

THE IMMANENCE OF GOD

By BISHOP FULTON J. SHEEN, Ph.D., D.D., LL.D.

IN THE philosophical order the conclusion of the first reasoning process is the existence of God. With the visible earth as a fulcrum, the human mind lifts itself above the phenomena of test-tubes and retorts to a knowledge of the Invisible God — the source of all that is, the Intelligibility of all that is orderly, and the Goal of all that strives.

But the human mind is not content with the bare knowledge that God made this universe; its legitimate curiosity strives to learn just what relation God bears to His masterpiece. Is He just an architect who designs an edifice, but who is not necessary for its continued existence? Or, if He is not disinterested in His work, is He transformed into it as water becomes transformed into steam? These questions imply added knowledge to that of the existence of God, namely, the question of how God is present in the universe which He has created. It is one thing to say God made the world, but it is quite another thing to inquire about the relation between His work and Himself, and this latter problem is the subject of this paper.

There are many answers to the problem, but like all philosophical answers they can be reduced to three: the two extremes and the mean. The extreme solutions are Deism and Pantheism. The answer of the virtuous mean is Immanence. Deism teaches that God is aloof from the universe and thus wholly transcendent; Pantheism teaches that God is wholly identified with the universe, and therefore wholly immanent. The traditional doctrine of Immanence is that God is both Immanent and Transcendent, or as an old Latin hymn puts it:

Intra cuncta, nec inclusus;

Extra cuncta, nec exclusus.

(God is in the universe, but not shut up in it; God is outside the universe, but not shut out from it.)

Deism as a system of natural theology arose in England in the seventeenth century as a heritage of Newton's queer scientific conception of God, whose function was to take care of the irregularities of the universe which Newton could not account for by his Law of Gravitation. God, in this conception, was just a mechanic, always searching for leaks to mend and gears to replace, His activity depending solely on the imperfection of the great cosmic engine. If one starts with the principle that God takes care of the irregularities which Newton could not fit into his science, it will be only natural that as scientists find laws to cover such irregularities, they will find reason for dispensing with God in this world. From this new outlook with the aid of Rationalism which denied the supernatural after misunderstanding it, and the political foment of 1688 which denied the Divine Rights to the Kingdom of Kings as it had already denied Divine Rights to the Kingdom of the King of Kings, there was born the philosophy of Deism.

Deism teaches that God gave the world a kick and let it whirl its own way into space. That initial impetus was enough to account for all its wanderings and activities. The clock had been wound up; it was to keep going by its own springs. God enthroned Himself in magnificent isolation, the distant spectator and great absentee Lord of the universe, that "fruitful interlude between two sterile immensities." In its later forms Deism developed into the philosophy of the Absolute which regarded God as unrelated to anything outside Himself, and therefore as the Great Unknowable.

The other extreme error touching the problem of the relation of the universe to God is that of Pantheism. It seems to be a truism of thinking during the past three centuries that what one philosophical generation believes to be true the next will believe to be false. Hence from the extreme that God is wholly outside the world the pendulum of thought swung to the other extreme, that God is wholly identified with the world. Pantheism is materialism grown sentimental, or monism turned romantic. In its earlier forms with Hegel, the universe was looked upon as the historical development and progressive manifestation of God. As Pure Idea God realizes Himself in nature as actual, in mind as conscious, and in time as history. In other words, God, nature, man and history, are all dissolved into a colourless identity. God is all, and things in such a God-intoxicated universe are but the modes or aspects of His Substance which pervades all things.

In the present day Pantheism takes on a new form, namely, that of the philosophy of the Organism, and incidentally, let me say that it is considered a great breach of etiquette to call the philosophy of the Organism Pantheism, but such it really is. According to the new view, there are no such things as substances. Science, believing

that substances were “chunks of matter,” found that they were molecules, then atoms, and now declares that they are made up of non-material electrical charges, one positive, the other negative — the proton and the electron. The physical world is not a world of reality behind appearances, but only the appearances themselves. These appearances are called events, or occasions in a world of space-time, hence “epochal occasions.” An event is a unit, and what we call a material object is a feature of those events. Now, all the events or epochal occasions in the universe are bound up one with another; everything that exists involves in some way the totality of all being, like the little flower Tennyson saw in the crannied wall: “If I knew you, root and all in all, I should know what God and man is.” That flower mirrors the universe, for it is the unification of its various elements or events combined with each other.

But in order that there might be harmony in this organic universe, wherein one event — I was going to say, thing — is bound up with every other event, it is necessary that there be someone resident in the universe to dispose it in an orderly fashion. Now this someone or something is God, Who is called “The Harmony of Epochal Occasions.” He is not outside the world, for “we know nothing beyond this temporal world.” He is the order of the universe but wholly interior to the universe. Each new “epochal occasion introduces God into the world,” and as the universe evolves He evolves with it, grows in richness of perfection with it and wins increasing victories in His warfare against evil.

It is not our purpose here to give an elaborate critical appreciation of these errors, but suffice it to say, that both do violence to reason. The fundamental error of Deism is its assumption that a cause, and in particular a Supreme Cause, is disinterested in the product of His Causality. As a matter of fact, the only reason any cause acts is on account of goodness. If it were not because of goodness of purpose of some kind, a cause would never exert itself. Once it does exert itself, it can never be indifferent to that which it has done. God therefore never could have forgotten that He made the world. Born out of Love it will always be loved. That is why Deism is impossible.

Deism implies that a Cause Who is the Good God can be disinterested in goodness; Pantheism, on the other hand, makes the Love of the good God impossible by identifying Him with the world. Love implies otherness or distinctness. *If God is not distinct from the world, then loving God means loving the world, or worse still: the world loving itself.* With the possibility of Love gone, morality must disappear. A God who is the totality of the universe cannot be ethical. He is neither good nor bad, because in the “All” which is God there is both evil and goodness.

Making God organic with the Universe and evolving with it does not help matters. It reminds one somewhat forcibly of Carlyle’s remark, that the making of the universe with God in it raises the same sort of question one of the Georges raised about the making of a dumpling “how the apples got in.” To have recourse to spacetime as the original stuff of God and the universe reminds one of the two shipwrecked sailors on an island who supported themselves by taking in one another’s washing.

The true solution lies in the mean of these extremes which either make God wholly outside the universe or wholly inside it. God is immanent in the world, but also transcendent to it. Now there are three ways in which God might be immanent in the universe:

(a) **Substantially:** His very substance would be one with the world and part of its essence, much as hydrogen and oxygen are the constituents of water. This would be Pantheism.

(b) **Personally:** by a Hypostatic Union, in which the nature of God and the nature of man would be united in the unity of the Person of God. Such is the Incarnation of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. This is immanence only in the broad sense of the term and is a problem not of philosophy but theology.

(c) **Causally:** in virtue of His Creative act by which He brought the world into being and remains the Omnipresent Ground of all finite existence and activity. This is the true notion of the Immanence of God.

The discussion of the Immanence assumes as proven the existence of God, but goes one step beyond, not content to know merely that God is the Creator of the Universe, but rather desirous to learn if, in creating, He left in the world the imprint of Himself and His artistry. It is true that some workmen produce things but never leave the stamp of their personality upon them. Is this true of God? It is equally true of other workmen, or better, artists, that they actually “put themselves into their work,” become immanent in it to such an extent that paintings like those of Rembrandt or Murillo can be identified as such — these artists “live” in the artistry of their hands. Does the Divine Artist become present in His work in such an immanent manner?

The answer is to be found by studying the Causality with which God created the universe. The universe is made up of a variety of things, from grains of mustard seeds to mountains, from squirming amoeba to man, from planets to flowers; and yet of each and every one of these things it can be said that “it is.” However different or diverse things may be, they all participate in being. Being is therefore the single effect of the Divine creative act to which everything is ultimately reducible.

St. Thomas, in speaking of a single effect, such as the being of the universe, says that it is intelligible only in virtue of a threefold cause:

- (a) the *formal* cause, which answers the question: According to what plan was the work conceived?
- (b) the *final* cause, which answers the question: Why was it made?
- (c) the *efficient* cause, which answers the question: Who made it? In other words, in order that the universe might be, three causes had to cooperate:

- (a) *Scientia ut dirigens*, or the formal cause — Who planned the work?
- (b) *Voluntas ut imperans*, or the final cause — Who commanded it?
- (c) *Potentia ut exequens*, or the efficient cause — Who executed it?

But it must not be thought that these three causes represent three distinct and absolutely separated natures. These causes exist in a substance, for a substance is the foundation of all causality. They proceed from the same substance under three different relations:

- (a) The formal cause is the intellect of the substance whence proceeds the *idea*.
- (b) The final cause is the *will* of the substance whence proceeds the end or purpose.
- (c) The efficient cause is the *power* of the substance whence proceeds action.

Let me make the relationship of these causes and their cooperation clear by an example. Before a sculptor can produce a statue three conditions must be fulfilled. Firstly, he must have some idea or model according to which he will cut his marble. Secondly, he must have the desire to reproduce that model in stone; that is, he must love the idea which he has conceived. Thirdly, he must have the capacity to realize his ideal, and to fulfill his desire; that is, the power to execute. Leave one of these three out and the statue could never be produced. If the sculptor never had an idea, his capacity to carve would be in vain; if he had the capacity to be a sculptor without either ideas or the desire to exercise his power, it would profit him nothing; and if he had not the power to cut stone, but was full of desires and ideas, he would be only a dream-sculptor but not a real one.

When finally the finished piece of sculpture sees the light of day, it will reveal not only the cooperation of these three causes, but also the degree of perfection to which the artist possessed them. The nobler the ideal which he conceives, the more intense the love of his idea, the more delicate his creative touch, the more perfect will be the statue, for the artist himself is immanent in these three ways.

Now since God made the universe by a threefold causality rooted in the unity of His Nature, and since *operatio sequitur esse*, which means that the artist is in his work according to the degree of perfection of his being, it will follow that God is present in the world, i.e., immanent in it, in three ways:

- (a) as the Wisdom which *plans* it;
- (b) as the Will which *commands* and *governs* it;
- (c) As the Power which *sustains* it.

I.

GOD IS IMMANENT IN THE WORLD BY HIS WISDOM

All things in the world of art have been made according to a plan. There never was a chisel touched to marble, or a brush to canvas, or a dome thrown against the vault of heaven’s blue, but that some idea preceded it.

In a perfect manner, everything in this world has been made according to certain ideas existing in the Mind of God from all eternity. God, being Perfect Intelligence, must therefore be possessed of the models, ideas or representations of all the things He wishes to call into the light of day. Every tree, every flower, every bird, every thing has had its spiritual model in the Divine Mind. And just as the ideas of a sculptor are imitable *ad extra*, so too the ideas of all things which God possesses are likewise imitable *ad extra*.

These ideas, which from our point of view are multiple, but really are one in the Divine Mind and identical with His being, are called archetypal ideas, and in relation to immanence three conclusions may be drawn.

(a) God is present in the universe in somewhat the same manner that an artist is present in his work of art. Just as the idea the painter has of the Blessed Mother is present on his canvas, so too the ideas God has of things are present in things as exemplars.

These divine archetypal ideas reflected in things, as the very rational plan of their being, are called forms, as in the mind they are called ideas (and sometimes forms).

Everything in the world has its form, which is the reason of its intelligibility, and which makes it what it is. A tree is a tree in virtue of its form (not external shape, but internal participation or reflection of the archetypal ideas) and for that reason differs from a camel, which has a different form. The form is, as it were, a little architect in matter, disposing it to be a species of a very definite kind. Much of this philosophy is behind the beautiful lines of Joyce Kilmer:

“Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.”

(b) Not only is God present in things as the wisdom which planned them, but He is also present in the richness and variety of His wisdom. Being infinite His wisdom reaches to the abyss of all things that are known and can be known. Quite naturally, therefore, no created thing could perfectly express the depth and variety of His knowledge; only an uncreated and single Word can express it, and that is the Logos or the Son. It was therefore fitting that God became present by His wisdom not only in one thing but in many, so that what one created thing failed to reveal the other might disclose. Thus creation became like a great orchestra, with thousands of instruments blending their various notes, and yet all cooperating to produce the beautiful harmony in which heavens and earth declare forth the wisdom of their omnipotent Creator.

(c) Finally, God’s wisdom participated in things is not only the reason of their being, and their richness, but also the reason of our own intelligibility. Why, in the ultimate analysis, do we know? We know, not because we invent, but because we discover — discover the wisdom of God hidden in the things which He has made. Every material thing in the universe is made up of matter and form. Matter makes it individual: the form, which is the architect within, and the reflection of the divine idea, makes it what it is, e.g. a rose. God, as it were, wrapped up His ideas about things in matter, just as He has wrapped up our soul in a body. Now, knowledge is impossible so long as the form or idea, or the reason of intelligibility, is hidden by matter. Knowledge is spiritual. Hence if the human mind is ever to know things rationally, it must have a power above that of the animals, a capacity for stripping off the matter from the idea, as it were, or else penetrating through the matter with a vision akin to the X-ray. This power Almighty God has given to the human mind in what has been called the active intellect, which has the power, once it enters into sensible contact with things, to grasp their essence, or the form which makes them what they are. But since the form is the participation of the archetypal idea of that thing in the divine Mind, just as the cathedral is the participation of the idea in the mind of the architect, it follows that in knowing the essence or nature of things, the mind knows the likeness of the divine ideas existing in things. Thus in an indirect way the wisdom of God becomes immanent in our own minds through the intermediary of things.

This is the fundamental reason why things are true. Truth is a conformity between the mind and things *sadaequatio rei et intellectus*.

My idea of a tree is true, if it conforms to the material thing before me which my senses represent to be a tree. Everything in this world is true inasmuch as it corresponds with the idea which God had in mind in making it. In this sense there is absolute truth. As St. Thomas puts it, “God’s own being is not only conformed to His intellect, but His act of understanding is the measure and cause of every other being and of every other intellect, and He is Himself His own existence and act of understanding. Whence it follows not only that truth is in Him, but He is truth itself, and the Sovereign and First Truth.

If things are true because they correspond to the divine Mind, so in a derived sense, our minds enjoy truth when they correspond to the things made according to the ideas of God immanent in them by participation, thanks to His creative act.

In the divine order of things, therefore, the immanence of God in, Creation by Wisdom is meant to describe a circular process. God made things intelligently; we discover their intelligibility thanks to our own intellect, make them immanent in us by an act of understanding, and by lifting ourselves up to that Supreme Truth, the Source of all gifts, we lift up the material world as well, and thus all things find their way back again to God.

II. GOD IS IMMANENT IN THE UNIVERSE BY HIS GOODNESS

The final cause which determines the purpose or end of anything resides in the will. Oftentimes we say that a product reveals an unwilling worker; at other times we say that the work reveals the enthusiasm and fire of the worker. How could we ever know this unless in some way the will became immanent in the thing done?

Since Almighty God created things not only by His wisdom which planned them, but by His omnipotent will, it is to be expected that His willingness and His goodness are in some way to be found in His works. Being goodness itself and hence wanting nothing for His perfection, God did not create on account of utility, or for purposes of increased happiness, but solely and uniquely on account of His liberality. But what is the manner and nature of this immanence by final causality?

(a) God is immanent in all things inasmuch as He has dynamized them with a purpose which is none other than the quest for His own goodness. A man invents a machine; being intelligent he has a very definite purpose in combining its mechanical parts, *e.g.*, to make piston-rods. This purpose is immanent in the machine, and the machine is considered a success in the proportion that it realizes the purpose of the inventor. Now God had a purpose in making the universe, and that purpose or end He put into all things. But since God is perfect goodness He could have no other end in creating things than that those things should share in some way in His goodness. Made by Goodness, made for Goodness, their goal and purpose was fixed, namely, to strive for their own perfection or completion, which is a participation in that Perfect Goodness which called them into being. If the zeal, the fire, the love of an artist can be found in his work, in a much more perfect manner can the love and the goodness of God be found in all things. St. Thomas tells us that “God is in the stone,” not substantially of course, but inasmuch as it shares in His goodness.

(b) In order to insure the attainment of their goal which is a sharing in the divine goodness, Almighty God has placed in each thing an immanent urge or striving, or law. An arrow is shot from the bow and speeds to the target. The arrow itself has no conception of either its direction or its goal, and yet both are immanent in it thanks to the archer. In like manner, things below man tend to their perfection unconsciously, but they do so only because God has interiorly impressed them with His purpose, which is nothing else than to become God-like, each in its own way. In animate creatures this immanent urge toward God is effected by the laws of nature; in the sensible world by the laws of instinct, and in conscious man by intelligence and will. These laws, being the expressions of the will of God immanent in things, constitute the source of what the Scholastics have called “natural love,” or the inclination toward their perfection, which is a participation in the goodness of God.

(c) God is so immanent in things by His purposes and His goodness, that He is more the end of every particular thing than its proximate end. This means, the flower tends more to God than it tends to blooming. We may go even further and say with St. Thomas that even irrational creatures love God. And yet this must not scandalize us. Any man who has a great ideal to achieve regulates all his actions, proximate desires, immediate wishes in function of that ideal. He therefore loves his final end, which is the ideal, more than any proximate end which might be a pleasure of the moment. Everything loves the whole more than the part — that is why we would rather lose our arm than our life — and since the whole is the goodness of God manifested in the universe, things aspire more to Him than to their own perfection. The immediate goal of every finite creature disappears from the horizon in the face of the Perfect Good which is God. It is the whole which makes the part intelligible. If the creature then did not first desire God, who is Perfect Goodness, it could never desire anything else. No one can love the unknown; no thing can strive to the unknown. If therefore every rational being in this universe consciously longs for love and goodness in their perfect state, and every irrational and inanimate creature strives for goodness in its participated state, it can only be because

somehow, somewhere, goodness and love became immanent in some way in the universe. The very fact that we seek, proves that once we must have found. Here is the real law of gravitation, by which things are not pulled down to the centre of the earth earthly, but rather lifted up to the centre of the heaven heavenly. The power of attraction varies not in relation to mass and distance, but according to nature and spirituality. The more spiritual the beings the more conscious and the more strong the pull; but each in its own way is attracted, attracted to God by the immanent gravitational pull of Goodness and Love: *Amor pondus meum*.

III. GOD IS IMMANENT IN THE UNIVERSE BY HIS POWER

God defined Himself to Moses as “I am Who Am,” to indicate the very perfection of His being. The universe can be said to have being, but only God can be said to BE. Creatures are compounded of being and non-being, but it is the very essence of the Creator to exist. Everything acts according to its nature, but the nature of God is to be. Hence when He wills (final cause) to create things (efficient cause) according to His eternal plans (formal cause), being will in some way be found stamped upon His masterpiece. God will therefore be immanent in the world not only by His wisdom, and His goodness, but also by His power, which is Being or Act.

(a) If absolute nothingness ever were, then nothing would ever be. Out of the void of absolute nothingness (i.e., excluding God) this universe could never come. It makes no difference whether one starts with primeval stardust or with the completed solar system; the being which is common to all things must have had a cause. The ultimate problem is not whether things began with littleness or immensity, but why they began at all. Evolution might explain how things happened to be, but it can never explain why things are. In this sense evolution no more excludes God than a “self-made” man excludes his mother. Since being is that which is most profoundly intimate in a thing, it can be accounted for only by the existence of some Perfect Being Who gave it its temporary endowment of existence. As St. Thomas puts it: “Since the very essence of God is to be, it follows that being in the created order will be properly His effect, just as to burn is properly the effect of fire.” The universality of being in the universe is then one of the certain signs that the Being of God is immanent in it by virtue of His Creative power.

(b) It must not be thought, however, that God is in the universe merely as the initial source of its being, for God is not merely a static cause. He is much more than the Architect of its being. An architect who not only plans his house but actually builds it is immanent in it by his activity; but note that the architect may die and yet the house will survive. This is because the architect is merely the cause of the becoming — *causa in fieri* — of the house, and not the cause of its being — *causa in esse*; he has merely transformed pre-existing materials. But God did not merely juxtapose already existing primordial stuff; He is Cause, of the very beginning or the very being of the things. Things therefore are related to His Being as the rays of the sun are related to the sun. They depend on God not only for the first moment of their being, but also for their continued being or conservation. If He should withdraw that conserving power for just a second they would fall back into the nothingness from which they came.

(c) God then is not like an artist who touches his work through the intermediary of an instrument and then leaves it. Neither with God is there *actio in distans*. He is intimately present in all things. *Deus est in omnibus rebus, et intime*. So immanent is He in the universe by His power that, as St. Thomas reminds us, all the movements, the activities the goings and comings, of things animate and inanimate are more properly God’s effect than they are the effects of secondary causes.

Created things may be secondary means of this conservation, but ultimately the conservation of every being depends upon God. So great is this dependence that St. Thomas does not hesitate to say that God is the ultimate cause of any action whatsoever, inasmuch as (i) He gives its subject the power of acting; (ii) He conserves it in its being; (iii) He applies it to action. In sum, He operates immediately in everything without in any way excluding the operation of the will or nature.

This means that God is present everywhere, not by material contact but by power. 5 The spatial notion that God is localized in things is therefore wrong.

God is spiritual and hence is not contained by things, nor is there a division of His being; just as the soul is entirely in every part of the body, so God is whole in all things and in each thing. 1 In all things as the cause of all being, God is nevertheless above all things, by the excellence of His nature.

Insofar as knowledge and goodness are concerned, things may be said to be more in God than God in things, just as the tree is more in my mind when I know it than I am in the tree; but since power is applied to external things, it is true to say that by it God is more in things.

In conclusion, God may be said to be immanent in all things, not by sharing of His nature, for since this is spiritual it cannot be shared, not by some accidental attachment, for the world entirely depends upon Him, but rather by His causality.

First of all, there is the causality of His being inasmuch as it is intelligence; and behold, God is in His creation by His wisdom. What are our laws of science, our laws of psychology, our laws of physics, but designations we give to things which compel us to think in a certain way and not in another? If laws were our making, we might make water run uphill. Do not scientists return to the experimental ground of nature to verify their hypotheses, and what is this but a recognition that they are merely finding wisdom and not making it? If nature impels us to think in a certain way, it can only be because nature itself is rational and has within it a reflection of the wisdom of God. As Browning has so well put it:

“. . . to know

Rather consists in opening out a way

Whence the imprisoned splendour may escape,

Than in effecting entry for a light

Supposed to be without.”

And this “imprisoned splendour” is the sign that God is not only in His heavens by nature, but in His world by wisdom. If 250,000,000 atoms were stretched one alongside the other, they would be no more lengthy than an inch, and yet each is a miniature solar system, with its proton as the sun, and its electrons as the planets; each has its law, order and plan, which have guided it in all its age-long contributions to the structure of the universe, and each has ever been ready to declare to the scientist at the other end of the microscope, if he will but look, that he is in the very presence of Intelligence Itself.

Next there is the causality of God’s being inasmuch as it is voluntary; and behold, the universe is made by the fiat of His omnipotent will! Why did God will to make the universe? The archetypal ideas He had concerning it did not constrain Him. Good created the world; for somewhat the same reason we find it difficult to keep a secret; it is good — good news. God is good, and being good He could not, as it were, keep the secret of His goodness; so He told the secret of His goodness to nothingness, and that was creation. The world is therefore the overflow of divine goodness. Begotten of the goodness of God, the goodness of God is in it. All the versatile motions and strivings of the universe are modes of procedure corresponding to the continuous activity of His will. Because God is in things by His love and goodness, they all strive to produce in part the same goodness which called them into being. That is why everything in the world tends to diffuse itself. The sun is good and diffuses itself in light and heat; the tree is good and diffuses itself in its fruit; the rose is good and diffuses itself in its perfume; animals are good and diffuse themselves in the generation of their kind. Man is good and diffuses himself in the generation of thought. Fecundity, or productiveness is the law of the universe; things give because to them has been given. The giving is their completion, and by seeking their own perfection and goodness they seek the Perfect Goodness which is God. That is why man finds a paradox in creatures and speaks of:

“their traitorous trueness, and their loyal deceit.”

They are fickle to us and faithful to Him, because God is in them drawing all things *suaviter et fortiter* back to the Heart of His Infinite Goodness.

Finally, there is the causality of God’s being inasmuch as it is pure act; and behold, God is in the universe by His being! Drawn from nothingness, we still always bear the imprint of our origin, just as the form of a statue must necessarily be imperfect if chiselled from an imperfect block of marble. God must therefore be in all things sustaining them at every instant. It was this lesson that St. Paul gave to the Areopagites of old: “God is not far from any of us, for in Him we live, and move, and have our being.” In fact, God is closer to us than we are to ourselves. We are just

borrowers of being, living on the momentary instalments which His bounty gives us, and not only us, but things. There is therefore supreme philosophy in the lines of Blake, when properly understood:

“To see a world in a grain of sand,
And a heaven in a wild flower;
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand,
And eternity in an hour.”

Why is it that God is never represented as shouting in revealed Scripture or in the writings of any religious people? It is because He is so near He has no need to shout; He whispers. The silence of the Heavenly spheres frightened Pascal they spoke to him of the presence of God. And who is there who will deny there was some idea of the immanence of God in the beings of the world, in the line Tennyson is recorded to have spoken to his friend in a field:

“On your knees, man, here are violets.”

Let it not be thought that the theory of evolution runs counter to the doctrine of the immanence of God. What is evolution, but the immanence of God expressed in dynamic terms? If there be such a thing as evolution, then I see almost an added reason for emphasizing immanence. Evolution from the smallest gas, or molecule would demand three things: Firstly, a Power which brought that gas or molecule into being, and sustains it in being during its progressive unfolding.

Secondly, a Mind which planned the evolution of that original stuff and gave it its laws. Thirdly, a Will which chose to bring it into being, impressed each emergent of that evolutionary process with its inner finality, and gave to the whole process its own goal and purpose, for without some purpose there would be no reason for ever evolving.

Thus whether one views the universe as made in its present state, or evolving slowly from the simple to the complex, God must be immanent in it as (i) *sapientia ut dirigens*, (ii) *Voluntas ut imperans*, (iii) *Potentia ut exequens*.

Reason tells us this much, but when revelation comes to tell us more, then we begin to grasp that these three Causes are rooted in the one Nature which is God, and each is so perfect as to be personal. The Triple Causality becomes the Trinity, three Persons in one God. Power — God the Father: “I believe in God, the Father Almighty.” Wisdom — God the Son: the Logos; the personal Thought of an eternal Thinker. Will — God the Holy Ghost: the power of attraction; Love. As one unfolds God’s ways with men, thanks to Revelation, one sees further progress in the ways of immanence. Goodness prompted God to create a world, which He permitted to share His perfections. The stone imperfectly manifests God’s presence by its existence, the plants and animals by their life, and man by his intelligence and will. But none of these tell us perfectly what God is. Is there not room for a still fuller revelation, thanks to the presence of His very Person? Some theologians say that God would have become Incarnate even though there had been no sin, in order that He might crown His creation. This is theory, of course. In the historical order, the fact is that He did become Incarnate for the redemption of men, and in doing this He tabernacled Himself in the domain of His own immanence.
