indeed intelligible,
means of reconciling this contradiction, some
of his expositors (as Sigwart himself) have at-
ttempted to prove that he was not an atheist, by
appealing to his declarations that intellect is
to be ascribed to the substance or being that
he calls God. The solution that I have given
of his apparently contradictory language may
show in what sense these declarations are to be
understood.

As we have already seen,† the doctrine of
Spinoza is, that, in ascribing intellect and will
to the nature of God, we use words without
meaning; that they can express nothing resem-
bling such intellect and will as we are acquaint-
ed with, nothing therefore of which we can
form a conception. In what follows we shall
see that he denies the existence of any intellect
or will in God having relation to his creatures,
any intellect or will about which they can have
any concern.

* Der Spinozismus historisch und philosophisch erläutert (Tü-
bingen, 1839), pp. 127, 128.
† See before, p. 343.
It is the doctrine of Spinoza, that all the phenomena in the universe are the result of an inevitable necessity; of the necessary operation of the laws of the Divine Nature, or, in other words, of causal Nature. Nothing could be otherwise than as it is.* According to him, there is no benevolent purpose in Nature. He denies that his God proposes to himself any purpose, or that there is any plan in the universe.† "Men commonly suppose," he says, "that all things in nature act for some end, like themselves; and even maintain, as indubitable, that God himself directs all things to some certain end."‡ He first undertakes to explain the origin of this prejudice, and then to prove its falsity. "The prejudice," he says, "has become a superstition, and struck its roots deep into men's minds. Hence every one strives earnestly to understand and explain the final causes of all things. But in endeavoring to show that Nature does nothing in vain (that is, nothing but for the use of men), they seem to have shown only that Nature and the Gods are as foolish as men."§ He commences

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* Ethica P. I. Prop. 33, pp. 64 seqq.
‡ Appendix, p. 69.
§ Ibid. p. 70.
his second head by saying: "Not many words are necessary to show, that Nature proposes to itself no end, and that all final causes are nothing but human figments." *

The opinion of those who subject all things to what Spinoza calls "a certain indifferent will of God, and maintain that all things depend on his good pleasure, is less wide from the truth," he says, "than that of those who maintain that God does all things with reference to good." +

This is the system which has had so powerful an effect on German philosophy and theology, and which lies at the basis of that work of Schleiermacher in which the eulogy of its author is introduced.

"To conceive of the personality of God," says Schleiermacher, "as resembling human personality, commonly implies a consciousness which is even morally impure." There is a great difference, according to him, between conceiving of God as having this sort of personality, and believing in a living God. "Every one may be accounted pious who believes in a living God." ¶ Truly religious men have never

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* Plessis F. A. Appendix, p. 71.
+ P. F. Plessis, p. 62.
¶ Schleiermacher, p. 181.
been zealous for the conception of the personality of God, "and so far as by atheism is meant, as is often the case, nothing more than a shrinking back from it, and doubt concerning it, a truly pious man will regard the existence of this around him with great indifference." *

In this passage *human* personality is impliedly denied to God. But personality is but of one kind, admitting no modifications or degrees. The word must have the same meaning, whether used of a man, an angel, or the Divinity. To deny *human* personality to God, or personality like that of man, is to deny a personal God. The epithet "human" can serve merely as a blind, or to suggest that it is allowable to use the word "personality" in some sense of which we have no conception.

It is further implied, that God is a living God. There is one sense of the word "living," in which we speak of organic material bodies as living. There is but one other sense, that in which the term is applied to beings capable of perception, possessing mind in some degree or other. Unless it be contended that God is a material organization, it is in the latter class of beings that he must be included.

* Ibid. p. 117. 
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To apply, then, to him the epithet of *living*, meaning a living being possessed of mind, and to deny his personality,—that is, to deny his consciousness of his own existence, to represent him as utterly passive and powerless, for a being can exercise no power of which he is unconscious,—to bring together these ideas, and all the others connected with them, is to present as gross an absurdity as the mind is capable of entertaining.

Of the new theology Schleiermacher was at one time considered an oracle. In further illustration of its character I will give an extract from him relating to the fundamental doctrine of Christianity, the immortality of man.

"I believe," he says, "that I have fully set before you the manner in which every pious person has within him an unchangeable and eternal existence. For, when our feeling cleaves to nothing individual, but embraces as its sole object our relation to God, in which all that is individual and perishable is swallowed up, then is there nothing perishable in it, but only what is eternal; and it may truly be said, that the religious life is that in which we have already sacrificed and renounced all that is mortal, and actually enjoy immortality. But the manner in which most men conceive of im-
mortality, and their longing after it, appear to me irreligious, and directly contrary to the spirit of piety. Nay, their wish to be immortal has no other ground than an aversion to what is the aim of religion." The great aim of religion, he goes on to say (as I formerly explained his doctrine), is the divesting ourselves of our personality, and the becoming one with the Infinite. But those, he proceeds, who receive the common doctrine of immortality, struggle against this; "they are anxiously concerned about their personality; and thus, far from being willing to seize their only opportunity to rise superior to it,—that afforded them by death,—they are anxious how they shall take it with them beyond this life; and aspire, at most, for eyes of wider vision and better limbs. But God speaks to them, as it is written, 'He who loses his life for my sake will preserve it, and he who would preserve it will lose it.' The life which they would preserve is one not to be preserved. . . . . . The more they long after an immortality which is none, and which they are not even capable of conceiving, (for who can succeed in the effort to represent to himself an existence in time as eternal?) the more they lose of that immortality which they might ever possess, and lose with it this mortal life, by in-
dulging thoughts that cause vain anxiety and distress.* . . . . . The aim and character of a religious life is not such an immortality as many wish for and believe in; — or, perhaps, only pretend to believe in; for their desire to know too much of it makes their belief very suspi-

* Schleiermacher well knew how to mock with some lip-phrase; and, conformably to this, he here introduces a passage which it is proper to quote.

"He who has learned to be more than himself knows that he loses little when he loses himself. Only he who, thus renouncing himself, has become blended, as far as in his power, with the whole universe, and in whose soul a greater and holier desire has sprung up, — only he has a right to, and only with him may there really be, any further discourse of those hopes which death gives us, and of the infinity to which we may inallibly raise ourselves through it."

It would be idle to inquire what hopes and what infinity Schleiermacher would hold out to a being whose personal existence is to cease with death.

An expression which I have used above, in connection with the whole subject, brings to my mind a passage of much beauty from a late poem:

"Is it a boon, when dissolution’s strife
Hangs, trembling, o’er the bed of child or wife,
And the poor sufferer turns amid her pain,
And looks, and strives to say, ‘We meet again,’ —
Is it a boon to stand in anguish by,
And meet with some lip-phrase that clinging eye,
Whilst the sad sceptic heart makes no reply?
Then, bending o’er the tomb to which she sank,
Present to feel — and Future — one mere blank?"

Kenyon’s Rhymed Plea for Tolerance.
cious; — not that immortality which is out of
time and after time, or rather only after the
present time, yet still in time; but the immor-
tality which already, in this temporal life, we
may immediately possess, and which is a prob-
lem in the solution of which we are continu-
ally engaged. In the midst of finiteness to be-
come one with the Infinite, and to be eternal
in every moment, — that is the immortality of
religion.”

Such is the conclusion of Schleiermacher’s
Discourse on the Essence of Religion. In his
note on the passage I have quoted, he says: “I
wish nothing more than that every man may
see himself, not only divested of all the foreign
apparel for which he is indebted to the out-
ward circumstances of life, but also after hav-
ing laid aside these pretensions to an endless
existence; in order that he may determine, when
he regards himself such as he really is, whether
these pretensions be any thing more than such
titles as the mighty of the earth often deck
themselves with, to countries which they have
never possessed, nor will possess.”

According to Schleiermacher, we may “be

* Ueber die Religion, pp. 118 – 121.
† Ibid. p. 141.
eternal in every moment.” This is one of those propositions of such startling absurdity, that they may create a momentary suspicion that some portentous truth is veiled in their darkness. But in this sentence, no truth, literally or figuratively expressed, is to be discovered.

Eternity involves an idea, the idea of infinity, the full comprehension of which transcends the powers of the human mind. We can have no other conception of infinity than as the absence of all limitation. Time without limitation is the only idea we can have of eternity. The proposition, that we may be eternal in every moment, has no other significance than that we may live an unlimited duration in every moment.

The words of this proposition cannot be understood as improperly used in a transitive or figurative signification; for no such signification can be assigned to them. In this, as well as in other passages of the theologians and metaphysicians of the modern school, the word “eternal” is so connected as to show that it requires to be understood as denoting unlimited duration. Here, in the passage before us, the eternal existence which may be enjoyed every moment is directly opposed to the immortality, the never-ending existence, which the Christian
hopes for after death; and the antithesis would be futile if by the eternity to be enjoyed in every moment were signified any thing else than a never-ending existence. Such is the character of the proposition. But we cannot suppose that any man having the use of his reason could enunciate it in the only sense which the significations of its separate words admit. There would be no greater folly in affirming, that, when we occupy any portion of extension, we fill infinite space. It is a mystical proposition, put forward in the vain hope that some hazy meaning may gather round it.

This unintelligible abuse of the words "eternal" and "eternity" is derived from Spinoza. According to him, "individual things are nothing but affections or modes of the attributes of God."* They follow necessarily from the nature of God, "and whatever follows necessarily from the absolute nature of any attribute of God cannot have a determinate duration, but through the same attribute is eternal."† He compares individual things to "eternal truths," which have no relation to time.‡ "If

* Ethicae P. I. Prop. 25, Coroll.
† Ibid. Prop. 21, Demonstr.
‡ Ibid. Definit. 8, Explicat., compared with the subsequent references to it in his work. It is perhaps hardly necessary to ob-
we attend to the common opinion of men,” he says, “we shall see that they are conscious of the eternity of their minds, but confound eternity with duration, attributing it to the imagination or memory which they believe to remain after death.”* And so on, more or less distinctly, in various passages.

The last conspicuous manifestation of the character of the new theology appears in the writings of Strauss. Few products of this theology, I might rather say none, have excited so much attention as his “Life of Jesus, critically treated,”—an attack, as has been before mentioned, on the credibility of the Gospels. Toward the end of this work he gives his view of what he calls the Christology, meaning, I suppose, the doctrine concerning Christ. The passage taken as a whole has no meaning, properly speaking, that is, it presents no sequence of ideas which the understanding is capable of receiving, yet it is still a very instructive one, as showing the character of those speculations which had become popular among his readers.

serve, that, in speaking of eternal truths, we use the word in its common acceptation, as meaning what always have been and always will be truths, in contradistinction from such as are true only in reference to particular temporary circumstances.

* Ethices P. V. Prop. 34, Schol.
"The key of the whole Christology," he says, "is this, that the subject of those predicates which the Church ascribes to Christ is not to be regarded as an individual, but as an Idea; a real Idea, however,—not as, according to Kant, an imaginary one. Considered as existing in an individual, in a God-man, the attributes and offices which the doctrine of the Church ascribes to Christ are inconsistent with each other; in the Idea of the species, they agree together. Humanity is the union of the two natures, it is God become man; the Infinite Spirit renouncing its infinity and becoming finite, and the finite spirit conscious of its infinity.* It is the child of the visible mother and the invisible father; of Spirit and of Nature. It is the worker of miracles; inasmuch as, in the prog-

* This language refers to the doctrines of Hegel, whose metaphysical system is of the latest fashion in Germany, and who maintains the unity of Spirit, human and divine, as the element of the universe; or, in the words of Strauss (Vol. II. p. 709), which cannot be rendered into English so as to give a show of meaning; "dass der göttliche Geist in seiner Entäussung und Erniedrigung der menschliche, und der menschliche in seiner Einkehr in sich und Erhebung über sich der göttliche ist"; "that the Divine Spirit in its renunciation and abasement is the human, and the human in its withdrawal into itself, and its elevation above itself, is the Divine"; or, as he elsewhere expresses it, that "God and man are in themselves [essentially] one"; "Gott und Mensch an sich sind Eins."
ress of man’s history, the spirit is continually obtaining more full mastery over nature, both in man and around him; nature becoming subjected to its activity as a powerless material. Humanity is the sinless; inasmuch as the process of its development is blameless; pollution cleaves only to the individual, but in the species, and in its history, is thrown off. It is Humanity that dies, and rises from the dead, and ascends to heaven; inasmuch as, through the negation of its naturality [what in its composition belongs to nature], it is continually attaining a higher spiritual life, and by throwing off its finiteness, as a personal, national spirit, a spirit of this world, its unity with the infinite spirit of heaven is brought out. Through faith in this Christ, particularly in his death and resurrection, is man justified before God; that is to say, through the quickening of the Idea of Humanity within him the individual becomes a partaker of the divinely human life of the species; — conformably to the fact, that the negation of naturality and sensuality* — which is but the negation of a negation, seeing that they are but the negation of the spiritual — is the only way for men to attain the true spiritual life.

* Sinnlichkeit: — See before, p. 287.
“This alone is the absolute purport of the Christology. That this appears connected with the person and history of an individual, belongs merely to its historical form.” *

Such a passage is adapted to give a strong impression of the state of intellectual action in a country, where writing of this kind, instead of being received with universal wonder and derision, was regarded as matter of grave discussion, and as belonging to the highest department of philosophy.

The latest development which I have seen of the results to which the new theology has arrived is in the work of Strauss, before mentioned, on the “Doctrines of Christianity,” which appeared almost simultaneously with the fourth edition of his “Life of Jesus.” In that work he maintains the doctrine of Hegel concerning what Hegel calls God, and defends it, against some of his mistaken disciples, from the imputation of resembling the Christian doctrine, or that of any believer in the personality of the Supreme Being. The concluding chapters of the work are occupied with an attack on the belief of the future life, and of the immortality of the soul. His last words are these: —

"If now the question be asked, what there is positive to set against these negations [involving the denial of the immortality of the soul], the whole answer (as Hegel too remarks) amounts to this;—that immortality is not to be conceived of as something future, but as a present quality of the spirit, as its inherent universality, its power of raising itself above all finite things to the Ideal. If men are accustomed also to give the name of Eternity to the life after death, this involves essentially the same requisite to its right apprehension. Hence, thinkers, who are in other respects on the right track, at once take a wrong course when they sometimes so express themselves as if, after the manner of the ancients, they would make immortality consist in posthumous fame, in the continued results of noble efforts, or even in being propagated through one's descendants,—in the reappearance in another of the Idea of Humanity* [Idea constituting a man], which had perished in one individual. The blessed results of the actions of eminent men after their death, and

* This language— one cannot say the conception, for there is none—is borrowed from Spinoza, according to whom men are only ideas; an idea in God constituting their "essence and existence." See particularly the Second Book of his Ethics, from the seventh to the eleventh Proposition.
the continuance of their names, are only a reflex of what was to them during life a present enjoyment of eternity,—occupation, namely, with essential interests, labor in the Ideal. So, too, the continuance of the species is a reflex of the present enjoyment of family love;—and the metamorphosis of the universe is, not in its endless course, but as something recognized, and thus, consequently, apprehended as present, an eternalization of the spirit. The exhortation of Schleiermacher, 'In the midst of finiteness to become one with the Infinite; and to be eternal in every moment,' is all that modern science has to say about immortality.

"Here, for the present, our business ends. For the other world is, in all respects, the one enemy, and, in its aspect as future, the last enemy, which speculative criticism has to encounter, and, if possible, to overcome."

"And this, then, is thy faith!" And he who announces it, and anticipates its victory, instead of veiling his head in abasement and utter desolation of spirit, is contemplating with complacency a time when God and religion shall be dispossessed of the world, and nothing shall remain but atheism, despair, the lowest moral and mental degradation, and German philosophy,
looking on with an idiot grin of triumph at its final success.

"And this, then, is thy faith! this monstrous creed!
That lie against the Sun, and Moon, and Stars,
And Earth, and Heaven! . . . . .
And know ye not,
That leagued against ye are the Just and Wise,
And all Good Actions of all ages past,
Yea, your own Crimes, and Truth, and God in Heaven!"

Throughout a great part of the civilized world, men are restlessly craving for better forms of society and government; for a deliverance from evils which they feel themselves, and which they see crushing others. Many are in the temper of unreasoning patients, so diseased and suffering that they are ready to adopt the pretended remedies of any impostor who boldly promises relief. But the cure of long-continued evils in a nation is analogous to the cure of long-continued diseases in an individual. It must be gradual; it must be accomplished with great patience and care; or the attempt to relieve may only aggravate the suffering. The existence of a well-organized state of society is solely the result of the character of the individuals who compose it. Many seem to think that republican institutions are the grand spe-
cific for the evils which exist; but a republic, to escape the worst disorders, to escape the loss of its essential character, if not of its very form and name, must have for its foundation the religious and moral principles of those who constitute and control it. In the most favored portions of our own land it is to the influence of moral principle, to the strong action of the sense of right and wrong, to the sympathy of man with man, that we owe our protection and security; — not to the immediate authority of government, nor to the exercise of civil or military force. Where this moral control does not exist, order can be preserved in a state only by substituting in its place human power,—arbitrary power lodged in the hands of an individual or a class, whose self-interest it is to prevent lawless and disorganizing violence. The less there is of moral principle in a community, the more stringent and irresponsible must be the power by which it is controlled. The government of banditti or of pirates must be despotic; and when a republic of unprinciplled men is sinking, as it will, into anarchy and the bloody strifes of faction, the only refuge is a dictator. The attempt to establish freedom among people unprepared to feel and act as freemen, has been often enough repeated
in our time to satisfy one as to what must be its result. It is but four years since, that the oppressed and the reformers of Germany possessed themselves of the supreme power, but they were ignorant what to do with it. Even if they had had the wisest ends, they would have been unable to employ their power to any good purpose. The materials to be worked upon, the individuals to be governed, had not the strong sense of religion, and of the obligations of man to man, which are necessary to bind men together in a well-regulated society, — principles the want of which can be supplied by no human institutions, no written constitutions or laws.

Whatever tends to weaken the authority of religion, the authority of God, tends equally to the destruction of human happiness, and, especially, in reference to the topic immediately before us, to the destruction of all hope of better forms of human society. These must rest on the laws of God. Of his laws all human laws of binding force are but declaratory; from them they derive all their intrinsic authority. They are obeyed because conscience enforces obedience, — and this is perfect freedom. All other obedience to human laws must be only that which the direct or indirect dread of human power is able to compel.