

**NUMBER: A LINK
BETWEEN DIVINE
INTELLIGENCE AND
HUMAN. AN ARGUMENT**

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Number: A Link Between Divine Intelligence and Human. An Argument by Charles Girdlestone

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CHARLES GIRDLESTONE

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PREFATORY NOTE.

A PHILOSOPHY of materialism, and a religion in which material sense predominates over spiritual, are at present loudly boasting of the many proselytes each has gained amongst persons not without considerable pretensions to culture, whether philosophic or religious. It may therefore prove not unseasonable, if one born in the preceding century, who has long been deeply interested in the researches of modern Science, now offers for consideration the following argument; tending as it does to prove, on grounds of reason generally intelligible, rather than technically scientific, the essential spirituality of human nature. For the more thoroughly man can be convinced, not only that God is a Spirit, but moreover that he himself, though he has a material body, yet in respect of his higher faculties is a spirit akin to his Creator, the better will he be prepared to reject those materialistic notions, which would hinder him as a philosopher from believing in the true God, and as a believer from worshipping that God in spirit and in truth.

Weston-super-Mare, January 1, 1875.

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NUMBER.

§ 1.—*Number and its properties are invariable.*

AMONGST the flights of modern speculation, it has been suggested, that there may possibly be in the universe regions and minds in which two and two make five instead of four, and in which three and four multiplied together produce a sum other than twelve. This idea, however amusing as a stretch of imagination, would indicate, if seriously entertained, a very defective notion of the nature of Number in itself, and of the important place which its properties occupy in the constitution of the material World. But whatever this vague speculation may be worth, it would not invalidate the striking testimony which Number, as generally understood, may be shewn to give to the statement, that man is made in the likeness of his Maker, instead of having been, as surmised by some, developed from the lower orders of creation. It is to the bearing of Number on this question of man's lineage, as pointing to an origin for the human race not below human

nature but above it, that the following argument will chiefly direct attention; pursuing throughout one definite train of reasoning, which it is believed has not been elsewhere so distinctly set forth. And inasmuch as it rests mainly on grounds which underlie the foundations of modern Science, in most if not in all of its departments, it may perhaps have some little weight with those who follow after knowledge scientifically, out of a pure desire to discover and hold fast that which is true.

There are many to whom man's moral sense seems the most manifest link between the human race and its divine Author. But it is on the intellectual sympathy between the two, in regard to Number, that the following argument is based; being addressed to those who hold that certainty is by no means so attainable in subjects of a moral nature, as in those which are purely scientific. Now it will be admitted by all such, that Weight and Measure are amongst the chief means of scientific investigation, and chief tests of certainty in scientific conclusions. And Number is the means of expressing weight and measure; so that without it, and unless its properties were invariable, the whole fabric of modern Science would collapse. Number may be regarded as Quantity exactly limited; whether it be absolute or relative. Used absolutely Number is the quantity of individual objects, whether persons or things, distances, surfaces, or solids, each thought of as actually sepa-

rated, or as separate portions of one whole. Used relatively Number indicates the proportion between two or more of any such objects. Thus Number denotes quantity with precision; substituting clear and definite ideas for the vague notions suggested by the terms large and small, many and few, much and little. There is an art of Number; and a science of Number. The art is taught in our common treatises of arithmetic. However much these may vary in the details of their subject, they invariably agree in their conclusions. For the science of Number the reader is referred to such treatises as Leslie's 'Philosophy of Arithmetic,' and Sandeman's 'Peficotetics.' Herein also it will be found, that the nature of Number and of its properties, whether considered absolutely or relatively, are held to be uniformly invariable. Number may be denoted by letters or by figures. It may be arranged on different scales, as the denary or the duodenary. But variations of this kind do not affect the solution of any problem in addition or subtraction, in multiplication or division; to which processes all the most intricate calculations are reducible. The principles on which all problems of Number are solved are as fixed as those of pure mathematics. Of this latter science Number may be regarded as a branch; if it be not rather its root and its foundation. In support of this claim on the part of Number to the highest rank, it may be urged, that nearly all of the

twelve axioms usually prefixed to Euclid are more or less numerical.

§ 2.—*The numerical law of gravitation.*

Amongst the physical sciences there are none in which the mind of man has achieved triumphs more remarkable, and established them on grounds more incontrovertible, than in Astronomy and Chemistry. It is from these two that it is proposed to derive the chief illustrations of our argument; beginning with astronomy. And herein attention will be first directed to the law of gravitation as laid down by Newton, and afterwards to Kepler's laws of planetary motion. These are matters within the cognizance of all who know ever so little of popular astronomy; they are conclusions about which there can be no doubt in any mind which has once mastered their significance and proofs. Now these laws obviously involve certain numerical proportions, which cannot but have been present in the Mind which planned the Universe, supposing it was ever planned by any mind at all; which proportions are also clearly intelligible to the mind of man, who alone, amongst all creatures known to us, seems to have the faculty of comprehending them.

A few words express the numerical law of gravitation; namely, that every portion of matter gravitates towards every other portion, with a force varying directly as the amounts of their respective

masses, and inversely as the squares of their distances from each other. The first clause of this law presents no difficulty. We readily acquiesce in the notion that bodies attract each other with forces proportioned to their masses. And many would be inclined to suppose, that in like manner the force of attraction or gravitation would decrease just in proportion as the distance is increased. But in point of fact the decrease of the force is proportioned to the square of the Number expressing the distance. At twice the distance the force is not twice less but four times less, the number four being the square of the number two. And in like manner at thrice the distance the force is nine times less, and at ten times the distance it is a hundred times less. Nor would it be any exception to this law, properly understood, if it could be proved quite as clearly, that the ultimate atoms of which matter consists are connected with each other by a law of attraction somewhat different. For, not to urge the probability that this law, be it what it may, would involve considerations of Number, it is obvious that these atoms are all constituent parts of the masses, whether great or small, to which the numerical law of gravitation is applicable universally.

§ 3.—*The universality of this law indicates one Lawgiver.*

It is to be observed then, that this varying of gravitation, in numerical proportion, inversely as