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Moses Maimonides
and
The Philosopher
of
Evolution.

M. Heller.

June 1884.

Preface.

If it is the function of prefaces to justify and explain the selection of certain subjects or the application of special methods, the following treatise is, undoubtedly, in need of some remarks of a prefatory nature; for neither is the subject an altogether trite one, nor has its aim been often attempted or its methods generally employed.

Both the philosophers who figure on the title page, have received much attention from Students of philosophy - the former as the chief exponent, to this day, of Rationalism in the Jewish Faith, the latter as the Apostle of what he calls the Philosophy of Evolution. - At the same time it is hardly necessary to point out the marked contrast of their positions, when

the former is known as a rational defender of Jewish theology on the basis of a new exact system of philosophy, while the latter sways the scepter of the ruling philosophical system and apparently threatens the very life of religion from his impregnable position of scientific results.

Thus, in themselves, the men, whom we have placed side by side, seem hardly in the least to justify comparison, yet far stranger will appear the object of this juxtaposition. - - Moses Maimonides, the learned rabbin, physician and philosopher, who, at one time, so powerfully influenced the currents of Jewish theology, until his voice was drowned in cries of woe, has again, in our century, arisen from ~~the~~ darkness and all but oblivion to find at the hands of careful and scholarly admirers

the Thorough and impartial Treatment, to which he was entitled by the importance of his reasonings. Brilliant and numerous were the works of which Maimonides was the subject; his opinions, their sources, his life and influence are thoroughly ascertained; but has entire justice been done to the results, at which he arrived? - It is this which we are ready to question and desirous to disprove.

It is our humble impression that among the many little and yet far-spread vices with which modern methods of research, however anxiously impartial, are tainted, one of the most hidden and yet not the least consequential, is this, in historio-philosophical research especially, that philosophical systems of the past are looked upon, almost invariably, with the curiosity of the

antiquarian or with the eye of the historian hunting for connections, but rarely, and then, in all probability, carelessly, by the examining Truth-seeker. Why this should be so, is historically, but hardly otherwise, justifiable; it is certainly due, not so much to any universal falsehood which destroys the usefulness of all the reasoning of past times - as rather to a haughty spirit of impatience, a self-satisfied consciousness of superiority which characterizes many branches of modern research.

Maimonides, much as he has been regarded with veneration by those engaged in the study of his works, has suffered greatly from the modern vice referred to. His writings have been admired as surpassing expositions of the spirit of his age; his

methods, his aims and tendencies have been applauded; yet has the applicability, the still continuing force of his reasonings been denied by almost every one of his interpreters. To show the gems of living truth that are still to be gleaned from Maimonides' writings, is the aim of the following reflections and comparisons; to prove that there attaches to the words of Moses Maimonides more than the mere historical interest, that he has uttered fundamental truths such as survive his age, is the object of this dissertation, - an object, the usefulness of which requires no further justification. -

But the method selected for this purpose is almost entirely novel and calls for an apology. Philosophers are generally compared for the purpose of reducing elements contained in one system to a

parent system, from which they are to be derived; the unshaken validity of disputed opinions is reestablished by reviewing attacks and views attacked; neither of these two usual methods is here employed; we evade the wearisome dialectical task involved in redemonstrating those fundamental positions of Maimonides which we believe to be of value to day; in order to prove that like opinions are tenable in modern times, it will be sufficient to find them advocated by a modern thinker, in this manner we shall, certainly, not prove the infallible correctness of such principles; but this, at least, will be the indisputable outcome, that such principles cannot be regarded as antiquated and entirely devoid of positive worth.

The reason will now become apparent, why

Mr. Spruce has been chosen among modern philosophers; for not only is his philosophy the most recent, but it is inspired by tendencies the most opposite to those pursued by Maimonides; its inductive method diverges most widely from the deductions of the latter - the two thinkers stand in every respect in mutual contrast; so much the more convincing of what we wish to prove must, therefore, be their points of agreement. That these points are not only striking and numerous, but, on the very face, fundamental, will contribute the greater force to our demonstration, the stronger is the contrast, in other respects, of ways and goals of reasoning.

Having thus explained and, as far as possible, justified the subject, object and method of the following treatise, it remains

that we should assign such limits to and impose such rules upon our comparison, as subject and object alike will most naturally suggest. For this purpose it will be necessary, at the outset, to make a sweeping declaration. - The supposition will not for a moment be entertained by those acquainted with the theo-philosophy of Maimonides, that any one could attempt to justify the whole extent and content of that thinker's statements. We propose to defend neither the Aristotelian metaphysics nor the tortuous biblical exegesis of our author; if such a defence was intruded, it would certainly task a superhuman ingenuity to discover corresponding analogies in the works of Herbert Spencer; but as philosophical theology in the strict sense that is, the theory concerning the nature of

God, as derived from philosophical speculation, holds the most important position in the philosophical work of Maimonides: "Dalālat Al-hairin" (Guide of the Wandering), we shall limit our inquiry to this special part of his reasoning and we shall try to prove its value by means of a detailed and classified comparison. For this purpose we shall use the first part (The Unknowable) of Spencer's "First Principles", referring also incidentally to a paper "Religious Retrospect and Prospect" recently published by the same author as the last Chapter of Part VI of "Principles of Sociology".

Several other limitations seem to lie in the nature of our investigation. Keeping strictly in view its special object we shall dispense with all search of a derivative nature, however inviting a field may present it-

self for such inquiry. It is of little importance for our demonstration of undiminished validity, whether the views of either philosopher are original or derived, and, if derived, from what source; the fact that they were advocated by Maimonides and that their correctness is confirmed by an agreement with Spinoza, will suffice, irrespective of all originality; so that, even though it may not be impossible to trace direct or indirect influence of the former on the latter* (through the medium perhaps of still current elements of scholastic theology) we shall omit such endeavors as not pertinent to our subject.

* See in a lecture "Über den wissenschaftlichen Einfluss des Judentums auf die nicht-jüdische Welt" proof of an influence of Maimonides on Leibniz and Kant.

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It may appear strange, if occasionally, in the following pages, we shall take the liberty of criticising Mr. Spencer in essential points and thus attack the very system, which, to a certain extent, we have accepted as a temporary standard for comparison. Still are such proceedings not altogether out of place and some justice will be conceded them, if it is remembered, that, after all, Mr. Spencer is at best a one-sided exponent of modern theology; manifest trespasses on the laws of impartiality may fairly be adjusted without the resulting of any injury to the harmony and integrity of the comparison.

The peculiar, half-conversational style, in which the views of Maimonides are, for the most part, presented, makes it necessary to introduce the more important traits of

his reasoning not in the fragmentary form of casual or rigorously classified quotations, but in the unbroken manner in which resides much of their characteristic persuasiveness. With a view to this fact, joined to the deplorable lack of any approximately complete translation in English of the "Guide of the Wanderer" we have appended to the body of the Treatise such Chapters as it seemed desirable to present connectedly and entirely. The translation of these as well as that of most quotations from Maimonides found in the body of the Treatise has been carefully made from S. Munk's Arabic Text with consultation of his Aruch and Yehuda Ibn Ribon's popular Hebrew Translation. Something of the consummate force of Maimonides will, it is hoped, be conveyed in this manner.

Introduction.

In comparing the theology of Maimonides with Mr. Spence's statements on the same subject, one of three courses might be pursued as to the succession of subdivisions; we may either follow them out as successively presented in the "Guide of the Wandering," selecting, in the same series, parallels from Mr. Spence's works; or we may adopt Mr. Spence's succession of subjects, illustrating as we proceed, by quotations from Maimonides; or, finally, we may create a more organic classification than is found in either, collecting and comparing in each subdivision such quotations from both philosophers, as are shown to refer to it. Our classification is arranged according to the last of these courses mostly with a view to increasing complexity

and decreasing fundamentality.
While it does not pretend to cover all
the points of resemblance between the
two philosophies, many essential
points having been left unnoticed,
it exhibits similarities at least within
the range and throughout the particulars
of one integral department of knowledge.

Chapter I.

Premises and Tendencies.

If our "Thesis" is True, if the Theological views of our Two philosophers bear the close resemblance which we desire to demonstrate from their works, it would be strange, indeed, and could hardly be due to anything but some inconsistency, on one side at least, if there existed not also some agreement as regards their higher general tendencies, or what may be called their first proposition. Some fundamental belief must be shared by both regarding the nature of theology or of the broader field, religion, regarding its position and importance among the other branches of knowledge. We need not go far in search of a like fundamental belief.

The very first problem which presents itself with respect to the nature of religion is its relation to the remaining body of knowledge, to Science.

Do the two departments antagonize one another, are they mutually independent, or are they even supplementary and needful the one to the other? Each of these three solutions has had its advocates at all times and periods. Both Maimonides and Spence proceed to reason on the basis of the third answer, - not because either or both of them were swayed by contemporary currents of opinion, there were almost as many Jewish philosophers who drew the sharp line of division between religion and science as those who made both coalesce; nor does Mr. Spence in our

age voice the unanimous sentiment of modern thinkers on that subject; the agreement is neither accidental nor forced by circumstances; yet of a character sufficiently radical to direct both philosophers towards similar methods and aims. Fundamental as it is, it forms a common tendency, the influence of which must prove essential in subsequent investigations.

We proceed to detail. The comparison of the following extracts will give rise to further parallels. They represent the conclusions which are reached by the two philosophers after corresponding processes of reasoning.

Spencer, F. F. o. F. p. 21.

• It is an incredible hypothesis that there are two orders of truth, in ab-

Maim.: Dalalat Alhāirīn

pp. 38 ff. of Hunk's Ar. Text.

• And thou knowest, that these things are connect-

Spinoza

"solite and everlasting
opposition. Only on some
Manichean theory, which
among ourselves no one
only dares avow how-
ever much his beliefs
may be tainted by it, is
such a supposition even
conceivable. That Religion
is divine and Science di-
abolical, is a proposition
which, though implied in
many a clerical decla-
ration, not the most ve-
hement fanatic can
bring himself distinctly
to assert. And who now does
not assert this, must ad-
mit, that under their seem-

Maimonides

ed one with the other, al-
so that there is not in
existence anything be-
sides God, the Exalted,
and all His works and
that this is all which
is included by exist-
ence outside of Him;
that there is no way
to make Him known
except from His works;
and they are the indi-
cation of His existence
and of that which we
must believe concerning
Him, i.e., what we should
affirm or deny of Him.
It is, therefore, absolutely
necessary that we should

~~Spencer~~

f. next page.

ing antagonism lies hid-
den an entire agreement.
Each side, therefore, has
to recognize the claims
of the other as standing
for truths that are not
to be ignored. He who con-
templates the universe
from the religious point
of view, must learn to
see that this which we
call science is one con-
stituent of the great whole,
and as such ought to be
regarded with a senti-
ment like that which the
remainder excites. While
he who contemplates the
universe from the scien-

Spencer

• Tific point of view, must
• learn to see that this which
• we call Religion is simi-
• larly a constituent of
• the great whole, and bring
• such, must be treated as
• a subject of science with
• no more prejudice than
• any other reality. It be-
• hoves each party to strive
• to understand the other,
• with the conviction that
• the other has something
• worthy to be understood;
• and with the conviction
• that, when mutually recog-
• nized this something
• will be the basis of a com-
• plete reconciliation.

Maimonides

• examine all existing
• things, as to what they
• are so that we can derive
• from every branch (of
• science) true and firm
• principles which will
• benefit us in our meta-
• physical researches. -
• How many principles
• could be found from the
• nature of numbers, and
• from the properties of ge-
• ometrical figures, by
• which (principles) we are
• led to certain things
• which are to be kept
• remote from the Deity,
• and the negation of
• which leads to various

Spencer

F. P. O. P. p. 102 ff.

Maimonides

"subjects." As to the scien-

"And now observe that ces of astronomy and
 "all along, the agent which, natural philosophy
 "has effected the purifi- there is not, I think, any
 "cation has been science. doubt to thee concerning
 "We habitually overlook this, but that these things
 "the fact that this has been are necessary in order
 "one of its functions. Religion to teach the relation of
 "ignores its immense debt the universe to the govern-
 "to science; and science is ment of God, how it is in
 "scarcely at all conscious reality and not according
 "how much Religion owes to imaginings. There are
 "it. Yet it is demonstrable also many speculative
 "that every step by which things, which, though
 "Religion has progressed there cannot be derived
 "from its first low concep- from those principles
 "tion to the comparatively for this science (meta-
 "high one it has now reach-physics) yet continually
 "ed, science has helped train the mind and

Sprucer

it, or rather forced it, to
take, and that even now,
science is urging further
steps in the same direc-
tion.

Using the word science in
its true sense, as com-
prehending all positive
and definite knowledge
of the order existing among
surrounding phenome-
na, it becomes manifest
that from the outset, the
discovery of an establish-
ed order has modified
that conception of disorder
or undetermined order,
which underlies every
superstition. As fast

Maimonides

cause it to acquire the
habit of demonstration
and the recognition of
truth by the things which
are essential to it and
which put an end to the
trouble which confusion
of accidental with essen-
tial things generally
causes to arise in the
minds of thinkers, as
well as the false views
which result from it. Fin-
ished to this is the advantage
of well understanding
those subjects of which
we shall speak, consid-
ered in themselves, even
if they did not serve as

Aristotle

• as experience proves that
 • certain familiar changes
 • always happen in
 • the same sequence, there-
 • begins to fade from the
 • mind the conception of
 • a special personality
 • to whose variable will
 • they were before ascribed.
 • And when, step by step,
 • accumulating observa-
 • tions do the like with the
 • less familiar changes,
 • a similar modification
 • of belief takes place with
 • respect to them.

• While this process
 • seems to those who effect,
 • and to those who undergo
 it,

Maimonides

• basis to the science of me-
 • taphysics. Finally, they
 • have also other advantages
 • for certain things by
 • which we arrive at that
 • science. It is, therefore,
 • necessary that he who
 • wishes (to attain) human
 • perfection, instruct
 • himself first in logic,
 • then gradually in ma-
 • thematics, then in the
 • natural sciences and
 • after that in metaphy-
 • sics. —

Spinoza

it, an antireligious one, it is really the reverse.
"Instead of the specific comprehensible agency
"before assigned, there is substituted a less
"specific and less comprehensible agency;
"and though this, standing in opposition to the
"previous one, cannot at first call forth the same
"feeling, yet, as being less comprehensible, it must
"eventually call forth this feeling more fully.
"..... Thus it is with science in general. Its
"progress in grouping particular relations of phe-
"nomena under laws, and these special laws
"under laws more and more general, is of neces-
"sity a progress to causes that are more and more
"abstract. And causes more and more abstract,
"are of necessity causes less and less conceivable;
"since the formation of an abstract conception
"involves the dropping of certain concrete elements
"of thought. Hence the most abstract conception,
"to which science is ever slowly approaching, is

one that merges into the inconceivable or un-
 thinkable, by the dropping of all concrete elements
 of thought. And so is justified the assertion, that
 the beliefs which science has forced upon Re-
 ligion, have been intrinsically more religious
 than those which they supplanted".

Several points in these extracts are worthy
 of notice, in as far as they serve to mark more
 clearly each of the similar positions. Both
 of our authors only make religion depend
 on science and not conversely, though in
 Maimonides a view, like the latter, would
 have been in harmony with contemporary
 Christian writers. Mr. Sprucer seems it neces-
 sary to defend the equal rights of both classes
 of knowledge before proving the dependance
 of one on the other, a defence whose object
 Maimonides seems to have taken for granted.
 As regards those elements of science which

assist the progress of religion, both writers do justice (according to their respective spheres) to the facts as well as to the mental training which science furnishes towards the better recognition of religion. On the whole the agreement is here a most thorough one, though the opinions are such as we should hardly expect to meet in the latter half of the twelfth century.

Chapter II.

The Existence of God.

At the very door of theology we are met by two questions foremost in importance, commanding logical recognition before any further progress, the questions with which stands and falls all subsequent inquiry: Is there a God? Whence do we know, there is one? An overwhelming majority of the world's reasoners answer the former question with an unanimous "there is"; a confusion of tongues answers in a countless different ways the latter query.

There is no need, then, of showing parallel answers as given by our two philosophers to the former question; comparison and proof of resemblance will here begin with the second part: How is the existence of God, or to clothe the term familiar to both,

of a "First Cause," to be proven? We receive the following answers, the comparison of which we shall place after the quoted views and arguments.

Spruener. F.P. at. p. 36. Maim. D.A. II p. 54 ff.

• When we inquire what is the meaning of the "various effects produced upon our senses - when we ask, how there come to be in our consciousness - new impressions of sounds, of colors, of tastes, and of those various attributes which we ascribe to bodies; we are compelled to regard them as the effects of some cause. We may stop short in the

It follows from the twenty-fifth proposition* The Chapter is preceded by twenty-five Aristotelian propositions, from which, on the afterwards repeated assumption (26th proposition) of the eternity of the world, Maim. proves the existence and principal attributes of God. It is subsequently demonstrated that the

^{Spencer}
 . belief that this cause is
 . what we call matter.
 . Or we may conclude, as
 . some do, that matter is
 . only a certain mode of
 . manifestation of spirit, of the eternity of the
 . which is, therefore, the
 . true cause. Or, regarding
 . matter and spirit as
 . proximate agencies, we
 . may attribute all the
 . changes in our conscious
 .ness to immediate dis-
 .cursive power. But to the
 . cause we assign what
 . it may, we are obliged
 . to suppose some cause.
 . And we are not only ob-
 . liged to suppose some

^{Maimonides}
 . that there is a motor
 . which has put in motion
 . the matter of that which
 . is produced and destroyed
 . rejection of the principle
 . of the eternity of the
 . world does not deprive the
 . preceding arguments
 . of their force. The 25th propo-
 . sition reads as follows:
 . The principles of compound
 . and individual substances
 . are matter and form and
 . there is absolutely neces-
 . sary an agent, i.e., a motor,
 . who has moved the substa-
 . nce so as to dispose it for
 . receiving form. And this
 . is the "next mover" which

^{Spinoza}
• cause, but also a first
• cause. The matter or
• spirit, or whatever we
• assume to be the agent
• producing on us these
• various impressions
• must either be the first
• cause of them or not. If
• it is the first cause the
• conclusion is reached.
• If it is not the first cause,
• then by implication there
• must be a cause behind
• it which thus becomes
• the real cause of the ef-
• fect. Manifestly, how-
• ever complicated the
• assumptions, the same
• conclusion must inevit-

^{Maimonides}
• is that it should receive
• form; and when you
• seek that which has put
• in motion this next
• move, it will be neces-
• sary, that you find for
• it some other motor,
• be it of its own, be it
• of another species;
• for movement is found
• in the four categories
• to which, in general,
• is applied the term
• of movement; as we
• dispose (in this manner)
• any individual matter.

^{Spinoza}
 "ably be reached. We
 "cannot think at all
 "about the impressions
 "which the external world
 "produces on us, without
 "Thinking of them as caused,
 "and we cannot carry
 "out an inquiry con-
 "cerning their causation,
 "without inevitably com-
 "mitting ourselves to the
 "hypothesis of a First Cause
 "..... "True, then, respect-
 "ing the nature of the Uni-
 "verse we seem committed
 "to certain unavoidable
 "conclusions. The objects
 "and actions surrounding
 "us, not less than the phe-

^{Maimonides}
 "have said in the fourth
 "proposition. * But this
 "could not continue ad
 "infinitum as we have
 "said in the ^{3rd} ~~fourth~~ proposition. **
 "This proposition sums up
 "the above four categories,
 "viz movements of 1) substance
 "(production and destruc-
 "tion); 2) quantity (increase
 "and decrease); 3) quality
 "(transformation); 4) place
 "(transference). —
 "It reads: "The existence
 "of an infinite number
 "of causes and effects, is
 "inadmissible." —

Sprucer

inasmuch as from non con-
sciousness, compel us to
ask a cause; in our
search for a cause, we
discover no resting place
until we arrive at the
hypothesis of a First Cause.
... These are inferences
forced upon us by ar-
guments from which
there appears no escape.

Maimonides

We, therefore, find that
every movement leads
to the motion of the
first body, *where it
stops. It is from this
last motion that we
derive, and to it, by
links of causation,
leads back, all that
which in this whole in-
ferior world conveys
movement and dis-
poses matter for the re-
ception of form. The cele-
stial sphere has the move-
ment of translation
which is anterior to all
movement, as it has
*The celestial sphere.

Maimonides

• been said in the fourteenth proposition. Like-
 • wise every local movement leads back to the
 • movement of the celestial sphere. One could
 • say, for instance, that this stone which mov-
 • ed has been put in motion by this stick;
 • the stick was moved by the hand, the hand
 • by the sinews, the sinews by the muscles,
 • the muscles by the nerves, the nerves by
 • natural warmth, and this, finally, by the
 • form which is in it (viz. the soul) and which,
 • undoubtedly, is the prime-mover. This
 • motor which has brought it into motion,
 • may have been, for example, an opinion,
 • (intention) viz. to cause this stone, by pro-
 • pelling it with the stick, to fall upon a
 • skylight so as to obstruct it, in order that
 • the wind which is blowing, should not
 • reach him (who throws the stone) through
 • it. That finally, which moves this wind and

^{Maimonides}
"produces its flowing, is the motion of the ce-
"lestial sphere, and thus you will find that
"every cause of production and destruction
"leads back to the motion of the celestial
"sphere. The mover of the celestial sphere will
"necessarily be one of these four things: either
"another body outside of it, or (something)
"separate, or a force distributed over it, or
"an indivisible force. . . . (In a few intro-
"ducing words all cases but the second are
"demonstrated to be impossible). . . . "It is,
"therefore, demonstrated, that the first
"mover of the celestial sphere, if it has an
"eternal and continuous movement, cannot
"at all be either a body or a force in a body.
" . . . And this is God - His name be glorified
"- I mean the First Cause which puts in motion
"the celestial sphere."

Remark - In a fourth proof (D. A. p. 9. aff)

the demonstration based on infinite regression of causes is simply repeated on the strength of another illustration, that of the passing from ~~the~~ actuality to potentiality with its necessary agent.

II.

Spencer, F.P.O.T. p. 88.

"Observe in the first place, that everyone of the arguments by which the reality of our knowledge is demonstrated, distinct by postulates the position of existence of something beyond the relative. Do say that we cannot know the Absolute, is, by implication, to affirm that there is an Absolute. In

II.

Maine, D.A. p. 71 ff.

"Aristotle has, in the beginning, laid down a principle, that, if there is found a thing composed of two things, and one of the two things exists isolated, outside of this composed thing, it is necessary, that the other exist likewise outside of this composed thing, for if their

<i>Spencer</i> The very denial of our power to learn what the Absolute is, there lies hid- den the assumption that it is the case with matter it is; and the making of this assumption proves that the Absolute has been present to the mind not as a nothing, but as a something. Similarly with every step in the reasoning by which this doctrine is upheld. The Phenomenon, everywhere named as the antithesis of the Phenomenon, is throughout necessarily thought of as an actuality. It is rigorously impos-	<i>Mainmored</i> (conditions of) existence exacted, that they should exist only together, as it is the case with matter and form, neither of the two could, in any manner, exist without the other. Thus, there are, as the separate existence of the one is a proof for the lack of necessarily (mutual) connection, it neces- sarily follows, that the other (element) also exists (separately). If, for instance, oxygen exists, and, at the same time, Vinegar and honey mixed.
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Epimenides

possible to conceive that our
Knowledge is a Knowledge of self, it follows necessarily
of Appearances only, with
out at the same time con-
ceiving a Reality of which
they are appearances;
for appearance without
reality is unthinkable.
Strike out from the argu-
ment the terms Uncon-
ditioned, Infinite, Abso-
lute with their equivale-
nts and in place of them
write "negation of con-
ceivability" or "absence
of the conditions, under
which consciousness is
possible" and you find
that the argument be-

Maimonides

time, honey exists by it-
self, it follows necessarily
that vinegar also exists
separately. Having set
forth this proposition
he says: We find many
things composed of a
mover and a thing mo-
ved, that is to say, such
as move another thing
and in conveying move-
ment, are moved them-
selves by another thing;
this is clear regarding
all things intermediate
in movement. But we
find also a thing mo-
ved which does not move
* Aristotle.

<u>Spencer</u> "comes nonsense. Truly "to realize in thought "any one of the propo- "sitions of which the ar- "gument consists, the "Unconditioned must "be represented as positive "and not negative. How, "then, can it be a legiti- "mate conclusion from "the argument that our "consciousness of it is "negative? An argument "the very construction "of which assigns to a certain term a certain "meaning, but which ends in showing that this "term has no such meaning, is simply an el- "aborate suicide. Clearly, then, the very demon- "stration that a definite consciousness of the	<u>Haimonides</u> (other substances); this "is the last thing mov- "ed"; consequently it "is necessary, that there "exist also a motor "which is not (itself) "moved, and this is "the prime-motor."
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Spencer

• Absolute is impossible to us, unavoidably
 • presupposes an indefinite consciousness
 • of it"

III.

Spencer F.P.C.P. p. 90.

• We are conscious of the
 • Relative as existence un-
 • der conditions and limits,
 • it is impossible that there
 • conditions and limits
 • can be thought of apart
 • from something to which
 • they give the form; the ab-
 • straction of these conditions
 • and limits, is, by the hypo-
 • thesis, the abstraction of
 • them only; consequently
 • there must be a residuary
 • consciousness of something
 • which filled up their out-

III.

Main. D.A. II p. 8a.

• One could not doubt,
 • that there are things
 • which exist and those
 • are the things perceiv-
 • ed by the senses. One
 • could not admit in re-
 • gard to things more
 • than three cases, and
 • this is a necessary di-
 • vision: either all things
 • are neither produced
 • nor destroyed, or all of
 • them are produced
 • and destroyed, or they
 • partly are produced

Spencer

"lines; and this indefi-
"nite something consti-
"tutes our consciousness
"of the Non-relative or Ab-
"solute. Impossible though
"it is to give to this concious-
"ness any qualitative
"or quantitative expres-
"sion whatever, it is not
"the less certain that it
"remains with us as a
"positive and indestructi-
"ble element of thought"
p. 96. "As we can in suc-
"cessive mental acts get
"rid of all particular con-
"ditions and replace them
"by others, but cannot get
"rid of that undifferentiated

Maimonides

"and destroyed, partly
"they are not produced
"nor destroyed. The first
"case is evidently in-
"admissible, for we see
"many things which
"are produced and de-
"stroyed. The second
"case is equally inad-
"missible, as I shall
"explain;
"it would follow from
"this (second case) that
"all, I mean all things,
"should of necessity
"have perished. Now,
"after they all had perished,
"it would have been
"impossible, that

Spencer

• ed substance of con-
 • sciousness which is con-
 • ditioned anew in every
 • thought; there ever re-
 • mains with us a sense
 • of that which exists per-
 • sistently and independ-
 • dently of conditions.
 • At the same time that
 • by the laws of thought
 • we are rigorously pre-
 • vented from (aiding
 • ourselves of the con-
 • sciousness of absolute
 • existence. This forming
 • a conception of absolute
 • existence; we are by
 • the laws of thought equally
 • prevented from aiding

Maimonides

• something should exist;
 • for there would not have
 • remained anything,
 • which could have caused
 • anything to exist, from
 • which it follows, that
 • indeed, absolutely
 • nothing would exist. How-
 • ever, we see things, which
 • exist and we ourselves
 • exist. It follows, then,
 • necessarily, from this
 • speculation, that, if
 • there are things which
 • are produced and de-
 • stroyed, as we see it, it
 • is necessary, that there
 • be also some one thing,
 • which is neither produced

<u>Spencer.</u> "ourselves of the conscious- "ness of absolute existence; "this consciousness being, "as we here see, the source "of our self-consciousness. "And since the only pos- "sible measure of relation "validity among our be- "liefs, is the degree of "their persistence in op- "position to the efforts "made to change them, "it follows that this which "persists at all times, un- "der all circumstances, "and cannot cease, until "consciousness ceases, has "the highest validity of any." -	<u>Haimonides</u> "not destroyed. In this "being, which is neither "produced nor destroyed, "there will be absolutely "no possibility of de- "struction; on the con- "trary, He will be of a "necessary, not of a "possible existence. "..... This is a demon- "stration which admits "neither of doubt nor "of refutation, nor of "contradiction except "with him who is ignorant "of the method of demon- "stration."
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Placed side by side, as these extracts are presented, they exhibit more than mere parallel reasonings; considering the vast distance between their authors, these views may be said to disclose a coincidence of intellectual attitudes, which can be explained only on the assumption of a high degree of mental congruity between the two reasoners. Their proofs for the Existence of a First Cause, all the proofs on both sides almost exactly correspond to one another; the underlying logical principles, at least, are the same; the form and illustrations of each proof differ, as far as a fair allowance for circumstantial divergencies would suggest. The three proofs employed are founded on three principles:

- 1) An infinite regression of causes is impossible;
- 2) Independent opposites involve one another;
- 3) There is a persistent element in that which

passes away. All of these principles prove the existence of an imperishable, uncaused First Cause.

It may not be superfluous, in conclusion, to observe, that the strangeness of this exact coincidence is to be ascribed to Mr. Spencer's selection; the proofs which Maimonides adduces were those known to him; many other proofs could have been gleaned by a modern author from the whole of the intervening history of philosophy; it is the more surprising to find, that in his selection of proofs Mr. Spencer adopts entirely and exclusively those employed also by the Jewish philosopher. In calling attention to this fact we do not for a moment intend to suggest any derivation direct or indirect, but merely to strengthen the validity of Maimonides' (though not original) arguments, which, it appears, was not weak-

ed by the rich growth of modern thought.

Chapter III. The Primary Elements of the Divine Perfection.

Penetrating farther into the body of theology, having disposed of the most abstract question, that of existence, we are confronted by a number of perfections which are conceded, more or less unanimously, to be implied, in an Existence such as befits the First Cause. Resemblance, in this field, unless embracing detail, will be less remarkable than that on questions preceding or following; uniformity of views is here, more than anywhere, free from exception, although somewhere a similarity sufficient, by close and unbroken will add its quantum of strength to the sum-total of the argument. A classification of Elements of Perfection has been adopted in the foundation

of differences in the degree of progressing abstraction required, as well as on that of the most natural succession of discovery in view of complexity. Of the Primitive Elements of the Divine Perfection the most abstract, hence also the highest in point of generality is the Element of
a) Divine Incomparability.

It will be scarcely questioned for a moment that this principle embraces, in the strictest sense, any elements of the Divine Perfection which may hereafter be named. The intrinsic truth, that It is utterly unlike and incomparable to, hence unclassifiable with anything we know, this principle is only specified by all other elements of perfection, that can reasonably be advocated. The principle has, in consequence, so decided a character of fundamentality that one

to contradict it in any manner. We append
parallels for the purpose of showing, rather
that the principle has been expressed than
that it has been recognized by both philo-
sophers. Otherwise, its extremely abstract
character would cause its omission by a
philosopher of the twelfth century to appear
no more than natural.

Spencer, F.P.S. p. 81.

Maim. D. A. Tr. 68 b.

• A cognition of the Real • as distinguished • from the Phenomenal • must, if it exists, con- • form to this law of cog- • nition in general. The • First Cause, the Infinite, • the Absolute, to be known • at all, must be classed • to be positively thought.	I should wish to know, then, whence similitude should come so that a single definition could embrace the two and that they could be design- ated by a common name, as it is pretended (that they can be). It is thus demonstrated
---	--

Spencer
Alaimides

"of it must be thought" in a conclusive manner
 "of as such or such-as" that between the attri-
 "of this or that kind" butes which are ascribed
 "Can it be like in kind" to God, and those (attri-
 "to anything of which" butes) which are known
 "we have sensible ex- to us, there is absolutely
 "pression? Obviously" no community of sense
 "not. Between the creat- of any kind, that the
 "ing and the created" community consists
 "there must be a distinc- only in the name, not
 "tion transcending any" otherwise.-
 "of the distinctions exist- This being the case, those
 "ing between different" must not admit ideas
 "divisions of the created," added to the essence of
 "That which is uncaused God) and similar to
 "cannot be assimilated" those attributes, which
 "to that which is caused" accompany our essence
 "the two bring, in the" as there is between the
 "very naming, and the" two (classes of attributes)

<u>Spencer</u> itically opposed. The In- finite cannot be group- ed along with some- thing that is finite; since, in being so grouped, it must be regarded as not in- finite. It is impos- sible to put the Absolute in the same category with anything relative, so long as the Abso- lute is defined as that of which no neces- sary relation can be predicated..... The Unconditioned, therefore, cannot be classed at all"	<u>Maimonides</u> "community of name (only)" <u>Remark</u>. That suits to the same effect in I Ch LII (Appendix p) also in Ch LV (App. p). -
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b) Independence.

Of the Elements which specialize, each in its way, the all-embracing perfection of incomparability, the one which concerns itself with Existence, or rather with that incomparable class of existence, which can be attributed to God, claims the right of first recognition. By logical implication the answer regarding the nature of that existence is almost entirely contained in the idea of the First Cause, a truth which neither of our reasoners has failed to state. This accounts for the otherwise strange procedure of Maimonides, who attaches so immense an importance to his *واجب الوجود* (חוב הקצ'חות, necessary existence) and yet hardly deigns to prove it in an incidental way. It must not be forgotten, besides, that as contained in the nineteenth and

twentieth propositions,* the principle possesses with Maimonides the force almost of a premise. Hence agreement on this point is but to be expected and comparison offers no further occasion for remarks.

Spencer, F.P.O.T. p. 38.

Maim. D. A. II p. 8a.

• Another inference con- In this being which is
• cerning the First Cause. • neither produced nor
• is equally unavoidable. destroyed, there will be
• It must be independent. absolutely no possibi-
• If it is dependent it can- lity of being destroyed,
• not be the First Cause, for on the contrary, it will
• that must be the First • be of a necessary, not of
* These propositions read: 19) Everything the exist-
ence of which has a cause, is of a possible
existence; *forte*. 20) Everything which is of a
necessary existence with relation to its own
essence, holds its existence, in no manner,
from any cause whatsoever.

Spencer

"Cause on which it de-
 pends. It is not enough
 to say that it is partial-
 ly independent; since
 this implies some ne-
 cessity which determines
 its partial dependence
 and this necessity, be-
 it, what it may, must
 be a higher cause, or
 the true First Cause,
 which is a contradic-
 tion. But to think of
 the first cause as total-
 ly independent, is to
 think of it as that
 which exists in the ab-
 sence of all other exist-
 ence; seeing that, if the

Maimonides

a possible existence;
 The necessary
 thing can be such only
 in relation to itself,
 or in relation to its
 cause, so that (in the
 latter case) it could,
 in relation to itself,
 exist or not exist, while
 it would be necessary
 (of existence) in relation
 to its cause, and its
 cause, consequently,
 would be the necessary
 thing, as was said in
 the nineteenth propo-
 sition. It is, then, de-
 monstrated, that it
 is necessary that there

Spencer
"presence of any other
"existence is necessary,
"it must be partially
"dependent on that
"other existence, and
"so cannot be the First
"Cause." -

Maimonides
"should exist a being, the
"existence of which is neces-
"sary in relation to itself
"and that, without it, there
"would exist absolutely
"nothing, neither that
"which is subject to
"production and de-
"struction, nor that
"which is not* if there

"be such a thing at all existing in that lat-
"ter manner, as Aristotle maintains, I
"mean, something not subject to production
"and destruction, being the effect of a cause,
"whose existence is necessary." -

*The celestial sphere, according to Aristotle. -

Chapter IV.
The Primary Attributes of Divine
Perfection. (continued).

Whoever casts a more searching glance at that process in speculative theology which may be designated by the term "attribution," will easily discover, that it is only an application, a fitting on, we may say, of universal or highly general attributes to an existence altogether and unexceptionally unique and perfect. Abstraction, in this process is continually on the increase, attributes are even dropped out and discarded which by their very nature prove too refractory for the refining process required. We refer to the theology based purely on processes of deductive reasoning. The more abstract, the more embracing and general are the attributes so treated, the less will

their legitimacy be likely to be impugned. The most abstract idea which human comprehension grasps is that still unnamed genus of which likeness and unlikeness are the species; existence is generally supposed to be the most abstract conception; but as our unnamed genus embraces the non-existent also, it may justly claim a higher degree of generality. Hence the succession which has been chosen in the case of these two elements.

Of those qualities, common to all things, which, in the process of "attribution" we would testingly apply to the idea of the "First Cause", the next lower in degree of abstraction are those, whose concretes are number and measure, both of which properly come under one, more general, head, viz. limitation. Of these two, number is the

more abstract, the latter even depending on it for its existence; we shall, therefore, discuss these qualities in the corresponding succession.

c) Individuality (Unity).

Individuality (the quality of not being in oneself divided), and not Unity, is the Term which properly and strictly designates the well known, much emphasised attribute of the First Cause. The real essence of this idea of oneness, of indivisibility is the conception of the most indestructible harmony; composed harmony can be disconnected; the harmony of the one is coeternal with its existence. — Here, again, inevitable logic is so forcibly in favor of individuality, so utterly opposed to any idea of composition or multiplicity, that an agreement of any two thinkers on this subject may be passed

over without notice; it is not, however, merely for the sake of completeness that the following quotations are placed side by side, but in order to demonstrate - as the mere collocation of extracts by itself can - that the proofs of both philosophers for the verity as unexceptionally recognized are, in all but form, identical.*

*It will be found, that Mr. Spencer uses one proof not mentioned by Maimonides, viz. the one based on two Infinites limiting each other (p. 8). In this proof, however, Mr. Sp. proceeds on the premise, erroneously taken for granted, that two Infinites cannot exist at the same time. No reason, why they cannot, is assigned; nor can any reason be imagined, unless "infinity" be taken in the illegitimate, here altogether incorrect, sense of spatial infinitude -

Spencer
F. F. o. P. p. 81.

"This implication (that of plurality) is self-contradictory. There cannot be more than one First Cause; seeing that the existence of more than one would involve the existence of something necessitating more than one, which something would be the True First Cause."

Maimonides
D. A. II. p. 81 ff.

Likewise it can easily be demonstrated to be inadmissible that the necessary existence in relation to itself belongs to two (existences); for the species of necessary being would then be an idea added to the essence of each of the two and neither of the two would now be a necessary being by its mere essence; but it would be (a necessary being) by this one idea which constitutes the species of the being

"and which would belong to the one and to the
"Other"

Remark. The above being the first clear proof
of unity found in the D. A., the end of the
Chapter (D. A. II 96ff.) gives a form more
decidedly similar to that of Spencer, which,
however, is too lengthy to allow of convenient
quotation beyond mere reference.

d) Divine Infinity.

Infinity is one of those ideas which have
been left without a clear definition for
no other reason, but in consequence of their
too frequent use. As applied to the Divinity
this term signifies absence of limit in all
quantitative attributes; by this definition
will be obviated the popular mistake of ap-
plying "Infinity" only to Space and Time.

Infinity is of the number of Divine Attributes
which have not only never been disputed,

but whose mention has rarely been omitted. With respect to Spencer and Maimonides two observations concerning the distinguishing character of their views may tend to throw light on the subsequent quotations:

1) Infinity is to both scientifically impossible; witness, on the one hand, Spencer, *F. P. & P.* p. 62.: "All Infinity is inconceivable*, an infinite series included; on the other, Maimonides' first three propositions, which deny the possibility of infinite extension, number and succession. 2) Both adopt in their statements only the close and popular meaning of infinity, embracing

* A closer examination of Mr. Sp. *F. P. & P.* will reveal what may be taken as a criticism, that he uses "inconceivable," "unthinkable," "impossible" almost entirely as synonyms.

only absence of limit in time and space.
Spencer D.F.O.F. p. 37. | for Maimonides cf. from
"But now if we go a step | The Appendix Ch. I p.
"further and ask, what is the nature of this
"First Cause we are driven by an inexorable
"logic to certain further conclusions. Is the
"First Cause finite or infinite? If we say
"finite, we involve ourselves in a dilemma.
"To think of the First Cause as finite, is to
"think of it as limited. To think of it as
"limited, necessarily implies the concep-
"tion of something beyond its limits; it is
"absolutely impossible to conceive a thing
"as bounded without conceiving a region sur-
"rounding its boundaries. What now must
"we say of this region? If the First Cause is
"limited and there consequently lies some-
"thing outside of it, this something must
"have no First Cause, must be uncaused.

^{hence}
 "But if we admit, that there can be something
 "uncaused, there is no reason to assume a
 "cause for anything. If beyond that finite
 "region ~~over~~ which the First Cause extends,
 "there lies a region, which we are compelled
 "to regard as infinite, ~~over~~ which it does not
 "extend - if we admit, that there is an infi-
 "nite uncaused surrounding the finite
 "caused; we tacitly abandon the hypothesis
 "of causation altogether. Thus it is impos-
 "sible to consider the First Cause as finite.
 "And if it cannot be finite, it must be in-
 "finite."

Before we enter upon the discussion of
 "Secondary Elements" a few words are urgent-
 ly needed to exonerate our procedure up
 to this point from a grave charge, which
 might, with much apparent justice, be
 advanced. In our comparison we have been

building on treacherous ground, as regards the Spencerian side; the philosopher himself condemns and rejects his own arguments in the most emphatic manner, on the very page on which he has been drawing these "unavoidable conclusions." "These are inferences," says he, "forced upon us by arguments from which there appears no escape. It is hardly needful, however, to show those, who have followed so far, how il-lusory are these reasonings. But that it would tax the reader's patience to no pur-pose, it might easily be proved, that the materials of which the argument is built, equally with the conclusions based on them, are merely symbolic conceptions of the il-legitimate order."

A declaration so scornful and forcible ought to be sufficient to annihilate the

very last element of validity in conclusions
 thus treated. And yet one may so boldly
 himself to claim, that these conclusions
 have remained essentially unharmed.
 These conclusions, or rather their founde-
 tions are not the only "symbolic concep-
 tions of the illegitimate order" Mr. Spruce
 discovers. Their fate is shared by "Ultimate
 Scientific Ideas", space, time, matter etc.;
 all conclusions based also on these "sym-
 bolic conceptions of the illegitimate order"
 suffer from the same invalidity. And yet
 are these latter conclusions irredeemably
 rejected for the same reason? By no means.
 One by one they are taken up again and
 freed from the stigma of illegitimacy;
 and from what standpoint? without further
 proof of our assertion we may say, from a
 purely subjective standpoint.

It would be a process too lengthy for the extent of this treatise and in consideration of its own relative importance, to take up also these illegitimate symbolic conceptions and to imitate and supplement Mr. Spruce's one-sided process of subjective justification by reestablishing the validity of the religious as he has done with that of the scientific conclusions alike loosely founded. Subjectively the "illegitimate" conceptions of religion have, no doubt, equal rights with those of science. The conclusions based on them are "unavoidable"; "there appears no escape" from them; to all of them we are "driven by an inexorable logic"; why, then, should they, unlike scientific conclusions equally at fault, be utterly rejected? What else should be of force sufficient to establish theological conclusions,

if it is not "inexorable logic"? If theology be founded on conceptions no less legitimate than the fundamental scientific conceptions, its conclusions must necessarily be accorded a proportionate degree of recognition.

For all of the above reasons it has seemed just to the subject to insert even such views of Mr. Spencer which he afterwards rejects and to receive them as representatives of modern theological reasoning to be placed at the side of Maimonides' thought. For even on the assumption (which is yet to be proved) that Mr. Spencer decidedly and conclusively refuses to re-adopt the reasonings adduced and controverted by him, it cannot be denied that, at least, he assumes them as fair representatives of a logical modern theology. As such and no more we have made use

of these views; hence, even if they be not
at all his views, they have legitimately
subverted the purpose of furnishing that
modern foil, by means of which the vali-
dity of Maimonides' theology will be-
come most strongly apparent.

Chapter V.

Secondary Elements of Divine Perfection.

The attributes coming under this heading are not secondary in the sense of being derived from the primary ones preceding them; since even all of the primary elements are mutually derivable this is not the distinguishing mark, by which it would be correct to keep the two classes apart; they are secondary, however, not only in importance but also in so far, as the trains of reasoning required for arriving at them are more remote and complicated, placing them at a greater distance from that which is most generally and frequently ascribed to the First Cause. It is in remote elements like these that the individuality of the writer will hardly fail to assert itself, that resemblance will be less probable, hence

of greater force and value.

a) God is not anthropomorphic.

This element is almost completely implied in the very first (incomparability) and corroborated, as may be easily perceived, by every succeeding one; yet is the danger of clashing with it so imminent both from the elevated position of man in the realm of nature and from the sublimity and alluring character of some of his best qualities that few theologians will trust it merely to be included in the more general perfection without devoting some reflection to a specification of such weighty importance. As to the particular position of the philosophers whom we compare it is peculiar, how harmoniously, with how strikingly similar an emphasis they treat this very point. Otherwise their manner

of presentation differs in exact correspondence with the advancement of their respective ages; Spence's words in an age which should be far above such puerilities, breathe a sort of tempered indignation, while Maimonides seems rather animated by a scrupulous anxiety to express the idea well and to impress it forcibly upon his readers. From both philosophers we cite only such aspects of the question as generally escape the theological reasoner, those elements which are most frequently causes of misconception; an agreement of both as to the folly of lower anthropomorphism is a fortiori self-understood and will pass without the proof of express citation. In the statements of Mr. Spence one may observe the curious fact that he seems to consider himself ^{entirely} outside of the range of all

orthodox theology, being unconscious, in all probability, of the fact, that the same ideas were expressed before him by a Jewish theologian and philosopher of the 12th century. Spencer, Rel. Retrospect and Main. D. A. I. 68a.

Prospect p. 345 ff.	"In the same way, there-
"Already... this one su-	"for those who believe
"prematural power has,	"that there are essential
"by what Mr. Fiske aptly,	"attributes applying to
"calls deanthropomor-	"the Creator, viz. that He
"phixation lost the gross-	"has existence, life, power
"attributes of humanity	"and will ought to un-
"If things hereafter are	"derstand, that these
"to follow the same general	"things cannot be attri-
"course as heretofore, we	"buted to Him in the
"must infer, that this	"same sense as to us
"dropping of human attri-	"with the only difference
"butes will continue.	"that these attributes
"Let us ask, what positive	"should be greater, more

<u>Spencer</u>	<u>Maimonides</u>
changes are liable to be expected. such emotions (anger, repentance, etc.), in common with all emotions can exist only in a consciousness which is limited. That is to say, the conception of a divinity possessing these traits of character necessarily continues anthropomorphic; not only in the sense that the emotions ascribed are like those of human beings, but also in the sense that they form part of a con- sciousness, which, like the human, is formed of suc-	perfect, more lasting or safer than ours, so that His existence be safer than ours, His life more lasting, His power greater than ours, His knowledge more per- fect than ours and His will farther reach- ing than ours and that the same defini- tion embrace the two things, as they present. It is not at all so, for the comparative is im- ployed only with things to which the respective adjective applies as common noun and

<u>Spencer</u> cessive states. Of course, this brings so, it is neces- sary that there exist themselves, when the will of God is spoken of. then, clear, for him who will, like emotion, neces- sarily supposes a series of states of consciousness. The conception of a divine will derived from that of the human will, in other words, like it, localization in space and time; It is the same with the ascription of intelligence that to dwell on the sen- sibility and limitation implied as before, we may note, that intelligence as alone conceivable by	<u>Haimonides</u> like difficulties present. similarity; It is, then, clear, for him who understands the course of similarity that, when to God and to every- thing outside of Him the word "existing is applied this is only by simple homonymy; in the same way knowledge, power, will and life are attributed at the same time to God and to every- thing gifted with know- ledge, power, will and life, this is only by simple homonymy, so
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Spencer

"us, presupposes existence
 "independent of it and ob-
 "jective to it. It is carried
 "on in terms of changes pri-
 "marily wrought by alism
 "activities - the impressions
 "generated by things beyond
 "consciousness and the
 "ideas derived from such
 "impressions. Hence
 "it is clear that the intel-
 "ligence ascribed answers
 "in no respect to that which
 "we know by the name. It
 "is intelligence out of
 "which all the characters
 "constituting it have ra-
 "nished."

Hui monides

"that there is no ressim-
 "lance between the two."
 D. Q. III p. 42a.
 For my part I think,
 "that the cause of all
 "these troubles is, that
 "a relation has been
 "set up between our
 "knowledge and that of
 "God, so that each party
 "considering that which
 "to us, to our knowledge,
 "is impossible, has ma-
 "gnified, that it is neces-
 "sarily also to divine
 "knowledge, or, at least,
 "there are found diffi-
 "culties. . . . In fact,
 "this knowledge is not

^{Maimonides}
"of the same species as ours, that we could
judge of it by analogy; it is, on the contrary,
something entirely different."

b.) God is negatively to be attributed.
This perfection is one of a logical character,
and is, therefore, rarely classed as a perfection.
Yet it will be found to be such, when it is con-
sidered, that positive knowledge of a thing
or any possibility of such a knowledge, is,
in some degree, a limitation of the thing thus
known. This perfection is of a highly general
character, but occupies more properly the
last place, as it is stated with reference
merely to human powers of knowledge. All
the preceding elements had one thing in
common: their negative form (incomparabi-
lity, individuality &c); it is one of the most pro-
found ideas of theology to recognize that

this characteristic is a necessary one, that perfections attributed to the Deity are only negations of imperfections, that this is the only method left us by which to approach recognition of the Divine Essence, as will be more clearly perceived in the context of the following Chapter. The forcible emphasising and the thorough carrying out of this idea may be looked upon as the grand achievement of the Arabian Mutaxilite school. The excellent philosophical sense Maimonides evinced in adopting this doctrine is corroborated by the zeal with which Spinoza advocates it; he justly looks upon it as the grand feature of the Unknowable, the true indication of its inscrutable mystery.

Spinoza F.P. p. 94. Maim. D.A. I p. 72a ff.
 in obedience to it (philosophy) we abandon, one increase the attributes

Spenser
after another, each idea
as it arises; yet as we
cannot expel the entire
contents of consciousness,
there ever remains behind
an element which passes
into new shapes. The con-
tinual negation of each
particular form and
limit, simply results in
the more or less complete
abstraction of all form
and limits;
by taking away the limits
and conditions in suc-
cessive acts, we form an
indefinite notion of ge-
neral existence. By fus-
ing a series of states of
Malinowski
of a certain object it is
better determined and
he who gives it attributes
adds to the perception
of reality. Likewise,
whenever negations are
multiplied with respect
to God, you are approach-
ing to the (true) percep-
tion, and you are near-
er to it, than he who de-
nies not that which it
is proven to you, ought
to be denied. . . . I. e. g.,
shall prove, that He
is not a body; another
man will doubt whether
He is or is not a body;
another, finally, will

^{Spencer}
 consciousness in each of
 which, as it arises, the limitations and conditions
 are abolished, there is produced a consciousness of something unconditional.

^{Maimonides}
 decide that He is a body and will fall short of God by such a belief. How great will be the difference between the three persons! The first one will, undoubtedly be the nearest to God, the second one will be farther from Him, and the third one the farthest. In the same manner, if we suppose a fourth one to whom it would be demonstrated, that affects are inadmissible with respect to God, while to the former, who denies corporeity only, this would not be demonstrated, this fourth one would, undoubtedly be nearer to God than the former one and so on, so that, if there was found a person, to whom it would be demonstrated, that it is impossible (to admit) many things regarding God which, according to us, could exist

in or emanate from Him - and still more so, if,
until then, we had believed them necessary, -
this person would, undoubtedly, be more per-
fect than we."

Remark. There are several elements of Divine Perfection which have not been treated in Chapters III, IV and V and some account of which may be thought necessary. They are: one attribute of an universal character, viz. unchangeableness, and several attributes corresponding to human ones, as that God is almighty, alwise and most holy, omniscient, perfectly just etc. These elements have been omitted for various reasons. The attribute of unchangeableness is a consequence of the combination of unity and necessary existence; that true oneness, whose existence is necessary, must be oneness in succession, as well as in coexisting moments, this al-

Tribute, besides, is contained in every point of the element of God being not-anthropomorphic*. Attributes, such as infinite wisdom, infinite goodness, infinite justice &c. &c. are too much founded on mere analogy from man, to form a subject, too dangerously suggestive of anthropomorphism, to form a subject of purely speculative theology, unaided by revelation, as that branch of inquiry is. It is for this reason that Mr. Spence rejects them in his Chapter: Religious Retrospect and Prospect p. 345 ff. which (from the standpoint of pure speculation) also Maimonides does as may be gleaned

*Reference to p. 345 of Mr. Spence's Ch.: Religious Retrospect and Prospect and to D. A. I. Ch. L (s. in Appendix) will suffice to prove that also in regards to this attribute the two philosophers agree -

from D. A. I. 636.

Chapter VI.

Man's Knowledge of God.

The question with which the deductions of speculative theology might be introduced, but which, at the end of theological speculation we are better prepared to answer is this: how far is it possible for man to know God?

The subjects preceding have treated of God as an independent existence, disregarding entirely his relation to other beings; the question, however, demands solution, of what nature is the relation between God and the highest class of existence known, the human mind? The subject will be conveniently subdivided as follows:

- 1) What is our consciousness or knowledge of God?
- 2) How do we arrive at knowledge of God?
- 3) How does this knowledge advance?

4) What is the general characteristic of God as to His "knowableness"?

To the first question short and decisive answers can be cited from our philosophers. To Spencer our knowledge of God is "an indefinite consciousness of the unformed and unlimited" (F. P. o. F. p. 94) Maimonides, speaking of God, says (D. u. I 70 b) "we comprehend of Him only that He is, not what He is"; * with both our knowledge is one of the mere fact of existence.

To the second question also both give the same answer: negation is the only process, by which knowledge of God is arrived at. This answer is already contained in that divine perfection, according to which God is only negatively to be attributed; whatever knowledge

* إِلَّا أَنَّهُ فَعْلٌ لَا مَاهِيَّةٌ : وليس ندرك إلا أنَّهُ فَعْلٌ لَا مَاهِيَّةٌ : literally we know only His "that", not His "what".

we have of the divine perfection is negative. The quotations cited at the end of the section devoted to the above perfection imply the answer to our second question.

From the manner in which this knowledge has been arrived at, may be easily concluded the manner of its progress, which, in the straight line of all progress, must be the same. The idea of continual increase in the knowledge of the Divine by means of advancing negation is certainly not a common one, however weighty and fundamental its character; yet the agreement between Spencer's and Maimonides' words almost amounts to a coincidence.

Spencer, F.P.O.P. p. 113. | Maim. D. A. I p. 72a.

"Very likely there will. It is thus clear to you,
 "we remain a need, that, whenever it will
 "to give shape to that in- be demonstrated that a
 "definite issue of an Ul- certain thing ought to be

Spencer

• Finite Existence, which
• forms the basis of our
• intelligence. . . . Per-
• haps the constant forma-
• tion of such symbols and
• constant rejection of them
• as inadequate, may be
• hereafter, as it has hitherto
• to him, a means of decep-
• tion. Perpetually to con-
• struct ideas requiring
• the utmost stretch of
• our faculties and perse-
• cutually to find that such
• ideas must be abandon-
• ed as futile imaginings
• may realize to us more
• fully than any other
• course the greatness of

Haimonides

• denied of God, you will
• thereby be more perfect
• and wherever you attri-
• bute to Him affirmations.
• by something added (to
• His essence) you will as-
• simulate Him (to other
• things) and be far from
• knowing His reality.
• It is in this manner, that
• it is necessary to approach
• the perception of God, by
• means of examination
• and study, in order to
• know the falsity of all
• which is inadmissible
• with regard to Him
• and not in attributing
• to Him affirmatively

^{Spinoza}
 "that which we vainly
 " strive to grasp. Such ef-
 " forts and failures may
 " serve to maintain in
 " our minds a due sense
 " of the incommensurable
 " difference between the Con-
 " ditioned and the Uncon-
 " ditioned. By continually
 " seeking to know and bring
 " continually throw back
 " with a deepened convic-
 " tion of the impossibility
 " of knowing, we may keep
 " alive the consciousness that
 " it is alike our highest wis-
 " dom and our highest duty
 " to regard that through
 " which all things exist,

^{Maimonides}
 " something as being ad-
 " ded to His essence, or as
 " if this thing was a per-
 " fection in relation to
 " Him, since it is found
 " to be one in relation to
 " us, for all these perfec-
 " tions are only some ca-
 " pabilities or others and
 " every capacity exists
 " only in beings gifted
 " with capacities. You
 " will know, then, that if
 " you attribute to Him
 " affirmatively one thing
 " more you remove your-
 " self from Him in two
 " respects: first because
 " you attribute to Him

^{Spencer}
"as the Unknowable."
^{Maimonides}
(that which is) a perfec-
tion to us, and, in the
second place, because He does not possess
anything additional, and it is, on the contrary,
His essence itself which forms His perfection,
as we have explained."

The last question, inquiring for the general cha-
racteristic of God, as regards His Knowableness
is of a position sufficiently conspicuous in the
Spencerian system to have given it the much
abused name of Agnosticism. Mr. Spencer's po-
sition, in this respect, is one perfectly just from
the standpoint of mere speculative theology,
distasteful as it may be to the dogmatic school,
it is an indisputable truth that to reason un-
aided God is the Unknowable, the impene-
trable mystery. This view is not only devoid of danger
to religion, but it is perfectly in accord with it,
that there exists no antagonism will be proved.

most conclusively from the words of a Maimonides
 which are written in the most unmistakable
 spirit of "Agnosticism", as it has been misnamed.
Spencer, F. P. O. P. p. 108 ff. Maim. D. A. I 716

"Thus the consciousness of an inscrutable Power
 manifested to us through all phenomena has been
 growing ever clearer; and must eventually be freed
 from its imperfections. The certainty that, on the
 one hand such a power exists, while, on the other
 hand its nature transcends intuition and is
 beyond imagination, is the certainty, towards which
 intelligence has from

Now knowest, O Reader of this treatise, that
 these beams (and they are a body which is mea-
 sured and we have meas-
 ured them by spans
 and cubits, so that we
 include in our science
 the measures of certain
 of its parts and most of
 its movements) our in-
 tellects are too feeble to
 comprehend their guid-
 ance, although we know
 that they possess, mat-

Spruce

"the first has progressed
".... It is true, that we
"are totally unable to con-
"ceive any such higher
"mode of being. But this is
"not a reason for question-
"ing its existence; it is
"rather the reverse. Have
"we not seen how utterly
"incompetent our minds
"are to form even an ap-
"proach to a conception
"of that which underlies
"all phenomena? Is it
"not proved that this in-
"competency is the incom-
"petency of the conditioned
"to grasp the Unconditioned
"ed? Does it not follow,

Maimonides

"too and form except
"that there is not there a
"matter like the one in
"us. This is why we can
"designate them only by
"inexact words, not by a
"definite affirmation;
"In fact we say that the
"heavens are neither light
"nor heavy, that they can-
"not be affected and there-
"fore receive no impression,
"that they have neither
"taste nor smell and
"other similar negations;
"all this by reason of our
"ignorance concerning said
"matter. And what will be
"the state of our intellects

<u>Sprucer</u> "that the Ultimate Cause" "cannot in any respect" "be conceived by us, because" "it is in every respect greater" "than can be conceived?" "And, may we not, therefore," "rightly refrain from as- "signing to it any attri- "butes whatever, on the "ground that such attri- "butes, derived as they "must be from our own "natures, are not elevating "but degradations?... May "we not without hesitation "affirm that a sincere re- "cognition of the truth that "our own and all other ex- "istence is a mystery ab-	<u>Haimonides</u> "when they attempt to seize "that which is pure from "matter, most extremes in "its simplicity, the neces- "sary bring which has no "cause, and which is not "affected by anything "joined to its perfect es- "sence, whose perfection "signifies negation of im- "perfections, as we have "set forth? for we under- "stand concerning Him "nothing except that He is "that there is a bring re- "sembled by none of the "things He has produced, "that He has nothing in "common with these latter,
---	--

^{Sprucer} "solitely and forever" "beyond our comprehen- sion, contains more of true religion, than all the dogmatic theology ever written?"	^{Maimonides} "that there is not in Him neither multiplicity nor lack of power to pro- duce that which is out- side of Him? Praise to Him, whom when the intellects reflect upon in His essence, their comprehension changes to inability (to compre- hend) and when they examine how His acts result from His will, their knowledge changes to ignorance and when the tongues wish to glorify Him by attributes, all eloquence be- comes a stammering and an impotency"
---	---

Summary.

Having compared the two philosophers according to a system of organically classified views we shall resume in a few words the conclusions to which we are led by the comparison. All the quotations cited referred to one narrowly circumscribed subject, that of philosophical theology, from which were carefully kept out all elements of a nature not strictly deductive or philosophical. Within this subject, though it embraces a considerable number of points, some of which are much disputed and variously judged, a minute resemblance was found between Maimonides and Spinoza; by means of hardly any argument beyond mere selection and juxtaposition their views were shown to be always identical; often even their proofs and arguments were the same, all this notwithstanding the numerous and strong con-

Tracts existing between the two thinkers.
A resemblance so remarkable cannot in any
manner be imagined to be due to a merely
incidental agreement of views; but to an
impartial observer it must go far towards
proving the validity of views so completely
and yet so involuntarily corroborated. It
was not, however, the direct purpose in view
of this writing to prove that these views were
valid; a procedure like ours can prove only
a probability of their being so. This much, how-
ever, must be regarded as conclusively de-
monstrated that views advocated but recent-
ly cannot be called antiquated, that a phi-
losophical reasoner whose views still find
defenders, even unconscious defenders,
cannot be looked upon as having been dis-
abled from the arena of philosophical or
theological controversy. There is due, then,

to Moses Maimonides more interest than
merely that of the historian, more recogni-
tion than the gratitude only of his own
age, he must be looked upon as one of those
who are "of all times"; whose words and whose
names partake of the immortality of all
living, impeishable truth.

Appendix.

Part. IChapter LII.

Whenever an object is asserted to have an affirmative attribute, and it is said to be such and such, this attribute must necessarily belong to one of the following five classes:

I. The first class is that, in which the thing is described (in regard to attribute) by its definition, as, e.g., when man is designated as being "the rational animal". Such an attribute indicates the quiddity of a thing and its true being, and we have already set forth, that it is the explanation of a name, nothing else. This class of attributes is remote from the deity in the opinion of every one; for He, the Exalted, has no preceding causes of His existence by which He could be defined.

And, therefore, it is admitted among all such thinkers who are exact in their statements, that God cannot be defined.

The second class is that in which the thing is described (in regard to attribute) by part of its definition, as when man is described by (the attribute of) "animation" or by "reason". Here the meaning is that of identification; for, if we say, every man is intelligent, the meaning of this is merely, that in everyone, with whom (the attribute of) "manhood" is found, "reason" is (also) found. And this class of attributes is remote from God, the Exalted, in the opinion of everyone; for if He had a part of a quiddity, then His quiddity would be composed; and this class is as inadmissible of Him, as the one preceding it is inadmissible.

The third class is that, in which the thing

is described by something outside of its reality and essence, so that this thing (viz, the attribute) should not be of those which make up and constitute its essence and that this thing (the attribute) should form (merely) a quality. But quality - this is its higher genus* - is an accident; and if there should be found in Him, the Exalted, an attribute of this class, He would be a bearer** of accidents and this in itself is sufficiently remote from His reality and essence, that He should possess a quality.

* meaning that "quality" is classed as species under the higher genus "accident."

S. Munk's note vol. I. p. 198.

- ** literally: "seat".

But it is surprizing, that those who admit attributes should everywhere avoid assimilation of God (to anything else) and qualification; for when they say that He cannot be qualified, this signifies nothing at all, if not this, that He possesses no quality; and everywhere, every attribute given to an essence in an affirmation and essential sense, either constitutes the essence - and then it is that itself - or it is a quality of this essence.

The kinds of quality are four in number; I shall give thee an example of each of these kinds under the form of an attribute in order to show thee the impossibility of admitting in the Exalted this kind of attribute.

The first example is, when, for instance,

you describe man by any of his qualities, intellectual or moral, or the dispositions, which are found in him, in as much as he is an animated being, as when you say: H. H. the carpenter, or: the chaste one, or the sick one; there is no difference, whether you say: "the carpenter"; or "the ^Isage", or "the scholar"; (as) they are all dispositions in the soul, and there is no difference, whether you say "the chaste one", or you say, "the merciful one", because every art and every science and every permanent moral quality is a disposition in the soul. And all this is clear to whosoever has occupied himself with the art of logic ever so little.

The second example is, when, for instance, you describe the thing by a natural

power or a natural lack of power, as, e.g., when you say: "the soft" and "the hard"; and there is no difference, whether you say "the hard" and "the soft", or whether you say "the strong" and "the weak"; all these are natural aptitudes.

The third example is, when, e.g., you describe man by one affective quality or by the affections, as when you say: "H. H., the angry one", or "the irritated one", or "the timid one", or "the compassionate one", where the quality is not permanent, and of this class it is, when you describe a thing by color, taste, odor, warmth, coldness, dryness and humidity.

The fourth example is, when, e.g., a thing is described by that which concerns it as a quantity, in so far as

it is such; as, e.g., when you say, "the long", "the short", "the curved", "the straight", and other similar things.

When you consider all these attributes and others like them, you will find them inadmissible with regard to God; for He has no quantity, that there could exist in Him a quality consisting of quantity, like this; He is not impressed nor passively affected so that there could be in Him any quality of affections; He has no aptitudes, so that He could have powers or anything like them; finally, God has no soul, that He should have dispositions and that there should be in Him capacities, such as gentleness, shame and other similar things or that which belongs to animated beings, as, e.g., health and

disease. It is clear, then, that every attribute which is referable to the higher genus "quality" cannot be found in God.

It is thus demonstrated that these three classes of attributes, viz.: all that which indicates a quiddity, or part of a quiddity, or any quiddity whatsoever, which is found in the quiddity, are inadmissible with regard to God; for they all point to composition, which, as we shall demonstrate, is inadmissible with regard to God.

The fourth class of attributes is that in which the thing is described by its relation to another thing, by putting it in relation, e.g., with a certain time, or with a place or with another individual; as, e.g., when you describe said by his being

the father of so-and-so, or partner of so-and-so
 or inhabitant of such-and-such a place,
 or as him, who lived in such-and-such a
 time. This kind of attributes implies neither
 multiplicity in the object described, for
 this said in question is (at the same time)
 partner to Amir, father to Bekr, master
 of Chalid, friend of some other said, in-
 habitant of the above house and (he is)
 the one who was born in the above year.
 These ideas of relation are neither his
 essence, nor, like the qualities, something
 in his essence, and it appeared at first
 sight that one could ascribe to God this
 kind of attributes, however, in verifying
 and closely examining the thing, its in-
 admissibility will be clear. In the
 first place it is evident, that God stands
 not in relation with time and space;

and this is manifest: for time is an
accident cohering with movement, as
in it (movement) is found the idea
of anteriority and posteriority and it
is numbered (by means of time), as is
explained in the passages especially
devoted to this subject; movement, then,
being of that which coheres with body
and God not being a body at all, it
follows, that there is no relation between
Him and time. Similarly, there is no
relation between Him and space. But
(what should be) the object of research
and examination is (to know) if there
is between God and any of the creatures
created by Him any true relation, such
that it could serve Him as an attribute.
That there cannot exist any relation
between Him and any of the things cre-

ated by Him, is evident at first sight: for one of the properties of two related things is perfect reciprocity; God is of a necessary existence and that which is outside of Him is of a possible existence, as we shall explain, and, consequently, there should exist no relation (between God and any creature). But that there should exist between them some relation is a thing which has been deemed admissible, but it is not so. For it is impossible that you should imagine a relation between intelligence and color, and yet, in our opinion, one existence embraces them; how, then, could you imagine a relation between Him, who has absolutely nothing in common with that which is outside of Him (and between any other thing)? For relation necessarily always

exists only between two things, which are
under the same "immediate genus";
but when they are (merely) under the same
genus, there is no relation between them;
that is, why we do not say: "This red is
stronger or weaker than this green, or equal
to it", although they are both under one
and the same genus, i.e., color. When the
two things are found under two genera,
then it is clear, even to common use,
that there is no relation between them,
even if they should be referable to one
(higher) genus. Thus, e.g., there is no rela-
tion between a hundred cubits and the
warmth of pepper: for the one of these two
things belongs to the genus (category) of
quantity, while the other belongs to that
*The "next genus" which follows individuality;
the "species specialissima" or lowest species.

of quantity. But there is no more relation between knowledge and sweetness, nor between gentleness and bitterness, although all these belong to the higher genus of 'quality'. Now, then, could there be a relation between God, and any thing from among His creatures, with all the great distance in the reality of being a distance than which there is nothing plainer? If there existed a relation between them, it would also follow that the accident of relation adheres to God; for, though it be true, that this would not be an accident in God's essence itself it would be still, on the whole, a kind of accident. There is not, then, in reality, any way of giving to God an affirmative attribute, be that even a relation. But these attributes (those of relation) are among the

attributes those, which most deserve indulgence for their employment as qualifications of God; for they do not imply any multiplicity in the Eternal, nor do they imply change in the essence of God by reason of change in the things with which He is related.

The fifth class of affirmative attributes is that, when a thing is described (with regard to attribute) by its action. By "its action" I do not mean the artistic ability found in it, as, when you say, "the carpenter" or "the smith", — this belongs to the species of "quality"; as we have said; but I mean, by "action" that action, which one does, when, e.g., you say: Said is the one who has built this gate, put up this wall and woven this stuff. The attributes of this kind are remote from the essence of the thing described; it is

for this reason, that we are permitted to as-
 cribe them to God, provided it is well known,
 that the various actions do not necessarily
 emanate from various conditions existing
 in the essence of their author, as we shall
 explain. On the contrary, the various actions
 of God arise from His essence alone and
 not from anything added to it, as we have
 declared.

Summing up, then, we have explained in
 this Chapter, that God is one from all
 sides, that there is in Him no multipli-
 city nor anything joined to His essence, and
 that the numerous attributes of various
 senses employed in the (holy) books, in
 order to designate God, indicate the mul-
 tiplicity of His actions and not a mul-
 tiplicity in His essence. Some are used
 in order to indicate His perfection by

reference to what we believe to be a per-
fection, as we have set forth. As to knowing
if it is possible, that an essence, one and
simple, in which there is nothing of mul-
tiplicity, should accomplish various
actions, this will be explained by ex-
amples.

Chapter LV.

We have already said, in several passages of this treatise, that everything which implies corporeity must necessarily be kept distinct from God. In the same manner affection* must be kept apart from Him; for all affections imply change and the agent of these affections is, undoubtedly a different thing from that which is passively affected. If then, God should be, in any manner, passively affected, there would be something outside of Him, which would act upon Him and change Him. Likewise we must necessarily keep remote from Him every deficiency and not admit that any perfection whatsoever could at one time the word is used in the scholastic sense.

time to missing, at another existing
in Him; for if one admitted that, He
would be perfect (merely) in potentia-
lity; but all potentiality is necessa-
rily accompanied by a deficiency, and
all that which passes from potentiality
to actuality has absolute need of some
other thing, existing in actuality, which
causes it to pass into it (viz. actuality).
For this reason it is necessary that all
His perfections exist in actuality, and
that He has absolutely nothing in poten-
tiality. That which, besides, it is neces-
sary to keep remote from Him, is resim-
blance to any one being whatever; this
is something which everybody knows
and already in the prophetic writ-
ings assimilation has been distinctly
repeated in saying: And to whom will

you liken me to whom shall I be equal?
(Is. lxv. 25) and to whom will you liken
God, and what likeness will you attri-
bute to Him? (Is. xlv. 18) No one is like
unto Thee, O Eternal" (Is. xlv. 6). There are
numerous examples.

Summarily, then, everything which
leads to one of these four species must
necessarily be kept remote from Him
by clear demonstration; namely every-
thing which leads to corporeity, so that
which leads to an affection or change,
so that which leads to a deficiency, as
e.g., the admission that something
could be not actually existing in Him
and afterwards be actual, or, finally,
that which leads to assimilating Him
with anything of His creation. These
things are among those, in which the

science of physics is useful for the knowledge of God; for, whoever does not possess the sciences, does not know what there is of the defective in the affections, he does not comprehend what is meant by "existing in potentiality" and "existing in actuality"; he does not know that deficiency is inherent in all that which is potential, that the potential is more imperfect than that which moves in order that this potentiality should pass into actuality, and that the thing which moves, is equally imperfect in comparison with the thing in view of which it moves in order to arrive at actuality. But if any one knows these things without also knowing their demonstrations, he does not know the particular truths resulting necessarily

from these general propositions. for
this reason he has no demonstration
for the existence of God nor for the neces-
sity of removing from Him these (four)
kinds.

Having made these preliminary ob-
servations, I enter upon another Chap^r
in which I shall show the falseness of
what those believe, who admit in Him
essential attributes. But this can
be comprehended only by him, who
has first acquired a knowledge of
logic and of the nature of being.

Chapter LVII.

It is known that existence is an accident superadded to that which exists. This is something evident and necessary in all, whose existence has a cause; for its existence is something added to its quiddity. But, as regards that whose existence has no cause, and that is God alone, the most exalted - for this it is intended to express, when we say, God is of a necessary existence - His existence is His veritable essence; His essence is His existence, and it is not at all an essence to which "existing" has come, for He is always of a necessary existence and (it is not something in Him nor an accident superadded to Him. He exists, therefore, but not by existence, likewise He lives, but not by life,

He is almighty, but not by might, and
 He knows, but not by knowledge. All, on
 the contrary, comes back to one single idea,
 in which there is no multiplicity, as will
 be explained.

What it is equally necessary to know, is,
 that unity and multiplicity are ac-
 cidents superadded to that which exists,
 in as much as it is multiplex or one,
 which has been explained in the (Ari-
 stotelian) "Metaphysics". In the same
 manner as number is not the same
 as the things numbered, so unity is
 not the thing which is one; for they are
 all accidents of the class of discrete
 quantity, which clings to the things ca-
 pable of receiving similar accidents.
 As to God who is of necessary being, re-
 ally simple and absolutely free from

composition, just as we could not ascribe
to Him the accident of multiplicity,
so it would be false to attribute to Him
the accident of unity; I mean to say,
that this unity is not at all a thing
added to His essence, but that He is
one, not by unity. — These subjects which
nearly elude the mind, could not be ex-
pressed in popular language, which
is one of the great sources of error; for in
every language we are, in this respect
extremely straitened for expression, so
that we could not represent such a sub-
ject otherwise, than by being inexact
in expression. When, therefore, we desire
to indicate that God is not multiplex,
this cannot be said by "one", although
"one" and "multiplex", both form part of
"quantity"; it is for this reason to return to

the subject, that we lead the spirit towards the reality of the thing, by saying: one, not by unity.

It is thus that we say "eternal", to indicate, that God is not something produced.

But to say "eternal" is evidently to be inexact; for the word eternal designates something which stands in a relation to time, which is an accident of movement which adheres to body. Besides, this word expresses a relation; for we say "eternal" in regard to time and "short" in regard to the line. All that to which the accident of time does not cling, cannot be called in reality, neither eternal nor produced, no more than sweetness can be said to be curved or straight, or sound to be salted or tasteless.

These things are not obscure for him, who

has practiced comprehending things in
their reality and who examines them
in a manner, that the intellect seizes
them in their abstraction and not ac-
cording to the whole of the idea as the
words indicate it. Everytime, then,
whenever you find in the (holy) books, that
God is given the attribute "first" and
"last", it is, as when they ascribe to Him
eye and ear; by this it is meant, that God
is not subject to change and absolutely
nothing new is added to Him, but not
that God falls under the head of time,
so that there be any analogy whatever
between Him and other things, which
are in time and that thus He be the
first and the last. All these words are
employed only according to the language
of men, just as, when we say, (that He is)

one, the meaning is, that there is nothing like unto Him, but not that the idea of unity is added to His essence.

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