

firmed by St. Paul, *All things were created by Him*; and this in a passage which declares that *the Son of His love was the Firstborn of every creature*: *πρωτότοκος*, begotten before all creaturely existence. These passages in their combination lead our minds to our Lord's only other reference to creation: *Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world*. To this give all the Scriptures witness. Carrying the evidence back now to the Old Testament we find that it renders to the Spirit the same tribute which the New renders to the Son. *Thou sendest forth Thy Spirit, they are created*; and, before the words *Let us make man*, we read that *the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters*. The doctrine of the Essential Trinity gives harmony and consistency to the whole. Without it the entire fabric of Scripture is unintelligible: it ceases to be a fabric; it is itself without form and void, and darkness rests upon its entire face.

Col. i 15, 16.

John xvii. 24.

Is. civ. 30.
Gen. i. 26, 2.

2. But there is evidently an Economical Trinity here, the foreshadowing of the Redemptional. What man's word is to his act, the expression of his will, the Eternal Word was in creation: *By Whom also He made the worlds*, where the Word is *the Son* who is the Mediator of the creation of the *αἰῶνες*, or orders of worlds, which He sustains by the word, *τῷ ῥήματι*, of His power. His omnipotence as God and His mediatorship as the Word in the created universe are one. The *διά*, generally used, also indicates this. He is the Mind and Will and Act of His Father. This economical relation does not so expressly extend to the Holy Spirit; but we have seen that of Him also as of the Son it may be said, *without Him was not anything made that was made*. All this is revealed for the suppression of the notion that matter, or the substance of the visible universe, is eternal; or, supposing it created, that any inferior Demiurgus was employed in the creation; also for the establishment of our faith in the worthiness of all created things; and, finally, to show that the scene of creation was prepared as to be in due time the scene of redemption also.

Economi-
cal Trinity

Heb. i. 2.

John i. 3.

THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES IN CREATION.

Divine
Attri-
butes

We have already anticipated our present subject when considering the Divine Attributes in relation to the creature. It is enough

to say here that the omnipotence of God, as the outward manifestation of His interior all-sufficiency, is enough for the original production of matter in what may be called absolute creation; that His wisdom and power are seen in the secondary creation or formation of matter into worlds; and that the end of all is the expression of the Divine perfections or their reflection in the works of His hands.

**Primary
Creation.**

CREATION PROPER.

It is only in the Divine All-sufficiency that we can find the ground of the origin of all things that exist not being God Himself. In this we must be content to seek the possibility of all forms of being, spiritual or material; known to us or unknown: our own universe, so far as we may call it ours, and other universes that may be behind it, with others that may follow it.

Matt xix. 26. The utmost that human thought can rise to is this, that *with God all things are possible*: that is, all things possible may, at His will, become actual. In one sense there is no NIHIL to infinite resources, and the maxim "*Ex nihilo nihil fit*" must either be converted into "*In nihilo omnia fiunt*," or limited to created agents, with regard to whom it is undoubtedly true. It is the uniform testimony of Scripture, and its fundamental error in the opinion of modern Pantheists, that the Eternal and only Being by His will and word brought all things that are not Himself into an existence which in no ultimate elements they had before. The testimony to this supreme truth is positive and negative

Gen i. 1 1. Positively, the beginning of revelation asserts this: *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.* These words concerning the old creation are repeated when the new creation is introduced: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him.* In that beginning, which baffles human thought to apprehend, the Son already is as God, and all things BECOME or are made. Hence the same revealing voice which declares the Divinity of the Son declares in contrast the origination in time or with time of all things. We may pass over the many passages which assert the Divine origin of the ordered

Cosmos : they might be supposed consistent with the existence of a substance out of which it was arranged. But the incarnate Saviour prays, *Glorify Thou Me with Thine own Self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was*: where *παρὰ σοί* corresponds with *the glory as of the Onlybegotten παρὰ Πατρός*. And in this light the many testimonies to the creation of all things must mean the bringing them into existence proper. *By Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities or powers: all things were created by Him and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist.* The contrast between the essential being of the Son in the Father, and the created existence of all things else, could not be more clearly laid down. In a very remarkable passage St. Paul declares the possibilities of God to be τὰ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ, *the invisible things of Him*. What He in the freedom of His omnipotence brings into visible existence proclaims His eternal Power and Godhead: the δύναμις here preceding, and measuring, and, as it were, determining the θεϊότης, while, on the other hand, the θεϊότης, or divineness of God, is the substratum of that δύναμις, the resources of which are infinite. What has been *clearly seen from the creation of the world* is but the manifestation of an invisible infinity of power behind. But there is a still nearer approach to the calling all things out of nothing in another word of St. Paul concerning God *Who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were*: τὰ μὴ ὄντα ὡς ὄντα. Hence we may accept our very term “ex nihilo” from the Vulgate: “Peto, nate, ut aspicias ad cœlum, et terræ, et ad omnia quæ in eis sunt; et intelligas quia ex nihilo fecit illa Deus, et hominum genus;” thus rendering a passage which the Apostle might have in view, ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων ἐποίησεν αὐτὰ ὁ Θεός. In the Epistle to the Hebrews the first article of the faith is the primitive creation as distinguished from the formation of all things. *Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear: εἰς τὸ μὴ ἐκ φαινομένων τὸ βλεπόμενον γεγονέναι*. The construction and the absolute origination of all things seen are, in fact, separated, and then united. The creating word of God is set over against both: all things were formed by the Divine word in order that

John xvii
5.

John i. 14.

Col. i. 16,
17.Rom. i.
20.Rom. iv.
17.2 Mac.
vii. 28.

Heb. xi. 3.

Heb. xi.
27.

No other
Doctrine
allowed.

Nehem.
ix. 6.

faith might lay hold of the truth, which reason cannot penetrate, that the created universe did not spring by development from things previously existing, but from the invisible creating power of One afterwards referred to as τὸν Ἄόρατον, *Him Who is invisible*. With this the revelation of Scripture has spoken its last word, after which the first word of science must begin.

2. Negatively, the Scripture precludes any other doctrine than that of an absolute creation of all things by the direct act of the Divine will. It omits any allusion to pre-existing forms of matter, animate or inanimate, out of which the present universe was through long periods developed. Physico-theological speculation may interpose universe after universe, or rather universe before universe, to carry up the continuity of cause and effect nearer to the final source; but at length it must come to the unsearchable chasm between phenomenal things and the eternal essence. Platonic ontology may go farther and contrast phenomena as they are made to appear with the eternal ideas appearing only to God Himself; but the κόσμος νοητός in the Divine mind is not creation, and it is of creation we now speak. The negative argument is found in all those many passages which bring the Jehovah-name into relation with created things. This is the Scriptural method of proclaiming the infinite and to us unthinkable chasm between necessary being and existence phenomenal. The Bible does not say, in philosophical language, that the Unconditioned One remains the Unconditioned while He creates the conditioned, or that the one Necessary Being cannot have other necessary existence, co-eternal with Himself, which He forms into the universe. But it simply says, in Nehemiah's language, which is the language also of psalm and prophet: *Thou, even Thou, ART JEHOVAH ALONE; Thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and Thou preservest them all.* Its doctrine is everywhere that the Eternal can clothe Himself with what garments visible He will; in modern language, it teaches that the creating act is the finite expression of the Infinite. The creation is referred to as its free exercise: all things requiring God as their First Cause, but the First Cause not requiring the creation by any necessity of His nature. Speculations as to the necessary connection of power and act in the

Immutable Being, and therefore as to the necessity of an eternal creation—speculations which forget the difference between the Infinite and the finite, a difference which is to us at once conceivable and inconceivable—are utterly unknown in Scripture.

THEORIES CONTRADICTING THE DOCTRINE OF CREATION.

Errors

It is at this point that we are met by those hypotheses which flatly contradict the doctrine thus laid down as Scriptural, and as alone consistent with the true notion of God and His universe. These have been alluded to in their relation to the doctrine of God Himself; but briefly, as the present is their proper place. It may be boldly asserted that Pantheism and Materialism, with a third class of intermediate theories that are composed of elements derived from both, owe their origin not to an anti-Theistic sentiment, but to the difficulty of accepting God as the Creator, primarily and absolutely, of anything that is not God. What is here said about them will be confined to a brief consideration of their bearing on the subject of creation.

PANTHEISM.

Pantheism.

Many definitions may be given of this system of thought, which has had the longest, the most diversified, and the most persistent sway in the annals of human error. But no definition does justice to it which forgets that it is a theory of the universe making God supreme in it without being its Creator: identifying, in fact, God with the universe, or the universe with God: τὸ πᾶν Θεὸς ἔστι. But there are two kinds of Pantheism, which are not perhaps distinguished as they should be in reviews of its history. All Pantheism is not the same Pantheism.

1. It cannot be said of the ancient Indian philosophies that they made God and the universe one. What to the Hindoo in every age—as long before the Christian era as since—has been the Supreme God, or the abstract Brahm without predicate, exists without a necessary finite created system. This eternal, infinite, immutable Being is sublimely above all creaturely nature. When the repose of incalculable ages is broken, He or It comes as to the creature into existence, is developed to creaturely thought in mani-

Hindoo Pantheism.