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A NEW ANALOGY



A NEW ANALOGY

*BETWEEN REVEALED RELIGION AND THE
COURSE AND CONSTITUTION OF NATURE*

By CELLARIUS

[*Rev. Thomas Welbank Fowle*]



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THE author of the Analogy, in his preface to that immortal work, states his reasons for writing it in the following terms: "It is come, I know not how, to be taken for granted by many persons that Christianity is not so much as a subject for inquiry, but that it is now at length discovered to be fictitious. And accordingly they treat it, as if in the present age this were an agreed point among all people of discernment." Now it is not to be denied that a state of mind, similar to that which he noticed and described, has been to an incredibly great extent growing up amongst ourselves in respect of Revelation, which "people of discernment" do not indeed pronounce fictitious, still less "set up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule," but the Divine origin of which they take for granted cannot be proved by evidence; or, if not this, then at least that it is not as a matter of fact demonstrated by such evidence as exists. Now, inasmuch as the argument from Analogy, first applied by the author of this celebrated book to the defence of religion, is a possession for ever, and, so far as regards its method, of eternal value and significance, there seems no reason why it may not be once

more employed to combat the present state of mental incredulity and indifference; due care being taken, as will appear in its proper place, to adapt the course and details of the argument to the changes which lapse of time and alterations in the way of thinking have produced in the attitude of those who cannot bring themselves to regard the Christian religion as being the direct work of God, and His own peculiar gift to mankind. The present writer would be the last to deny that such defences are for the most part best left in the hands of professed champions of the Faith, the clergy and theologians, who have abundant learning, activity, and opportunity for the performance of so sacred a duty. But the crisis being what it is, and men's minds being plainly in a state of doubt and uneasiness, and the objectors constantly affirming that *their* peculiar difficulties are not being met upon their own ground, or by arguments which *they* consider *ad rem*; and, above all, the way of Analogy, of old so successful, not having been tried, the writer has brought himself to believe that there is some excuse for intruding himself—though not his name, which could not conduce to the furtherance of his purpose—upon the public notice. In so large and open a field of intellectual husbandry there is room even for a private and unlearned person to address to his fellow Christians, more especially laymen, those reasons which have from time to time appeared to himself to afford a reasonably strong presumption that Nature and Revelation have proceeded from the same Author, and that therefore the materials of a credible and rational religion are placed at the disposal of mankind.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION : THE NATURE OF THE NEW ANALOGY, ESPECIALLY AS COMPARED WITH THE OLD	1

CHAPTER II.

ON THE PRESUMPTION AGAINST A SUPERNATURAL REVELATION	33
---	----

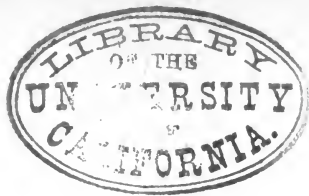
CHAPTER III.

ON THE ANALOGY BETWEEN REVELATION AND NATURE VIEWED GENERALLY	50
--	----

CHAPTER IV.

ON THE IMPROBABILITY FROM ANALOGY THAT REVE- LATION WAS PRODUCED IN THE COURSE OF NATURE	81
--	----

CHAPTER V.		PAGE
ON THE EVIDENCE FOR REVELATION		97
CHAPTER VI.		
ON THE REVELATION OF THE FATHER		118
CHAPTER VII.		
ON THE REVELATION OF THE SON		153
CHAPTER VIII.		
ON THE MORAL TEACHING OF CHRIST		182
CHAPTER IX.		
ON THE ANALOGY OF REDEMPTION WITH NATURE		199
CHAPTER X.		
ON THE SELF-SACRIFICE OF CHRIST TO DEATH AND HIS RESURRECTION TO LIFE		228
CHAPTER XI.		
ON THE REVELATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT		259
CONCLUSION		284



A NEW ANALOGY

BETWEEN REVEALED RELIGION AND THE COURSE
AND CONSTITUTION OF NATURE.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

THE NATURE OF THE NEW ANALOGY, ESPECIALLY AS
COMPARED WITH THE OLD.

THE nature of the new Analogy must be determined chiefly by the kind of objections which reasonable men feel to stand in the way of their accepting the Christian Revelation, or, more generally, by the attitude of their minds towards it. And what we observe is a general and, it is to be feared, growing disinclination either to accept Revelation as true, or even to inquire whether it be true or not, and this not so much because of moral or even of intellectual difficulties, as because men have come to take it for granted that knowledge is impossible and certainty unattainable. And this

disinclination extends to both branches of religion, natural and revealed, both of which are rejected by the same minds, but, it is very important to observe, upon quite opposite grounds. It is generally, perhaps we might say universally, admitted that the order and course of Nature, nay, its very existence as apprehended by creatures such as we are, do powerfully suggest and even force upon us the ideas which go to make up the fabric of religion, viz., the being of a Creator and man's dependence upon Him in the way of fear, obedience, submission, hope, and the like. But it is contended that there is nothing in the order of Nature to afford us any certain knowledge who or what the Author or Cause of Nature really is; and, further, that we have no faculties whereby, even were the conditions of knowledge more perfect than they are, we could by searching find out God. Whether this be so or not it is not necessary for us now to inquire; but, admitting it to be true, the conclusion would seem to follow that it is only by special Revelation that the Creator can be made known to us, and in the next place, that things being as they are, such Revelation is in a very high degree probable and

to be expected by us. But at this point the objector, cutting himself loose from all considerations and probabilities derived from the actual condition of things as we know them, proceeds to treat the history of Revelation as though it were a piece of ordinary history to be judged by the ordinary tests of historical truth, and as though Nature had no influence whatever in predisposing the mind towards its reception or in suggesting a reasonable probability of its being true; rather, indeed, the reverse. The point of the objection is not (as in the case of natural religion) that Revelation does not afford a sufficiently clear and substantial knowledge of God, a thing which I have never seen denied, but that there is no sufficient evidence for its having happened (being, as it certainly is, beyond the laws of Nature and above our common experience), as the history says it did. Which, when we look at it attentively, really seems to come to this, that natural religion must be rejected because it is not supernatural, and Revelation because it is.

But while the objection, by taking the Christian apologist at a disadvantage, certainly contrives to

place him under serious embarrassment, and goes far, if persisted in, to make agreement impossible, yet the bare statement of it would seem strongly to suggest that a way there must be out of the difficulty if we try to find it. Harder, indeed, than to prove a negation is it to prove an affirmative to minds whom negation satisfies, nor will the attempt be made in this present book. But the mass of mankind are not thus easily satisfied, nor does it seem as if objections of this sort had as yet made much way with them: they appear to treat them as ingenious rather than sound, unanswerable rather than convincing. And it may be possible to put a different complexion upon the matter if we succeed in uniting what the objection keeps steadily asunder, namely, natural and revealed religion.

In Revelation the existence of God is purported to be proved to us by evidence; in Nature His will, attributes, and modes of government are displayed. Hence the order of thought is as follows: Nature first impels us to suppose that there must be a creating God; Revelation next informs us that the supposition is true, and further

explains His relations to us ; and thus we become enabled to trace the operations and intentions of God in the world at large.

Now if we assume (that is, conduct the argument as if there were no preliminary reason for thinking it to be the case) that the Author of Nature is not directly the Author of Revelation, except in the sense in which He may justly be called the Author of all things that happen or that are, then there can be no difficulty in arriving at a conclusion adverse to the credibility of the Christian faith, for we are still without direct proof of God. But if, on the contrary, we can find solid reasons for believing that the course of action attributed to God in Revelation is such as might be expected from the Author of Nature—if the two are so consistent with each other and so much in harmony as to afford a presumption of their having been derived from the same original cause—then we have positive reasons and a sure warranty for a religion fitted to carry the hopes and sustain the burdens of the human race. Hence we are put upon this inquiry first of all : Are there reasonable grounds

to be obtained from an examination of Nature and Revelation for alleging that they are the offspring of the same Mind, and that both form part of the order and constitution of that larger Nature—that is to say, of the universe itself—by which our present world is conditioned and in it included? Or we may state the same issue in another way, as thus: When we compare what is told us of God in Revelation with what we know to be true of the Creator in Nature, is it more likely that the same Power which gave us Nature also gave us Revelation, or that men (who they were and how they accomplished their work being at present certainly undiscovered) invented, not of necessity designedly, the latter, and succeeded in getting it passed off upon the world as being the work of the Creator Himself?

Now, the only method known to reason by which identity of origin can be proved between two different systems, is by likeness of phenomena—that is to say, by Analogy; which kind of argument, it may be here observed, has grown prodigiously in force and use since the time it was

first applied to the defence of religion, so much so as would almost of itself justify the undertaking of a new Analogy. For the human intelligence has of late years earnestly bent itself to the task, imposing it upon itself as a kind of serious moral duty, of summing up in the fewest formulas, or of tracing to the same origin, or of including in their appropriate classes, all that immense variety of processes, phenomena, individuals, which, until the mind of God, working through the mind of His creatures, breathed upon them, were a mere chaos to the beings who lived among them and by them. For all science is but the perception of likeness. I say all science, because the perception of difference is, *by itself*, a mere negation, and of value only so far as it leads to the perception of similitude. It is useful to know that one thing is not like another for the ultimate purpose of discovering what it is like, and so of giving it its proper place in the general arrangement of phenomena. And as the human mind has definitely committed itself to this method of investigation, it follows that the argumentative stress of Analogy is much increased thereby, nor are we entitled to

be startled—neither, as a matter of fact, are we startled—at the most amazing, seemingly far-fetched, and altogether original analogies, which, in a previous state of thinking, would have seemed nothing but fanciful, audacious, and perhaps irreverent guessing. No length of time or distance of space, no external difference of form and use, no distinction between matter and spirit, animal and human, physical and moral, dead and living, does in the least avail to hinder the human mind from pressing forward in its task of grouping phenomena by the likeness they bear to each other, or of discovering affinities and connecting-links where at first sight it would seem impossible that any should exist. Wherefore a new Analogy betwixt Nature and Revelation, supposing it to be established even in a faint degree, will carry more weight with it in the estimation of the public, and will even be in some sense of a more positive and efficacious value than the old. In itself, indeed, it can be at the present time merely germinal and tentative; but failure itself, be it ever so absolute, need not be discouraging so long as the method pursued be in accordance with the

present practice of human thinking, and with the requirements of the religion that has to be defended.

So far for the value of the new Analogy taken generally, which we shall now proceed to examine more in detail, with the special object of fixing the sense in which the three leading words—God, Nature, Revelation—are to be employed without departing from the conditions which the kind of argument imposes upon us. And perhaps a safe and satisfactory way will be to compare the new Analogy with the old in respect of the meaning attached to the words in question; from which comparison it will appear, unless the writer greatly deceives himself, that we are strictly following the method prescribed by the master-mind, and are using these words in what is essentially the sense he employed them in; but also that certain points there are, arising merely from the different way men have of regarding things in these latter days, which mark the place where the argument begins to take a fresh departure, leaving the accustomed highway, and which also to some extent open up a view of the new road along which our journey must be pursued.

This is the description of the argument from Analogy as we find it in the introduction: "If there be an Analogy or Likeness between that system of things and Dispensation of Providence which Revelation informs us of, and that system of things and Dispensation of Providence which experience together with reason informs us of, *i.e.* the known course of Nature; this is a presumption that they have both the same Author and Cause; at least so far as to answer objections against the former's being from God, drawn from anything which is analogical or similar to what is in the latter, which is acknowledged to be from Him; for an Author of Nature is here supposed."

Now this passage, down to the words "Author and Cause," contains a description of the method of analogical reasoning as employed in the cause of religion which all who presume to approach that subject can, or rather must, adopt as their own, nor need we desire a better account of the aim of this present treatise. But after this the author goes on to say that he means to use this Analogy to answer objections which have been made against the Christian Revelation, because of what it contains and teaches;

and this he does (in the words of Origen, by whom the idea of Analogy was first started), by saying we may well expect to find the same difficulties in Scripture as are found in the constitution of Nature. Now, if we remember that men do not nowadays find difficulties in the contents of Revelation so much as require better evidence for it; or, if we like to put it thus, that their chief, if not only difficulty, is in the existence of the supernatural element in which Revelation does differ from Nature, at least apparently, it will follow, as has already been hinted, that the new Analogy must adduce positive evidence that the two have the same Cause, in spite of the presumption to the contrary drawn from that wherein they differ. It is not because the two have the same difficulties, but because they can be proved to have similar methods, laws, characteristics, ideas, a consistency of operation, and a striking capacity for combination, that men will now be brought to believe in the truth of the Christian religion. Hence the exact point at which the new departure begins may be placed at the words "at least" in the above description; for there need not be, and there is not by the nature

of the case, any limitation to the evidential validity and constraining logic of Analogy, which is to the full as competent to establish a case as to refute an objection or explain a difficulty.

The next subject that presents itself for consideration is the meaning which the author of the Analogy attached to these three words—God, Nature, Revelation; and herein, first, the essence of that meaning in which we gratefully copy him; second, certain modifications and developments resulting from improved ways of thinking or increased information vouchsafed to man in these later days—a matter, be it observed, of capital importance to the right understanding of the new Analogy, because, for one thing, it is owing to these improvements, and that in ways that can be distinctly traced, that we may expect larger and more positive results from its employment without being thought over-sanguine. But it should not be forgotten that the author himself did practically extend his use of Analogy much beyond the perhaps rather narrow office, of answering objections namely, to which in words he confined it.

First, as to what we mean when we speak of

God. The closing words of the above quotation, "for an Author of Nature is here supposed," have been much objected against, not as being improper or unfair in the author's use of them and as against the opponents he was controverting, but because they appear to postulate the very thing which nowadays is in dispute—whether we can ascertain by reason or otherwise the existence and attributes of God. But the objection is more verbal than real. The being of God is supposed only in the way and for the purposes in and for which it cannot but be supposed if men are to discourse of religion at all. For that *some* Power exists, even if you choose to call it the Unknowable, all are agreed, as well as that it attracts the thoughts and emotions of mankind to itself. And to call this Power the Author of Nature, and then to regard Nature as *revealing* His mind and will, is quite allowable, provided we avoid deriving arguments from His Abstract Being or drawing conclusions concerning His mind and will other than are to be deduced from Nature, that is, the order of things as we possess and can verify and expound them—which is just what the author of the Analogy has carefully done on

the one hand, and avoided on the other. And that his "supposition," as he makes and uses it, is justifiable, may be abundantly shown if we pay attention to the results of modern thinking on the subject.

The reason why we are justified in assuming an Author or Cause of Nature—if, that is, we are to speak of religion at all—is founded upon the truth, first of all, that we are unable to conceive of anything as being uncaused, and therefore not even the universe itself, much less that very small portion of the universe which is all that we mean, or at any rate ought to mean, when we speak of things as being "natural." Nor is there the faintest indication from what Nature teaches us to lead us to try and imagine that it is without cause, or to help us in the least degree to mount above or escape from this primary law of our rational understanding. For even if we were able to conceive of Nature as uncaused—that is, as self-existing—we should only be introducing surreptitiously, under cover of the word "self," another unknown factor into the sum of things, and the "self" of Nature would be but

another, and that a very improper, uncouth, and misleading, name for God. And modern speculations about the origin of the world do but make this truth more distinct and impressive; for men are now commonly taught to speak and debate concerning the formation, not only of this earth of ours, but of the solar system itself, even of the sun, from which, so they say, the earth was framed. Nor is there the least difficulty in the supposition, or the least improbability in the belief, that time was when all the vast space now occupied by the solar system was a mere blank emptiness till—what shall we call them?—forces, powers, creative germs, of the existence of which elsewhere we have plain ocular demonstration, acting from spheres outside our present system of things, established and by slow degrees elaborated the world in which we live. For it is as easy to conceive of the origination of a world as of an atom, and of a universe as of a world. The fact then being—first, that we cannot think of the world except as being caused; and, secondly, that we are very plainly made aware of the existence of other spheres which may have, and very

probably (judging from what we know of the origin of the earth) *did* have, an existence anterior to our system or Nature; it follows that we are fully entitled to assume a Cause of Nature, and if a Cause, then, due care being taken what use we make of the supposition, of an Author as well. For Author is but the term for the highest form of Cause known to us, viz. a Personal Being, and is therefore the proper word to employ, not merely from motives of reverence and *natural* awe, but for the strict purpose of philosophical discussion. And when I speak of taking due care, I mean this: Men begin by thinking of an Author of Nature, and then unconsciously come to regard Him as a Personal Being like themselves. Then as there are plainly many things in which He differs from men, they put these differences in combination or in contrast with His supposed Personal Being; and out of this they gather ideas—such as Eternity, Infinity, Equality of Persons, Foreknowledge—which are so many notions (true or not it is not our purpose to inquire) imported into the nature of God beyond what the experience of



Nature warrants. And this is what, I repeat, the author of the Analogy has nowhere done, and that he has not done it may perhaps be not unjustly thought the great charm of his book, and a constraining example to his successors. But letting the sum of phenomena or course of Nature be what it is, and nothing more than it is, there is then no begging any question in assuming that it represents the thoughts and intentions, or declares the will and character of a Divine Author. Thus the law of gravitation may be regarded as expressing the control of God over the motions of bodies. It is indeed in strictness no more than an hypothesis, which may require to be verified from other sources; but on the other hand the name and the idea of God, or Personal Creator, is at once the first, most natural, most easily grasped, most lofty, and, for these reasons, the most legitimate and befitting synthesis of the universe. And in this provisional—if so you like to call it—sense, and in no other, it was used by the author of the Analogy, and will be used in this present treatise.

Secondly, as to what we mean when we speak

of Nature. Until recent times, and certainly at the time when the Analogy was composed, Nature was commonly thought of by the mass of public opinion—which, without having scientific knowledge, submits itself to the guidance of those who have—somewhat as follows: It was regarded as consisting of a number, that varied more or less according to the philosophical comprehensiveness of the comprehending mind: a number or aggregate, I say, of separate things—*i.e.* forces, or substances, or genera—each of which was believed to have had an origin independently of the others, save that they were the offspring, though not at the same time, of the same creating Will. And the relations of these were supposed to be arranged by immutable omnipresent laws impressed upon them from the very beginning of things. That is to say, the laws which regulate the co-ordination of things in space were beginning to be understood by the learned and accepted by the multitude, whereas the laws which regulate the succession of things in time, so far as they regard what we may term the primal or præ-chronological things, were not yet attempted to any great extent save by

unverified conjectures. But these, as we very well know, carry the mind a long way back, into the very origin of things, long before they assumed the shape they have now, and into their mutual relation in the way of cause and effect. Nor is it absurd to suppose (though the idea rather takes away the breath) that gravitation itself may have been caused by some previous, totally inconceivable, state of things in the world of that which we call "matter."

Now, the language of the author of the Analogy, always aiming at strict and even painful accuracy according to the standard of his age, gives plain evidence that he conceived of Nature as we have above attempted to describe. For he speaks always of the Constitution and Course of Nature, whereby (so at least it would seem, and so surely the whole book goes to show) he makes it clear that in his way of thinking Nature was constituted by the Creator in a particular way, so as to run a particular course, in obedience to the natural laws which its very constitution impressed upon it; whence the Creator is also the Governor of the world. But Nature presents itself, to our ways of thinking, in

the inverse order ; and we should, so far as a mere reversal of the order of words can do it, indicate our view of the case by speaking of the course and (consequent) constitution of Nature ; that is to say, of the course or succession of phenomena as having fixed the present constitution of things. We cannot but recognise, even if we will not welcome, the idea of development ; that is, of a principle or principles running throughout Nature and fixing by irresistible, and at the same time discoverable, methods, its order and constitution. Hence we do not conceive of the mind of God as creating and then sustaining, but as moving from infinity by the agency of powers that are always progressing towards creation (no better word seems to present itself) and natural order. Thus the very process whereby the will of God operates in creating, the actual course which that will pursues in framing the constitution of Nature, is more and more laid open to us, so that we can gaze upon the very arcana of the creative mind ; that is to say, those few leading principles which, as they may with patient searching be discovered by those who apply themselves to the investigation of Nature, so may

they by reverent inquiry be understood in their religious significance by those who apply themselves to the knowledge and worship of God.

The above considerations do certainly seem to hold out an anticipation of the possibility and value of a new Analogy between Nature and Revelation, by the simplicity and brevity which they import into our conceptions of the former. And if we use the Darwinian theory simply to describe a way of thinking about things that has taken possession, apparently for good and all, of the human mind, and which in its general tendency no one now disputes (not entering into any controverted points nor blaming theology for, very naturally, holding aloof from it), we shall be able to see in the words "course and constitution of Nature" a simple definite idea, and, as it were, a fixed method of procedure, which may help us to make it, both as a whole and in some details, a subject of comparison with any other dispensation that claims to have proceeded from the same Author.

Thirdly, as to what we mean when we speak of Revelation. The author of the Analogy does

not appear to have anywhere definitely put to himself the question which sounds so natural to us: What exactly do we mean by Revelation? But in chapter vii. of the second part he virtually answers it by the declaration that "this Revelation, whether real or supposed, may be considered as wholly historical;" and in the fifth chapter, on "the particular system of Christianity," he has given a very sufficient account of what the history may be taken to cover. And this, when we examine it, is neither more nor less than the life of Jesus Christ. Thus he begins with that verse which the present writer, long before he thought of venturing upon this task, had always regarded as containing the sum and substance of the Christian faith: "God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish;" or, again, "the Son of God loved us and gave Himself for us." And in a later part of that chapter he sums up the "particular manner in which Christ interposed in the redemption of the world," *i.e.* by living and dying in it, and rising from the dead at the last. Now all this he includes under Christ's office as

Mediator, because, as he himself has told us in the first words of this chapter, "there is not anything relating to Christianity which has been more objected against than the mediation of Christ"—and to answer objections was the purpose of his book. Nor, if we take the word in a general sense as expressing the instrumentality whereby God revealed Himself to His creatures, would it be less suitable for our present undertaking. But inasmuch as it is commonly taken to signify one special aspect of Christ's mediatorial work, *i.e.* the sacrificial, we shall do better to retain what was the author's primary conception of Revelation: first, that it was a history; second, that it was a history of Christ's human manifestation.

Let the following then stand for the meaning in which Revelation will hereafter be used: That God, out of love to the world, sent His Son to live the life of man in it: that the Son addressed Himself to the task of saving mankind from their sins by a life of perfect virtue and holiness, by the performance of benevolent actions through the power His Father had entrusted him with, by the teaching of a perfect and efficient morality,

and, perhaps above all, by that instruction concerning the Father and His relations towards His (no longer creatures but) children, which we receive as of binding and absolute authority: that in the performance of this work He was put to death and raised from it—the effect of these great transactions being to afford a certain means of redemption from sin and death to those who accepted Him as their Saviour: that by virtue of these events He is solemnly, and in the face of all men, instituted King and Judge of mankind, with each individual member of which He is brought into personal and spiritual communion: finally, that the Christian Church was instituted as the means whereby all the blessings His work confers may be appropriated by His disciples and carried on to those who are not yet His people.

If it be objected, as may not improbably be the case, by the defenders of Revelation, that much more than this is of the essence of Christianity, and necessary to salvation, and by its assailants that it is responsible for many other doctrines than these, and must be prepared to maintain them, I answer—deferring for the present an

investigation into the essence of the Christian religion by means of analogy, and not disputing the truth of either of the above propositions—that such other doctrines, be they what they may and as true as you please, cannot, according to the plan we have proposed to ourselves, be treated as belonging to that part of the Christian Dispensation which it is possible to bring into comparison with the course of Nature. For what we have set before ourselves is to discover some analogy between that which may with certainty be attributed to God in Nature and that which may be believed to be true of Him in Revelation; in other words, the *punctum comparationis* consists in what God, by His own power and exercise of His will, in obedience to His own character, without admixture of human co-operation or even knowledge, has plainly and beyond all doubt done—in creation, as all men know, in redemption as Christians believe. And if the course of Nature and contents of Revelation be as we have defined them respectively, then it may be affirmed that, upon the first blush and prior to further examination, they are such as

admit of being brought into comparison one with the other. Of which, if any Christian doubt, let him call to mind the opening verses of the fourth Gospel, and be at peace with his fears.

A similar answer may be given to the not unnatural objection that this method of proceeding gives special prominence to the so-called supernatural element in Christianity, to the detriment of those natural appeals which Holy Scripture addresses to the conscience or the emotions, or the sense of beauty or the instincts of humanity itself. Shame indeed were it if a Christian writer should seem to disparage these; nor is the author unaware of the existence of this melancholy tendency in Christian literature, not only of the past but even of the present time. But for the purpose we have in view such arguments would be not merely irrelevant but intrusive, because the comparison is to be made, not with anything that is excellent in morals or true to human nature, but with the work of God in the course and constitution of Nature. If our purpose were to prove religion by miracles, the objection would apply in all its force; but as it

is to prove Revelation in history (whether supernatural or not) by its analogy with Nature, our argument does not pass by, still less supersede those other arguments to which I allude, but rather runs a parallel course with them to the same goal.

We are now in a position to define the new Analogy, adopting the language, *mutatis mutandis*, of the old, and for convenience of contrast throwing it into the form of answering objections, which of course any argument, though positive in its own nature, can be made to assume.

“If there be an analogy or likeness between the system of things and Dispensation of God which Revelation informs us of, and that system of things and Dispensation of God which experience, together with reason, informs us of—*i.e.* the known course of Nature—this is a presumption that they have both the same Author and Cause, certainly so far as to answer objections against the former’s being of God drawn from the fact that it differs from the latter in one respect, namely, the supernatural element.” And here let it be noted that the objection does not now

take the form that sufficient evidence for a Revelation is impossible, but that the evidence as we have it is not sufficient to make reasonable belief, still less reasonable certainty, attainable; that is to say, that we have to deal with a state of mind that comes to the discussion of the evidence and probabilities of the case under a certain prejudice, which, to show that the word is not being used offensively, we will further call natural, against the Christian belief in the life of the Son of God upon earth. But this prejudice can, I think, be reduced almost to zero by the exhibition of an analogy between Revelation and Nature of such a kind as to afford a strong presumption that they have the same origin: certainly I know no other way by which this result, so desirable in the interests of religious belief, can be brought about.

Before bringing this chapter to a close, in excuse for the length of which it may be pleaded that the possibility and method of a new Analogy is at present more essential than its details, a few words must be added by way of deprecating any further comparison with the old that might leave

the writer under a just stigma of pretentiousness. Let us then pay to the memory of Bishop Butler that unfeigned tribute of admiration with which a further study of his great work has inspired the writer. Apart from the purely philosophic faculty, which few persons have possessed to greater perfection, these two things may be affirmed concerning him: first, that he introduced a new and highly rational way of dealing with religious demonstration—namely, the method of Analogy or comparison with Nature; secondly, that his book may be quoted as one of the few that at a blow accomplished that whereunto it was sent—*Venit, vidit, vicit*. Men do not now allege those objections against Christianity which seem so plausible till they are found to be inherent in the constitution of things or to lead up to problems which we have no faculties to approach. Nay, it will hardly be deemed fanciful if we attribute in some degree the present difficulties in respect of religion to the influence of the Analogy in constraining men to think that Revelation must resemble Nature if it is to be pronounced credible, and that the existence of a miraculous element

breaks this condition. In which case it becomes more than ever a duty to inquire whether the door which Butler once for all threw open has got closed against the efforts of human reason to discover the truth about religion.

Rather let us affirm that the progress of thought has cleared the path which he first journeyed over, and has made it in some respects easier for smaller minds to follow his method of reasoning. For one thing, we shall be spared the necessity of that almost painful reference to the fact that Christianity and Nature were schemes "very imperfectly understood." This falling back on man's ignorance and on the limitation of human faculties was at once necessitated by the method of his argument, and is perfectly justifiable when used in the last resort to answer difficulties which are inherent in the very fabric of things, the human mind included. But the new Analogy may be said to depend rather upon the extent of our information and upon our ability to discover the methods of Divine working in Nature and in Revelation. And what is more, further information, as future generations gather it in, and a more

just and accurate way of thinking, as it gains possession of the intelligence of mankind, can but fortify and fill up the Analogy, supposing it to exist, or expose and overthrow it (a thing of which there does not now seem any trace) if there be no connection between Nature and Revelation in the way of a common origin. For what, after all, is our plan but the very simple process, recognised universally as the proper task of man, of bringing religion into combination with things known and knowable by means of its likeness to them? And why should not religion present many features of resemblance and adjustment to Nature, if only we look for them? How, indeed, can it help doing so if the same God be the Author of both? To what may we not attain as we surprise more and more the hidden secrets of Nature's working on the one hand, and the hidden springs of man's moral and spiritual being on the other? In the perpetual struggle of the human mind to arrive at similitude, identity, simplicity, it may well be that analogies lying close at the roots of all Being will more and more reveal themselves to our eyes. A great and wide sea truly

upon which to venture, and the ship but a weak and ill-furnished raft—*pelago truci, ratem fragilem*. But some one of old has said: "They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters, these see the works of the Lord and His wonders in the deep."



CHAPTER II.

ON THE PRESUMPTION AGAINST A SUPERNATURAL REVELATION.

It is a fact that the preliminary and, if not the only, certainly the fatal objection in the minds of those who reject Revelation is to be found in the supernatural element which it avowedly contains, and which, indeed, makes it what it is. Accordingly, the second chapter of the second part of the Analogy (to which part alone this treatise bears any relation) is devoted to the consideration of what the author calls "a supposed presumption against miracles." The arguments by which he endeavours to remove or diminish this presumption, which by us cannot fairly be called "supposed," are mainly these: first, that there are innumerable things in the Dispensation of

Providence of which we are wholly ignorant, Nature being vast beyond all our imagination, so that all that is opened to our view is but a point in comparison of the whole; and, secondly, that at the beginning of things—which here, as elsewhere, he speaks of as a settlement—there must have been a creative Power outside of the constitution of Nature, which, indeed, was framed by it, and that this Power may well be supposed capable of operating again upon the world. All which is unquestionably true, and possesses an importance which no change in our ways of thinking can ever wholly destroy, for the facts upon which he builds his reasoning are certainly facts of Nature itself. But it must be admitted that this way of stating them is no longer suited to the form which objections against Revelation nowadays assume. For in the appeal to man's ignorance the objector is beforehand with us, and alleges *his* ignorance of all that lies beyond natural law as the very ground of his unbelief. And, again, to suppose that laws made at the first constitution of Nature may be upon fit occasion superseded is not so very difficult a task after

all, nor does it make a very extravagant demand upon our common sense; but then this is no longer the way in which we are taught to think of Nature. Rather we are summoned to discern a natural course of things growing out of a few simple elements acted upon by a few general laws, so that interference with but one particle of Nature's handiwork sends a shock through the whole system of things, and cannot, in the present state of the human mind, be accepted without serious mental discomposure. Nor can it be denied that the presumption against a certain event having taken place once, drawn from the fact that it has never taken place at any other time, is, upon the face of it, exceedingly strong. It is incumbent, therefore, upon us to endeavour to find out in what the strength of this presumption consists, and how much weight is in fairness of reason to be attached to it. For some objections there are to Christianity to be likened to the strength of Samson, which was not to be resisted till discovered where it was placed, and then it was easy to shear his locks. And this surely is the case: that reason, as experience widens,

grows more and more suspicious of presumptions one way or another.

It is a misfortune of controversies upon serious subjects that they give rise to arguments which prudent advocates must make what haste they can to disavow, if they would gain a hearing for themselves. Thus the statement that God must be supposed to have left Himself at liberty to dispense with His own laws is surely one of the most unfortunate arguments ever propounded. We are compelled by the limits of our nature to regard God under the highest conceptions (human, but idealised) of wisdom, power, and goodness, which, strive as we may, is what we must come to at the last; but this argument compels us to conceive of Him under the stress of man's weakness and incapacity of forethought. But, to be fair, this kind of argument has parallels on the other side; as, for instance, when men fall into the habit almost unconsciously of regarding law as a kind of inevitable necessity fastened upon men and things by a power which is not to be distinguished from fatalism though attired in a new garb; whereas law (as all the best thinkers

see plainly) is but conceptions concerning phenomena formed by the human intelligence for itself and for its own use solely out of that part of Nature which is open to our observation, which can never be otherwise than limited, subdued, and overawed by the vastness of the transcendent mysteriousness brooding in eternal stillness over the home and mind of man.

Turning then to interrogate Nature, and admitting to the full the existence of a presumption against supernatural occurrences, we are at once confronted by another presumption that seems to flow just as obviously and naturally from our experience of things as we know them. For experience testifies, and the intimate union of man with Nature, now become evident, supports the testimony, that Nature places at our disposal facilities for answering every question and ascertaining every truth that can fairly be pronounced intelligible and useful to us. The intellectual spirit of the day will accept this general statement with ungrudging assent. Problems, for instance, concerning the origin and destiny of man, his conduct and happiness, his

physical and mental constitution, are presented to us for investigation, and we are encouraged by the record of past successes, by the very necessities of our being, by our interest in the welfare of our kind, to pursue these problems as far as ever our faculties will enable us to go. No doubt there comes a time when all problems in every department of knowledge fade away into the Unknowable, whence all things come and whither they return; but then this is also the point, so wisdom teaches us, at which they also lose their practical interest and their usefulness for mankind in the present stage of existence. And, for now as we journey on we shall stumble over half-concealed analogies at every step, let us observe as we pass that Revelation owns and respects this natural limitation of our faculties, and professes to tell us about Divine things only so much as it is useful for us to know and possible for us to understand.

Now certainly among all the problems that have ever exercised the spirit of man there is not one that springs up so regularly or occurs so persistently as this—"Do we hold

any, and if so, what relations to the Author or Cause of our existence?" Those who have tried most to rid themselves and the world of this problem only seem to show by their labours and protestations how vital and tremendous a subject it is: their strenuous endeavours to cut the knot which they cannot, or think they cannot, untie, do but call the more attention to it and invest it with a redoubled fascination, as of something that challenges man to his face. Nor may the mind be put off with demonstrations concerning the impossibility of comprehending the Absolute, or the Infinite, or the uncaused Cause of all things. These are not the things we want to know, nor are these the tasks which Nature sets us to learn. What does concern us to know, and what, if known, would alter the whole course of human life, is, whether there be a God who has respect unto His creatures, and whether He means to give us any other life than this. Can anything be of more practical value to us in the way of knowledge than to discover whether we shall live again and see each other once more, and be partakers of the universal

life? If it be desirable and full of interest to ascertain how we came to be what we are, it cannot surely be less so to ascertain what we are going to be, and, so deep is the connection, it is only because we are gifted with the power of reflecting upon our origin that we cannot help but speculate upon our destiny. So that just in proportion as men make discoveries about the former do they stimulate inquiry into the latter. Perhaps they do not mean to do so, and perhaps the stimulus does not in many cases reach themselves, but its effect upon the general mind in arousing religious questions is none the less evident.

We have, therefore, a presumption gathered from our experience of Nature that we shall be able to find, and certainly cannot help trying to find, an answer to every question that fulfils the condition of being useful and intelligible, the time of such discovery being determined by our opportunities and our growth in knowledge, which last again is a very plain fact of experience. And then we go on to point out that religious questions being amongst the number of these problems, there is nevertheless no answer to be had for

them from the course and constitution of Nature taken by itself. We lay this down absolutely, because it is the position taken up by those to answer whose objections the argument of this book is intended. And perhaps it would have been as well to stop with this simple assertion; but seeing that the *argumentum ad hominem* is never very satisfactory, still less so to look as though we were avoiding expressing an opinion upon a vital topic, we will briefly explain in what sense that which men call agnosticism, or the inability to discover God in Nature, may, in our opinion, be accepted, if not absolutely, at least for the present time and *causâ argumenti*.

The statement, that men cannot, their reasoning powers being what they are, convince themselves of the existence of God by the way of reason only, does not seem to the writer very pertinent to the matter in hand, seeing that the persuasion of God may eventually come to man by other means than that of positive demonstration, which at the present time occupies (perhaps usurps) the whole field of knowledge. Theologians should be careful how they surrender other avenues to

the natural belief in God while they are trying, perhaps in vain, to force a passage along the path down which the mass of thinking men happen just at this time to be journeying, *i.e.* that of sensible experience. If from any means whatever—say from a predominant spiritual instinct, or the testimony of conscience to a morality inherent in Nature, or even from the bare experience of Nature itself—men do actually persuade themselves that God exists, the persuasion will be just as real, though of a different kind, as if they had come by it in the way of strict reasoning from facts. I do not say that they will, but that they may, and if they may, then agnosticism is itself only at most a reasonable probability, and not a reasoned truth. And it is, to say the least, quite conceivable that the long dispute might end in the agnostic, while exclaiming in one breath, “I cannot find God in Nature,” being constrained to add in the next, “but I must believe in Him all the same.”

But this let the future decide. For us the stress of agnostic unbelief lies clearly enough in this: that at a time when men are turning with ever-

increasing zeal and success to the study of Nature as the one source of all ascertainable knowledge, there does not seem the very faintest indication to show that any solution of religious problems will be obtained from this quarter. If we put this into the language of religion we should say that if we are to judge of the intentions of the Author of Nature from what Nature is and does, which is the very thing we are claiming in this book to do, then there is a determination growing increasingly evident that in this way, for the practical purposes of faith and worship, He will not be known. Two considerations there are that make this impression almost irresistible.

In the first place, the history of the progress of knowledge informs us that the human mind begins by giving very erroneous and childishly simple answers to the questions which phenomena suggest; that by degrees the mistakes are cleared away, and that in the long run positive truth is obtained. Thus in the field of science the human mind that began by asserting "water is the essential element of all things" ends by discovering that water is composed of two gases;

whereas in the field of religion the same mind that grasped the idea of the Unity of God could not retain it, still less advance upon it. So that Nature is, as it were, out of analogy with herself. She suggests so many plausible conjectures, and verifies none of them. There was no necessary impossibility in the belief that there were Gods in every stream or upon every hearth; or that the world was divided between the God of light and the God of darkness; or that God is an all-embracing Father, a divine Architect, a moral Governor of mankind. Only all these one by one came into favour, could not be verified, and then passed out of favour with the human intelligence, the remarkable thing being that in religious knowledge nations have begun better than they ended. Until it would really seem as though in a spirit of irony, Nature, weary of setting men to weary themselves with making images of the Creator and then breaking them in pieces, induced them to make a caricature instead, and by way of diverting them from the further pursuit of a fruitless inquiry summed

up the long result of man's searching after God in this—"Something not ourselves."

Add to this, in the second place, that there seems no reason that we can imagine why the Creator should not have made Himself known in the course of Nature, seeing that so much has been done in the way of suggesting the idea of His existence and provoking curiosity as to His relations towards us. The argument from design, for instance, only just falls short of succeeding, and cannot even yet be pronounced to have failed. To say that man fails because of his own fault is to talk idly—if he had been intended to succeed he would have done so. (It may be well to remind the reader that we are speaking only of arguments derived by reason from experience of Nature, and not of moral or spiritual arguments addressed to our conscience or our emotions.) But it is the contrast between the ease with which it looks as if information might be, yes, and ought to be, given and the rigorous silence maintained towards us that makes so strong an impression upon the human mind.

Circumstances may change this, but the defenders of the Christian religion must at the present time accept it as a fact with which they have to deal.

Now it is to find a remedy for this, what we may call unnatural, state of things—unnatural because contrary to an otherwise invariable experience of Nature's methods—that Revelation is supposed to have been given, and may be defended as intrinsically probable in a world such as this. That is to say, we have, when we come to look at it, two strong and opposed presumptions—one against the continuance of an unnatural state of ignorance, and in favour of a belief in the Revelation which removes it; the other against any intervention with the fixed course of Nature, and in favour of a belief in the unbroken chain of causation to which experience testifies. What are we to conclude from this?

Now, if the courteous reader has any expectation that these two presumptions will be balanced against each other or alleged to neutralise each other, he will be disappointed. Of their effect one way or another we mean to say nothing, because the weight that each has will be not an

absolute quantity, but relative to the minds, so very variously constituted, upon which they act; and for a similar reason we put aside (not without difficulty) the temptation to set one against the other, so as to make both inoperative. But what we beg the reader most carefully to observe is that, compared with the positive arguments to be derived for or against the Christian religion from its analogy with Nature, both presumptions are but as dust in the balance; for in comparing two things together to see whether they are alike or not we are upon the plain firm ground of reason and experience. Everything turns upon whether Revelation and Nature can be shown to resemble each other so far as to prove identity of origin and unity of design. If no such resemblance can be traced, then Revelation would appear more alien than ever from the spirit and teaching of Nature; if the contrary, then Revelation would simply become, and would be readily recognised to be, a part of Nature in its larger sense. In the former case the presumption in favour of Revelation as answering our difficulties and filling up a void in Nature would sink into nothingness; in the latter the

presumption against miracles would cease to be an effect of reasonable cautiousness, and become a mere prejudice, nay, an *idolum theatri* itself, it being plainly irrational to set up in the name of reason a preliminary improbability against arguments that rest upon reason and our admitted experience of things. So that we are once more brought round, though the writer would willingly have spared himself and his readers the tediousness of the journey to the point where we found ourselves at the close of the last chapter.

But one result has been to vindicate indirectly the philosophical method employed by the author of the Analogy. His philosophical insight taught him that Revelation must be introduced upon the scene as having some relation to the religion of Nature, which relation he defined briefly, as follows: "Christianity is a republication of natural religion." Constrained by the tenour of our argument, as well as by the change in men's ways of thinking, we, on our part, should rather regard the relation to consist in the answer which Revelation gives to the questions propounded by Nature, thereby making natural religion real and

effective. But whatever form the statement of it may take, the truth itself remains imperishable: that in proportion as men can combine Nature, or, if the expression be preferred, natural religion and Revelation together, they will be able to build up an inexpugnable fortress that can neither be stormed by assault of doubt, nor starved into submission by agnostic indifference.

CHAPTER III.

ON THE ANALOGY BETWEEN REVELATION AND NATURE VIEWED GENERALLY.

WE propose to consider in this chapter the points wherein an analogy may be traced between the schemes of Revelation and Nature respectively taken in their mere outlines as defined in the first chapter, and to discover how correspondences of a general character may be made out between them such as we are wont to expect from two sets of things having the same origin. And it must once for all be remembered that the resemblances to be hereafter set forth are not by any means to be supposed to be of the same value, more especially since they are addressed to differently constituted minds. Those that

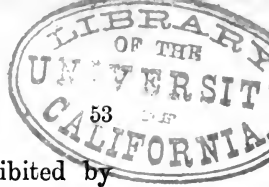
appear fanciful to some may strike others as real and significant; and some may be but superficial, and yet suggestive of deeper likeness lying below the surface and to be discovered in its time. Nor must it be taken as a discredit to the argument that similarities may be pointed out so faint as by themselves to amount to almost nothing at all. For the argument is a cumulative one; and every resemblance adds something, be it ever so little, to the mass of proof, just in the same way that any resemblance of form and feature, no matter how small, may be assigned as evidence that two persons are blood relations. And it is a peculiar felicity of the argument from analogy that whereas points of resemblance may always *primâ facie* be quoted in proof of community of origin or of kind, points of difference may on the contrary be assigned to that wherein the two are admittedly and obviously not the same, but separate, things. But it will go hard with any one who shall set out to find essential discrepancies between the course of Nature and the events of Revelation.

This is perhaps the proper place to observe

that the reader must not expect to be pleased with a great deal of that which is thought so much of in these days—novelty and originality. The ideas are for the most part the familiar topics of religious literature, only adapted to the purpose or used as the vehicle of instituting a comparison between Nature and Revelation. And as ideas are not private property, nor patented by their inventors, the author trusts that this general expression of obligation to the writers he has laid under contribution will be deemed sufficient.

When we are called upon to examine two phenomena in Nature, with a view of discovering whether they be, or of proving that they are, effects of the same cause or plans of the same mind, what may we expect in the way of preliminary likeness? Something that may, perhaps, be expressed in these three words—comparison, combination, and co-operation.

First, we expect that it will be possible so to bring them together as that a comparison may be made between them; and, further, that a general appearance of similitude sufficient to invite the



mind to further comparisons will be exhibited by them. To which may be added that the process whereby each has been reduced or brought down to a state admitting of comparison being made, will be also alike.

Second, we expect that neither of them shall present any marked divergence or obvious repugnance to the other so as to require alterations or the removal of first and natural impressions before the analogy can proceed. In other words they must combine readily, for to the proof from analogy *force* is fatal.

Third, we expect that if (as in the case before us) they are represented as parts of a larger scheme they must, when brought together, adjust themselves in harmonious co-operation, and so unite to carry out the object which their Author or Cause may be supposed to have in view. To take these in order.

I. COMPARISON.—The writer is sometimes inclined to think that many of the strongest arguments for religion, like the common breath of daily life, pass unnoticed, just because they are so common that no one stops to look at them or take them up :

being the property of every one, no one seeks to appropriate them. Of such is the truth that Nature and Revelation are capable of being brought into comparison at all, which men take as a matter of course because they are always doing it. And yet what different things are Nature (which is the sum of laws and forces), and Revelation (which is a series of events in history)! It does not at all follow because phenomena are the effect of the same cause or the work of the same Author that they should fall within the scope of the argument from analogy: thus it would be in the highest degree absurd to be asked to infer from appearance that (say) the same man who grew a field of corn also built the barn to receive it. Nor is there any necessity either from experience or from the reason of the case that the essential doctrines of any given religion should be able to be compared with the essential principles of Nature's course and constitution. And yet the bare description as given in the first chapter of what Nature and Revelation may be defined to be, indicates that such comparison is possible, even if our

knowledge of what men have thought about them and the very commonest experiences of religious minds did not assure us—I will not say that the thing is capable of being done, but rather that it is incapable of not being done.

What is it in the aforesaid description that makes these two dispensations thus comparable together? Merely that both are traceable to definite beginnings, can be concluded under brief and definite conceptions, can be by proper observation reduced to plain essential principles, and so betray upon the face of them similarities that invite further attention. Thus Christianity is a growth from certain germinal acts introducing forces from out of the universe to act upon the world, and creation itself, so far as it is conceivable by us, would seem to be just the same, the word "process" being substituted for "act." In this view the commencement of the course of Nature within the limits of our world would be the beginning, and Revelation would be the end of the Creator's work, regarded as something distinct from that small part of Nature which we call ours. And if, as perhaps will be the case, we reach in

Nature at last to some primal force or forces, so in Religion we are already conducted to the love of God as the moving power of the moral world before the formation of which it is revealed as existing. All which, not now to anticipate ourselves by going further into details, is so much a matter of common experience, it so "lies about us" and enters into our ordinary ways of thinking, that we do not stop to inquire how it came to pass or how easily things might have been ordered otherwise, to say nothing of the strong probability that they would have been ordered otherwise but for the sameness of their origin. And we may perhaps conjecture that much of the softening power and potent charm which the New Testament confessedly exercises upon men busied in the interpretation of Nature is due to this primary and artless analogy, which may perhaps dispose them to receive favourably any explanation of that gratification and that consciousness of an unseen presence of truth, which the New Testament, as they themselves cheerfully testify, is wont to afford them.

Now this definiteness of essential principles, common to Nature and Revelation, is not in the

least a thing to be taken for granted as though prior to experience it were necessary to the mode of thinking about them which the human mind *nolens volens* must adopt: so far from this, it has only been arrived at as the result of prolonged inquiry and sore conflict. For all we could have told Nature might have remained a mere aggregate of phenomena more or less loosely bound together by laws, and it is only quite of late that men have learnt to think of it as that "Course" to which the term Evolution seems by common consent to be applied. Even so Christianity consists of a vast array of events, doctrines, and institutions, beginning even before Revelation was given, and it is only now that men are coming (as we have said) to see that, however true and necessary to salvation different persons may think any of these to be, yet for a positive definition of that wherein the Christian religion consists we must confine ourselves to the events of the New Testament history. A sound instinct has indeed at all times warned the best minds that this must be the case, and Butler, as we have seen, took it for granted. It is now, however, becoming

the commonly accepted view; and that by a process presenting a curious analogy to the discovery of truths of Nature.

The conception of Nature as a course, known as the Darwinian theory, has been reached by a continual conflict of opinions, always tending, by the discovery of remoter laws and wider generalisations, towards simplicity and unity of knowledge. Ideas about the cause or constitution of natural phenomena have been promulgated, based perhaps upon some approximation to the truth; these have come into conflict with old ones, have been in turn superseded by new ones, until by the survival of the fittest, those ideas which describe the course of Nature in the simplest and most accurate form take their place as reasoned truths and become part of the common stock of information. If any one will mentally trace out the history of Christian doctrine, he will find that it has followed precisely the same law.

The positive (or we might call them scientific) essentials of Christianity are contained in the life of Christ, but we arrive at this not at all by an immediate effort of the reasoning or spiritual

faculties, still less as an expression of individual opinion, but by a long course of conflict, of survival, of rejecting non-essentials, of discerning more clearly what it was that God did or framed or set in motion at the first beginning by the exercise of His sole power. And this is accomplished in a very remarkable way, being no other than through the agency of the various Christian sects or Churches, the very existence of which has constantly been alleged as an argument against the religion that produced them. It has always been felt as a stumbling-block that a religion which assumes to inculcate peace, union, and charity, should become the parent of strife and intolerance; and so no doubt it is. But one of the first results of our analogy is to rebut this moral presumption against the Christian religion by showing that if Revelation were to be in accordance with Nature, this is just what was to be expected as certain to take place. Truth is discovered by the conflict of various schools of thought rejecting the relative or the transitory, and sects are merely schools of thought hardened into offensive and defensive communities by the kind of doctrine about which they hold different

opinions, and by national or even local peculiarities. But from the mass of opinions there is clearly eliminated faith in the historical manifestation of Christ, as that which all hold in common: those who care to retain the name Christian go to the New Testament history of Christ's life and work as that upon which to establish their faith and their creed. Nor, on the other hand, can any doctrine or institution which is rejected by men, who, by their own profession and in the view of the world, are plainly Christian people, be regarded as fundamental, that is to say, for the positive definition of Christianity. Thus, if anything there were besides this that might be deemed an essential part of the Christian religion, it would be the two Sacraments; and yet no one who wished to treat it in the purely scientific method could dare to reject the Society of Friends from its ranks. It is true that the boundary line (if such for the purposes of argument there must be) is confused in some measure by the existence of a few excellent persons who, while disbelieving, or perhaps rather trying to disbelieve, the New Testament history, do not nevertheless feel

inclined to give up the noble name of Christian. The strict requirements of logic in an argument of this character may compel us to regard such persons as outside the number of Christian believers in the essential elements of revelation, nor perhaps will the common sense or usual judgment of mankind find fault with this opinion. But logic is one thing, practice is another, and practically to seek to retain the name of Christian is as honourable to them as it should be gratifying to the mass of Christian believers, who may see in it a strong testimony to the moral powers and spiritual effectiveness of their religion.

As our main purpose is not to answer objections that have been made to Christianity, we shall merely beg the reader to remark in passing how consistent it is with natural processes, and how much to be expected in any religion, if true, that it should not appear early in history, that it should be confined for long to certain types of civilisation, that it should grow as it has done by those struggles and survivals, which we may call, if we please, immoral and unworthy of a divinely planted institution, but which are none the less

in strict analogy with Nature—which is also Divine.

But leaving this at any rate for the present, we must insist that Revelation must have an essential foundation of truth in it, to have survived the rough and searching treatment it has had to endure, not from opponents merely, but from its own adherents. And the proof of this is to be found in our experience of Nature's method of operations, which is as follows: Real existence, presenting itself just because it is real in different shapes or on different sides to various minds and epochs, becomes an object of research, of criticism, of disputation, until at length its true meaning and essence become apparent, and some final conclusion concerning it is arrived at. Whereas there is a kind of unity about false systems; which does not admit of being disputed about, which, as it were, evaporates in the crucible of criticism. Being the product of some mistaken mind, or relative to some special mode of thinking, they have no root in themselves; but when the sun of knowledge beats upon them, they wither away, no one exactly knows why or how. So

have perished many superstitions, many false systems, many erroneous, though for the time useful and attractive, creeds. Witchcraft, Protection (as a thing capable of intellectual defence by competent inquirers), the Divine Right of Kings, may be received and believed in, but only upon condition that people think the same way concerning them, and that, too, the way in which they were first promulgated. So that whatever men may now think of the sectarian spirit, without it there would have been no Christianity, and it is but the exhibition in the field of religion of the law that governs all demonstrations of real truth. The evil of it lies not in difference of opinion, but in violence of temper.

But at this point we *must* step aside for an instant to meet one of those ingenious objections or rather ways of putting things, which seem to suggest the consoling thought that the ingenuity with which objections are started bears some proportion to the readiness with which they are answered. Men allege that Christianity is either primitive, mediæval, or modern; it is either Latin, Teutonic, or, "*longo intervallo*," Greek; it is either

Catholic or Protestant, either Trinitarian or Unitarian ; and so on. But as all these religious systems are (so they allege) in many respects defective, and in no respect absolutely and exclusively true ; as moreover they have been associated with imperfect morality and erroneous notions ; therefore Christianity, which is composed of these, is no better than they are, is only relatively true like them, and is doomed to perish with them. And men talk in all gravity of Christianity as being responsible for the crimes and blunders of Christian people. But this is just as reasonable as if we should say that there is no absolute morality or fixed truth because there have been many schools of opinion about them ; or that the course of Nature is a delusion because men were so long in finding it out ; or that the principles of the English Constitution are responsible for party selfishness and violence. What Christianity is responsible for is the Revelation contained in the life of Christ, and for nothing else. The stream issues pure and wholesome from its source, however much it may be polluted in its progress towards the sea. Nor can anything be justly said

against the moral perfection of Revelation till the world has realised the spirit of Christ and of His teaching, and found it morally defective when tried by the touchstone of experience.

II. COMBINATION.—The proposition that there is no intrinsic repugnancy between the systems of Nature and Revelation may easily be thrown into an affirmative form by exhibiting the kind of regard that each may be said to have for the other. But it is well to remind ourselves that, had the two been derived from different sources, traces of repugnancy and incompatibility must have appeared in every feature. That nothing of the kind takes place affords a strong probability that their origin is the same. The most obvious way of stating this fact is that not one doctrine or truth peculiar to either dispensation requires to be modified or altered by any other doctrine or truth peculiar to the other. No doubt theologians have always yielded to the temptation of endeavouring to force an interpretation upon Nature that their own doctrines seemed to require. No doubt also natural philosophy has been seduced into the affirmation that there is no

place in the world for religious belief. But time and conflict have done their inevitable work, and there is a growing disposition to recognise that no truth of Nature can be inconsistent with religion, and none of religion contradictory to Nature. Here once more Revelation is responsible only for itself; incompatibility with Nature, to be fatal, must be discovered *there*. But there is no conceivable opinion about Nature—conceivable, that is, scientifically—which a man may not hold and yet also hold along with it the Revelation of Christ. We doubt whether Analogy will reveal any more convincing evidence than this, which is only not surprising because it is taken so much as a matter of course. For Revelation claims to reveal something of the relations of the Creator to the world, and reason, applying itself to the study of Nature, makes practically the same claim (even if in unnecessary rigorousness of statement we are obliged to substitute Cause for Creator); and this is so managed by the former as to leave the latter in absolute possession of its own domain, and of entire freedom for its own proper work. Revelation is guilty of no intrusion in this respect,

for it does not contain one single word that can be tortured into the expression of an opinion upon scientific subjects, and this is the very reason, one may conjecture, why Revelation is so brief and so exclusively religious. But this will come before us more naturally under the head of the teaching of Christ (see Chapter VII.), which alone it concerns the Christian advocate to maintain, as being the authoritative and responsible expression of the truths and methods of the Christian Faith. Only we may go on to point out that whatever impression is made upon our minds by the Master's non-interference and strict self-limitation, is further increased, even to a pitch of astonishment, when we reflect that it was strictly carried out by the poor unlearned men who have preserved the account of His life and teaching for us. For if that account be a genuine expression of their own ideas about their Master, then the early Christians were sharers in a dispensation that involved the exercise of other than natural powers, and yet they managed somehow to avoid interference in the way of opinion or dogmatising with natural laws, and they never

once yielded to the temptation of using those special gifts of information which they certainly thought their Master possessed, to answer questions which belong to reason and experience to discover. They one and all display a genuine unconsciousness that their religion was even so much as suspending any of the Divine arrangements in Nature, in which they acquiesced implicitly, not because, as reason teaches *us*, these were unalterably fixed by law, but because they were in accordance with the will of God, whose Son they (the disciples) proclaimed. They felt, of course, that something was being done in and for Nature by its Maker, something special and beyond His usual ways of operation, but quite in harmony with the will and attributes of the Creator of the world and of man.

We have, then, a—so to call it—natural treatment of Nature by Revelation, in spite of itself containing a supernatural element; but those who put on the garb of the supernatural are certain of detection unless it be their own—they are like the fabled ass in the lion's skin. But it may be replied that the mere exercise of supernatural power involves a disturbance in Nature; that the

two are *ipso facto* divergent, and so incapable of combination. But this is a matter for experience to decide, and experience would seem to say that there is positively nothing in Revelation which the course of Nature feels itself called upon to resent or to shrink from admitting.

The case seems to stand thus: If certain causes or series of causes produce with undeviating regularity a certain set of results, we are entitled to assume first that no alteration can be made in them save for the purpose of producing something beyond their capacity; and, secondly, that if in the process of alteration anything is taken from them, the first set of results cannot be accomplished as before. Now the course of Nature may fairly be regarded as a machine altogether capable of producing the vast aggregate of phenomena, together with all life, social, moral, and intellectual; nor must we be surprised if they whose business it is to study the working of the machine should carefully guard against the intrusion of anything that might argue its insufficiency for its own work, or spoil the regularity upon which their knowledge of it depends. So that it might almost

seem impossible for the Creator Himself to give a Revelation that should comply with these stringent conditions, and altogether inconceivable that the human mind should hit upon one capable of satisfying them. But the Christian religion has achieved the task.

For Revelation cannot possibly be regarded as taking away from the constitution of Nature, which still remains unalterably competent for the accomplishment of its own proper work ; rather it presents itself as an addition to supply that which Nature itself could not give, though it seemed to ask for it, namely, an adequate knowledge of the Creator. It is as though the owner of a spinning machine, wishing at a particular moment to add another colour to his stuff, introduced into a space *originally left open for it* a thread of the colour he desired, which was immediately taken up into the texture of the piece by the regular working of the machine. And this is no fancy, but, if we look at the history of Revelation, just what happened. For we have the Creative Power introducing the life of Christ into the world, but not in the least altering the course of Nature, whose wheels pro-

ceed with the same monotonous regularity, and so bringing into the world, out of the same original source as the world itself came from, a life that was quite natural and human, that adjusted itself to the world as to its proper home, and that gave to Nature that hue which was wanted, if not to complete the harmony, at least to relieve the tameness of the original colouring. So that if this view of things be correct, and perhaps it will not be seriously objected to even by the more zealous champions of Nature's sovereignty, we may affirm that our second point, namely, the absence of incompatibility between the two systems and consequent power of combination, is not only proclaimed as a fact (which it is), but justified from the Analogy of Nature and the teachings of experience.

III. CO-OPERATION.—Perhaps the force of the Analogy will be best displayed by an illustration. I am taken, let us suppose, to a ship lying in a dockyard, and am told nothing concerning its builder except, what I can see for myself, that he meant it to perform the work proper to ships. I am next taken to a factory, and there am shown

a set of machinery, boiler, and the rest of it, about the making of which once more I know nothing; but I am told it is meant for the ship aforesaid, and built according to the plans of the designer thereof. I find, upon inquiry and examination of the several parts, such a correspondence in size and shape and in adjustment of details, as to give me strong reason for believing a statement which I have none for disbelieving, so far as the veracity of my informant is concerned, and I accept it accordingly. Even so stands the case as to Nature and Revelation.

As this illustration dominates the whole Analogy, we will take pains to avoid a possible misapprehension. Note, then, that the particular kind of cause selected—namely, a living agent—is chosen as the most fitting for the matter in hand which it is meant to illustrate, and not as forming an integral part of the argument. The stress of the argument lies in the sameness of the cause, whatever it be, and would remain the same whether the cause was an agent or a material antecedent, or fate, or, in short, anything you please.

The above illustration may appear to challenge comparison with Mr. Paley's famous argument from the watch which a man was supposed to find upon the ground, and thereupon to infer the work of a designing mind. And we may say again that such arguments, if only because they have pleased the public mind and excited general interest, may be safely credited with a certain essential rightness of method, even though inevitable changes in men's ways of thinking imply a corresponding change of application of the method. The argument is now very generally thought to be defective because the finder of the watch had a previous knowledge of men whose business it was to make watches, whereas of the existence of a Creator he could have no knowledge—it being the thing in question: in other words, the argument failed in so far as the analogy did not hold. But of the above illustration it may be said that though it does not aim at going so far, yet it goes safely up to the point it aims at. I do not know how or by whom the ship was made, or how and by whom the machinery was made; but I am entitled

—nay, I must do it whether it pleases me or not—to infer that the same mind (or cause) presided over the manufacture of both of them, else they would never have fitted in with each other, and never have co-operated for the end which the bare appearance suggests that they were intended for; or if that word be objected to (but how can we escape from the necessary conditions of human thinking?) then let us say, for which they are plainly suitable.

Now, is it possible to deny, upon the first and merely external view of things, and previous to any detailed examination of either of the two systems, that the Christian Revelation betrays a remarkable aptitude for co-operation with the course of Nature towards the formation of a religion reasonable enough to satisfy the judgment, and capacious enough to carry the destinies, of mankind? The writer for his part professes himself quite unable to conceive how anything can be wanting for reasonable minds to the religion which has, as a matter of fact, issued from the union of the two, it being remembered here as elsewhere that the various additions to Revelation

that have been made, however true and useful and logical they may be, form no part of the original combination, and cannot be defended, as it can, by Analogy. And the essential element in which this power of co-operation consists is nothing more nor less than that commonplace of Christian doctrine, that Revelation makes the Author of Nature known to us as a Being with whom we can enter into the very closest moral and spiritual relations. It was for want of this assurance that, to recur to our simile, the ship, though apparently formed in every line for motion, remained immovable for religious purposes until the proper machinery was placed on board. Then in a moment, as a mere matter of historical fact, all that was wanted to give movement, life, and energy to man's religious emotions and natural, if dormant, faith, was supplied to him, and Christianity became, to say the least, *one* of the many vessels upon which are embarked the hopes of the human race. Useful co-operation consists in one of the two things supplying exactly what the other wants, and it may well be doubted whether the whole analogy of Nature, so fruitful

in co-operations of this kind, can furnish one more marked or noteworthy than this one of Revelation with Nature to produce religion.

And here it is important to insist with all urgency upon the truth hinted at in the last sentence, that the co-operation is mutual, for the ship is at least as necessary to the machinery as the machinery to the ship. And if we attend to the matter closely, we shall perceive that it is not the sufficiency of Revelation taken by itself that constitutes the force of the appeal to our reason and piety, but its union with all that Nature teaches man to hope, to fear, or to think, as being from God. And perhaps we should remember somewhat more than we do that the Christian religion does not depend merely upon the truths laid down or the emotions kindled by the manifestation of Christ, but upon this as penetrating and interpreting the course of Nature. Not but that the genuine Christian spirit, sometimes almost in its own despite, has evinced a cordial appreciation of the religious aspect of Nature, and has striven to concur and co-operate with it. But it seems probable that as more has

perhaps been done in this way in the past than theology is wont to give men credit for, so does much now remain to be done in the future. There are some minds to whom the adoring contemplation of the will of God in Revelation is enough for the needs of their spiritual being, just as there are others who, taking from Revelation no more than the assurance that the Creator of the universe is the Father of mankind (by what means the assurance comes they hardly care to inquire, so all-important and all-credible is it to them), straightway find themselves able to discover and reverence His will in Nature. This has always been a large part of the unconscious religion of mankind, and it is emphatically the religion—hidden perhaps too much away, as though it were a thing to be ashamed of—of the students of Nature in our own time. Nor does there seem any reason why this form or application of religion may not increase, even among ardent Christians themselves; nor yet any why it ought not, so long as the life and character of Jesus Christ retain their hold over the love and reverence of mankind,

which, it must be observed, is certainly the case at present among all classes of minds. And, to say truth, this is a seasonable and consoling reflection, for it is impossible not to feel some uneasiness at what is often said, namely, that the more Christianity recedes from its original source, the farther it spreads over different peoples and circumstances, so much the less value may the purely historical events have for the generality of men, or, at any rate, for some men. The author does not himself share this anticipation, but is not afraid of it, even if it turned out to be a correct guess as to the unknown future. For nothing can undo the past, that Revelation has given life and motion to man's religious instincts by giving certainty and proof to his reasonings about his Creator and Ruler. And this, if the Analogy of Nature is to go for anything at all, affords an exceedingly strong presumption that both have their origin from the same Cause.

The candid reader must now judge for himself whether a sufficient likeness has been established between the two dispensations viewed generally as wholes to amount to some proof that they

come from the same Author, and whether he will care to go into a further examination of the details, which I promise him shall be as short and simple as the kind of subject admits of. But before doing so a preliminary point must be raised and settled. Does the history of religion, it may be asked, afford any ground for supposing that an Analogy between Nature and Revelation could have been brought about by any other means than by the design and will of God? Thus it is possible that other sets of machinery besides this one might fit the vessel equally well; or, again, that some other person, catching hints perhaps from the master-mind, might have designed the machinery that did fit. So that we have here two distinct questions: First, are there any other religions that present the same kind of resemblance to the course of Nature that the Christian does? Second, could human nature have devised the scheme of Revelation without express help from God? The true answer to these, especially the second, is to be found in the detailed development of the Analogy itself; but it may perhaps be well to indicate very briefly

the radical incompetency, as proved by the touchstone of Nature, of any known human cause to produce even that superficial resemblance, which is all that we have as yet touched upon.



CHAPTER IV.

ON THE IMPROBABILITY FROM ANALOGY THAT REVELATION WAS PRODUCED IN THE COURSE OF NATURE.

THE assertion that the Creator of the world did, by a special act of his own volition, create also the Christian religion, claims for Revelation a pre-eminence so absolute as to make it certain that the assertion will be jealously scrutinised and, if possible, rejected. Hostility is, under the circumstances, so natural, and so much a thing to be proud of, as being itself a testimony to the supremacy of their religion, that Christian advocates ought to find no fault with the expression of it, even were it more acrimonious or more contemptuous than upon the whole, and, taking all things fairly into account, it is wont to be.

Our relations with Nature are so intimate, and of such paramount importance, that there is an inevitable prejudice against even such an addition as we sketched in the last chapter, and the present state of human knowledge upon religious subjects puts within men's reach two arguments of which they are not slow to avail themselves. They say that, religion being a necessary product of thought in such a world as ours, Christianity is true in the sense that other religions are true, and that these may be supposed to have been derived from the same source, whatever we take that source to be. And, again, that the same workings of human nature which produced other religions may be supposed to have produced the Christian also. Two most serious and extensive questions, with which happily for ourselves we have in this argument no further concern than to point out what the Analogy of Nature has to say concerning them, which may be done briefly and without much difficulty.

First, as to other religions. Now, in so far as religion is derived from the workings of the human mind (and this is true, whether we suppose that

under the human mind is included a divinely given consciousness of God or not), it is clear that the various manifestations of the religious faculty cannot be absolutely compared with each other in respect of superiority or usefulness, because each is the best and only possible for its own sphere, being conditioned, in respect of utility, by what men call environment. Thus two is a smaller number than five, taken absolutely, but as large if it belongs to a sum of things represented by twenty, and the other to a sum of things represented by fifty. So that unless we can find some fixed standard of truth applicable to all times and places, we cannot fairly say that one religion is more true or more essential than another. And even in respect of morality, our own moral ideas make us bad judges of the good or evil of other creeds.

Now, amidst all that is relative, fluctuating, and dissimilar, there is certainly to be found one fixed standard such as we desire, that is everywhere unalterably the same; and this is none other than this very course of Nature itself, which all religions save the Christian have tacitly repudiated. Of Nature it may with truth be said that *animus non res mutant*

qui trans mare currunt. The law of gravitation, the form of the earth, the principle of evolution, are the same in the homes of the religions of the East as in Christian lands, and all that we have summed up in the words "course of Nature," such as conservance of force, origin from atoms, natural selection, survival, heredity, correlation of life with environment, have been at work no less persistently in Asia and Africa than in Europe and America. And so comparison of religions, when pursued to its full extent, is seen to be a weapon with a double edge—if it shows how much religions have in common, it shows also the essential point in which they differ. And what a difference there is!

Would it be considered unfair to say that all civilisations other than Christian have, in their religions, caught and represented every aspect of Nature, good and bad alike, except that which gives to it a spiritual significance, which is the being intellectually apprehended as a course and constitution? Their defect (we mean of the religions) and ultimate cause of failure, has been not that they were too much Nature-religions, but too little, in

that they missed that in Nature which is wanted to make religion true in point of fact and wholesome in respect of morality—the conception of law and order. Hence they are out of Analogy altogether, there being nothing in them that can be compared and combined with the course of Nature, merely because the requisite materials in the shape of information and ideas have been, as a matter of fact, wanting. They have, on the contrary, displayed an open unconsciousness of natural operation, an indifference and incongruity, and finally a complete acquiescence in quite erroneous views about phenomena. Nor is this quite the worst that must be said of non-Christian religions in respect of their relations to Nature. In the first place, they appear to have succeeded in effecting what Christianity has sometimes been accused of trying to effect, but has, in the long run, very plainly failed, namely, preventing the investigation of phenomena from making any very appreciable progress, by first of all inventing some theological account of them, and then throwing over such account a veil of religious awe and mystery, to forbid further inquiry. And, in the second place, they have but

too commonly succumbed to those superstitious or immoral tendencies which Nature, in her merely marvellous or sensuous aspects, has almost forced upon religious systems. Knowledge of Nature is the vital atmosphere in which true religion alone can breathe, and it would seem as if Revelation had first set the human mind free to pursue the knowledge of Nature, and then called upon Nature, when known, to co-operate with Christianity itself, in forming an absolute and sufficient religion. And the really astonishing thing is that Christian civilisation has accomplished the investigation of Nature, and is at this moment addressing itself once more to new tasks, in spite of the defiance which the representatives of religion have too often bidden to the discoverers of physical or moral truth, and of the persecutions which they have inflicted upon them. Does not this look as if there were a Divine power and purpose beneath the purely human manifestations of Christian policy and speculation? This idea we throw out by the way, for the reader himself to think out.

It is not perhaps necessary to pursue this topic much further, a somewhat unwelcome task, as it

cannot but be to those who sympathise with the strivings of human nature, and not the least when they seem to end in failure and decay. But it may be well to complete the argument by pointing out that the process which has rendered Christianity a system comparable with that of Nature is wanting in all other religions. For we saw that Nature and Revelation have been brought into relation in the way of comparison with each other, because, by the effects of research in the one case, and by the conflict of denominations in the other, they have been reduced to their first principles and traced back to their real essence. But other religions have lost the advantages and, to a great extent, escaped the reproach of sectarianism. The relative truths (relative, that is, to the conditions out of which the religions grew), which was all they could attain to, will not bear dissection. They may at times give rise to reformation, as when the original truth tries to escape from the corruptions that have fastened upon it, or they may become the exciting cause of factions, which, though not in reality having much further cause for disagreement in doctrine

than the Blues and Greens of the hippodrome, nevertheless assume a hostile attitude towards each other. But analysis, controversy, the contrasted views of those who see one side of the truth more than the other—the keen scrutiny of different communities trying to get their own opinions out of the original doctrine—these, and such as these, which enter so largely into the religious life of Christendom, they cannot endure. Hence they present a history, upon the whole, without sects, as we understand the word; and so, though full of beauty and power, at any rate in their beginnings and at their best, they remain outside of the Analogy of Nature, and, to recur to our illustration, do not even make a pretence of being able to devise machinery to fit the ship.

Second, as to the possibility that the Christian Revelation was produced in the ordinary course of things, and by the common faculties of human nature. And here it will be frankly admitted that the presumption that Revelation was the work of the Author of Creation ought to far exceed in probability any other account that can be given of its origin. Note the words

“far exceed,” for in proportion as Analogy is a convincing weapon of reasoning should its proofs be conclusive.

Now, the conclusion from the Analogy of their parts that a given set of machinery was made for a particular vessel may be rebutted by positive testimony to the contrary, and if evidence was given that another mind designed the work, we should, in spite of our natural amazement at the coincidence, have no choice but to examine and perhaps accept it. But then, as in the illustration, so in religion, we require at once to be shown the Maker and to be told the evidence, and thus the *onus probandi* is, by the preliminary argument from Analogy, thrown off the advocate of Revelation, and placed upon its opponents. It was at one time thought that a real and formidable difficulty was suggested by the obvious question: “Is there any positive evidence for the existence of a designing mind; that is to say, of a Being concerning whom we may rightly think under this conception?” But now the question is shown to be capable of being retorted, and we, in our turn, desire to be informed as to the persons and the

process by whom and through which a religion was designed that resembled the operations of God in Nature.

The answer—and it is, of course, the only one that the circumstances of the case allow—is that Christianity grew out of the religious consciousness of the Jewish people, or rather of a few chosen spirits among them, at a special crisis of their history. And though this topic does not belong to our present discussion, yet it may be well to remind the reader that the explanation comes before him as an hypothesis already profoundly discredited by the rational judgment of mankind. We may fairly say of it that it is out of Analogy with history before we come to try whether it is not also out of Analogy with Nature. Upon the relation, however, of this theory to history it is not within our province to dwell further than to remind the reader that the reasons for the dissatisfaction with which men already regard it are so serious as the following: The account given by the men themselves who are supposed to have devised Revelation, and especially the attitude of submissive faith which

was exhibited by all the leading minds of the apostolic age towards it; the extraordinary mixture of credulity and virtue which the theory presupposes; the unlikeness to any known method of propagating a religion; finally, the entire failure of all attempts hitherto to give a plausible and consistent account of the history of Revelation other than it gives of itself. All which is abundantly set forth in religious literature, but it can never be too much insisted upon.

But our purpose is to submit this explanation to the touchstone of Analogy with Nature. Now, if it were a question of framing a Revelation that should satisfy the religious instincts or the moral wants of our humanity, we might perhaps find it possible to believe that this was accomplished by a few Jews, and certainly not the less so because they were sprung from the ranks of the people. They were men; they were good men; they were filled with enthusiasm; they longed for the regeneration of their nation, if not of all nations. Hence they may, difficult as it is to believe, have constructed an ideal life and perfect morality out of the materials furnished by the life

and teaching of one among themselves. But how did they contrive to make their religion fit with such marvellous accuracy into the course of Nature? Already we have seen that this religion of theirs compares, combines, and co-operates with Nature, and we shall see presently how this external Analogy is but the reflex of a deeper and more intensive internal and detailed resemblance. Yet, though good and religious men, they were not natural philosophers, and cared even less than most men about the course or laws of natural phenomena. These were, to the founders of Christianity, simply the sphere of the works of God, and as they had in their own belief the resources of supernatural information to fall back on, they might with the utmost imaginable ease have tried to give some special account of them. But not only were they withheld by some mysterious power from intruding into the course of Nature with theological explanations, but they were enabled to devise a Revelation exactly parallel with it. So that it would really seem no less absurd to attribute the designing of Revelation to them than to suppose that an engineer could

by some happy chance make his machinery to fit a ship of which he had no knowledge. That they could accommodate their work to those particulars whereof we ourselves began to know something, as it were, but yesterday, does seem in the highest degree improbable; and, not only that, but unnatural.

Let the proper conclusion from all this be steadily kept before the reader's mind. The alternatives between which we are to decide are not merely whether the Analogy of Nature makes it more probable than not that Revelation comes from the Creator, but whether it makes it more probable that it is from the Creator than from the only human source to which it can be attributed. For Revelation like Nature, exists: it must have come from some cause or other, and itself tells us what that cause is, and interweaves the account of its own origin with its claims upon our mental and moral appreciation. Nor, we may here take occasion to observe, does it avail the objector to lay stress upon the favourable conditions and circumstances which certainly attended both the birth and progress of



the Christian creed; for in respect of our present argument this is really nothing to the point. For the whole Analogy of Nature obliges us to conclude that nothing in the world can be produced or survive except the conditions be favourable, and therefore if Christianity had grown up in spite of circumstances, or if it had appeared at an unseasonable time, this would have been a strong argument against its being of God. What then we have to decide is, whether the conditions were not only favourable but sufficient of themselves to produce the effects in question. And this appears to us almost the same as asking whether a carefully prepared field, together with suitable weather, could produce the crop required without sowing the proper seed.

It remains to be observed that this argument will be strengthened many times over as our Analogy proceeds from a mere general resemblance such as we have pointed out already to those special resemblances of inner spirit and specific detail with which we are next to occupy ourselves; and at each point, if we succeed in establishing

any to the satisfaction of the reader, he will be invited to consider which of the two explanations as to the origin of Christianity, best suits the facts of the case. But we enforce it thus early in the discussion, because it has already become apparent that Revelation assumes the form, not of a congeries of doctrines and beliefs such as a number of persons might unite in composing, but of a "course" or "system" or "dispensation" such as we commonly take Nature to be, and wrought by definite principles into the counterpart of Nature itself. And if we press for further information, we do, as in Nature so in Revelation, but find ourselves in presence of those mysterious sources of all created things which we experience every moment we act or think, but of those primal forces themselves know nothing. And it may well be that the serious reader, with no other apparatus than the New Testament on the one hand, and some trustworthy handbook of science on the other, will be able to find, or perhaps to feel, for himself, so complete an analogy between the *origines mundi* and the *origines revelationis* that he will be inclined to dispense with the comparisons

to which he is next to be invited. Will he believe that no one would be better pleased than the writer himself? For in both these mysterious regions, where reason stops baffled and the imagination drops down appalled, traces of a primal Being, glimpses of mind, whispers of spiritual voices, indications of forces from far-off places and testifying of undiscoverable realities to be revealed in their time, come and go and still persist in returning and haunting the soul with the very presence of the Creator Himself. As *they* know well who have bowed themselves before the shrine of the living God, either in the creation of the world or in the manifestation of Christ, but *they* know best who have bowed themselves in both.

CHAPTER V.

ON THE EVIDENCE FOR REVELATION.

THE general resemblance, which is all that we have sought as yet to establish between Nature and Revelation, carries with it a strong probability that there is also a similarity between the various parts and separate features. How then are the two systems to be arranged, or into what parts broken up, to admit of further comparison being made? As far as concerns Nature—this being the standard with which the other is to be brought into analogy—it is evident that we may take it just as it is; that is to say, as expressing the sum of those general laws or truths concerning phenomena which the best minds have laid down and common opinion has accepted; and then we may

select from these the points to which we propose to show that Revelation bears some likeness. But the truths of Revelation we must try and arrange in some order such as would be accepted by Christians as containing the minimum of their creed, and such as will give us a definite idea of what precisely it is for which we have to find analogies in Nature.

This, however, if we follow the historical method, is not difficult to do. Let us summarise the account which Revelation gives us concerning God as involving this much at the very least: that the Creator of the world sent His Son to live a human life in it, with the object of redeeming it from evil by the sacrifice of Himself to death and Resurrection to life, and that the Holy Spirit was sent to carry forward this work. And this will break up into five main portions—namely, the Revelation of the Father, the Revelation of the Son, the Method of Redemption, the Sacrifice of Christ, and the Revelation of the Holy Spirit—which we will take in their order, believing this arrangement to be upon the whole most compatible with the notion of Revelation as a course, and also quite consonant with what Christians are agreed in accepting as

the essentials of their faith, all controverted points being studiously and of necessity avoided both in Religion and Nature, according to the example set us by Butler himself. And we trust to be able to make it clear that the account given of God under the threefold manifestation of the Gospel narrative is such as Nature would suggest beforehand, or verify afterwards, as being the kind of account which the Author of Nature would be likely to give of Himself for the good of His creatures. And thus the belief or hope that the Being who made the world according to the course of Nature, is also the Being who redeemed it according to the method of Revelation, will grow into an exceedingly strong probability, derived from the same kind of strict reasoning as that whereby positive truth is wont to be established; for (it may be added) no analogies can be admitted such as the poetry or the devout ingenuity of the religious imagination may indulge in, but only such as are established by reason upon the sure basis of actual likeness.

But we must detain the reader from this (to us) pleasing task for yet another chapter, while we

proceed to point out a preliminary analogy of capital importance, which the threefold Manifestation of God in Revelation renders possible. It is this: that the testimony for Revelation includes, as we have a right to expect it would, every kind of evidence by which Nature calls upon us to believe that this or that proposition is true. For as there are more kinds of evidence than one, and as each kind fulfils a special function, and appeals to different considerations, and unites to make an absolute demonstration, it would have been a serious defect in Revelation if any one kind had been omitted. Men could hardly have avoided feeling that one disposition or tendency of the human mind had been overlooked; they would have argued that all had not been done in the way of proof that might have been done consistently with the course of Nature; and they would have been able to declare with more justice than they can now that Christianity was only adapted to certain, and those lower, types of intelligence. It becomes therefore a matter of great moment to ascertain whether the testimony we have for Revelation includes every sort of evidence—good, moreover, of its kind—

upon which we are expected, or rather obliged, to believe that such and such a thing is true in the ordinary affairs of life.

Now all testimony which is presented to men for reason to consider and decide upon, resolves itself into one of these three kinds—evidence of each man's own senses, of competent witnesses, of effects or appearances from which we infer the existence of certain causes or conditions. Broadly speaking, these three form the chief element in questions of natural science, of history, and of moral judgments respectively; but this is intended more for a practical account of things than for a logical analysis, for over-systematising is as often as not the bane of correct reasoning upon practical matters. At any rate these three certainly exist, and may be conceived of independently, even though in actual experience they run into and involve each other. Nor would it be easy, though we are not concerned to deny the impossibility, to find any other kind of evidence, properly so called, than these; for knowledge gained, say by intuition or by purely abstract reasoning, supposing such to be possible

(which, once more, we have no wish to deny), may be good knowledge, but is not founded upon evidence at all. And perhaps every single phenomenon in Nature may be said to afford occasion for evidence of this threefold character: thus, if we wanted to obtain the strongest possible assurance that a certain tree is standing in a certain place, we should have to see for ourselves; that it was planted under such and such circumstances, we should have to ask those who were present; that it is a useful tree, and so to be retained, we should have to examine its effects in respect of fruit, shade, soundness, picturesqueness, and the like. Such being the state of the case in regard to the nature of evidence, and there being a plain difference between what we see for ourselves, what others have seen and told us, and what we conclude from results concerning things, *i.e.* abstractions, that cannot be directly submitted to the senses at all, we go on to point out, and are surely justified in making much of it, that *some* power or other has so ordered the course of Revelation as that it presents evidence of this threefold character, and so leaves, as it were, no

stone unturned, no method untried, to convince men that it contains a true account of God.

We shall place the evidence of witnesses first in our brief discussion of the testimony of Revelation for several good reasons. To begin with, it covers at least three-fourths, if not more, of the beliefs of mankind. All history by the nature of the case, all that part of science which depends upon the records of observations made by a comparatively few persons, a great proportion of the common experiences of life by which conduct is determined, rest upon no other foundation than our belief, itself founded upon experience, that men may be upon the whole trusted to speak the truth when they have no interest in telling a falsehood. No doubt nothing is more common than for interests in the direction of false testimony to arise, and it is equally a matter of fact that mental defects are the cause of much mistaken evidence. Against this may be set another fact equally indisputable—that selfish aims or intellectual perversities have an inevitable tendency themselves to betray their own presence or their own possibility, and to that extent can

be guarded against. Certainly the instinct of mankind claims for the veracity of human nature (apart from disturbing influences) something of the same trustworthiness that it claims for the veracity of Nature itself (apart from misleading appearances); both, it seems to feel, are necessary for the conduct of the affairs of life. Nor is this instinct unwarranted by human relations with external or material things, with which upon any view the mind is so intimately connected that the first impressions made upon the judgment by phenomena have in this sense the first claim upon us, that to say what in our opinion we see or hear or think we know comes first in Nature. To falsify the testimony of our senses is a second and more artificial process, though following so hard upon the first as to be barely distinguishable from it. And certainly, as we have said, man, if he is to live at all, must believe in his own power of distinguishing between the true and the false, whether it arise from honest mistake or from selfish prejudice, or from what, as too commonly is the case, a fatal mixture of both. But if our belief in the natural veracity of average human nature is

thus firmly rooted in our constitution, much more is our belief in the veracity of good men, when they speak of things of which they have had experience and may be presumed competent to testify. Here we have at times a dilemma of a very painful character presented to us—to decide whether an extremely improbable assertion be true, or an extremely trustworthy man be guilty of error. And if the error be such as to make the witness morally culpable, our perplexity increases to the verge of distraction, so that we have to struggle against giving way too much to the feeling that we could rather distrust the evidence of our own senses than have our confidence in the general veracity of human nature rudely overthrown by the discovery that a good man was, whether from inadvertence to plain fact, or selfishness, or prejudice, or what not, guilty of deceiving us in a matter of which his own senses had made him cognizant. People of education have an instinctive abhorrence of attributing falsehood to their equals.

The reader may perhaps have too hastily concluded that we were about to quote in this connection the testimony of those whom we call the

Witnesses of Revelation, that is, those from whom we have received the account of it; and he may perhaps have felt some not unnatural weariness at the revival of an unsatisfactory topic. But we have in mind a much nobler theme, the testimony which Jesus Christ bore to the attributes and the designs of His Father, such testimony being the only way in which the Creator could, according to the Analogy of Nature, be made known to His creatures. And what we have to insist on is, that the scheme of Revelation provides that first and admirable kind of evidence, the testimony of a good man to what he knows of his own knowledge to be true. And be it remembered that length of time does not impair the value of this testimony, but increases it. We know as well as the early disciples what His account of God was, for they have told us what they thought it was very unmistakably; and we can put it together better than they did, survey it as a whole, and test its value by the moral judgment of successive generations of men. Nor does any man affect to doubt either that Jesus Christ assumed to give information about God from the resources of His own per-

sonal knowledge, or that this information is easily to be gathered in its main outlines from Holy Scripture. It is perhaps not necessary to quote passages in proof of that which is the special characteristic of His teaching, and has always been regarded as constituting its impressiveness and importance; but this one may be recalled as particularly decisive: "All things are delivered unto me of my Father, and no man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him."

See, then, the point at which we have arrived. Everywhere He pledges His credit, the credit of such an one as Jesus the Crucified, to the truth of what He tells us concerning God. How are we to escape the force of the argument derived from the fact that this kind of evidence is afforded us by Revelation, and that it is so pre-eminently good of its kind? If it be not the case that God was His Father and had sent Him to save the world; if the designs of God towards mankind were not what He represented; if He had no other means of knowing than other men; if, in short, in His own language, He did not in some real sense speak

the things as His Father had taught Him, then the larger and more important part of His testimony is founded on error, and we are driven to that moral paradox which the Jews themselves were too sensible to admit: "He is a good man *and* He deceiveth the people." To which paradox criticism not seldom finds itself absolutely shut up, and we are by no means unfamiliar with the attempt to draw the portrait of a good man sadly mistaken from the beginning and gradually growing worse. But happily we are also familiar as with a more rational opposition so with a much more pleasing spectacle. For we see men in the strength of reason and the honesty of pure motives making havoc of all the outward fortifications of religion, only to arrive at the inner shrine, and there to sink their conquering weapons in the presence of the Man whom they find there. "Is He one," we can almost overhear them whispering to one another, "whose religion we do well to overthrow? Is He likely to have pledged His character and honour to false, even if honest, assertions, or sold His soul to dreams and fancies? If He has, then how can we trust any man, especially upon the most serious and

vital questions? And is it possible to find contentment or satisfaction in life, when there exists, as shown by this fatally crucial example, so cruel a contrast between what men are, or seem to be, in the way of goodness, and what they convey to us in the way of mistaken impressions and delusive beliefs?"

The second of the three kinds of evidence found in Nature is paralleled in Revelation by the manifestation of the Son of God upon earth, in the sight and hearing of the generation and people among whom His life was passed, and who had the same sort of opportunity as all men have of testing the truth of statements that concern outward facts. And here we must begin by limiting to its own appropriate and somewhat narrow sphere the effect which evidence of this sort can exercise in the determination of religious belief. These are times in which the demand for what men call positive fact is much insisted on, and Christian writers appear to be in some danger of yielding to the temptation of trying to find it where it does not exist, or of attaching undue importance to it where it does. No doubt

the evidence of the senses as to matters of fact is the foundation of all positive demonstration, and is infinitely the most decisive and convincing of all kinds of testimony, to the comparatively few, that is, who by the nature of the case can themselves be the witnesses of any particular phenomena. But in questions of history we gain nothing by calling it "positive" or "scientific," because in no case can we obtain it except at second-hand; we know what certain persons thought they saw or heard, but we know no more. And in the case before us our ignorance concerning the witnesses is so great, and our means of testing their competency so small, that the mere fact that certain men appealed to the evidence of their own senses, as proof that they were telling the truth cannot in all fairness go for much in the way of experimental demonstration; much less ought we to think of it as standing alone, or having an innate supremacy over other kinds of testimony.

And yet, after having made all reasonable deductions, we cannot forget that in submitting itself, as it were, to the judgment of the senses, Revelation has obeyed to the uttermost the demand of Nature

for this special kind of proof ; of which it may be said that it contributes an indispensable element to the formation of right judgments, not itself so much convincing as being a *sine quâ non* if reasonable conviction is to be attained. Sensible evidence, such as we have to the life and actions of Christ, just hits off that temper of mind which suspects the truth of any Dispensation, unless some one has seen or heard proofs of its existence. And when we reflect how much value is attached to “objective” phenomena in these days, and how easily we may think of a Revelation as having been given without them—nay, more, how little there is that a spiritual religion and the testimony of the senses appear to have in common with each other—we must be struck with the force of the argument from Analogy, apart from and prior to any inquiry as to the worth of the evidence as it has come down to us. We have only to realise what would have been the position of the Christian religion in such days as these, if no such evidence had been forthcoming. The life of Christ was lived upon earth in full view of the world, and the circumstances which attended His entrance into and

departure from it were such as any ordinary observers must have been able to make themselves acquainted with. As for the witnesses who have left us their impressions of the real state of the case, they did just what the Analogy of Nature permits all witnesses to do. They told the world what they believed they had seen and heard ; upon this they founded a system of doctrine and a church ; so sure were they that they had truth on their side that they went everywhere to proclaim it ; and when they were taxed with falsehood they did all that lay in human power—not indeed to convince mankind that what they affirmed was true, for this is beyond the scope of human testimony, but—to convince us that they themselves at any rate believed what they said, for they sealed their testimony in their blood with entire cheerfulness and assurance of victory. And so they “did what they could.”

This limitation of the proof from sensible experience is the more important, because it removes certain plausible objections which only possess validity so long as we place more upon the argument than it will carry. It is quite true, as

men assert, that the testimony of the senses affords a narrow basis for an universal religion, and is of little cogency to many minds. But then this weakness is only because Revelation, in this as in other respects, proceeds so closely in analogy with Nature, from which it will not depart. Historical events can only be proved in a certain way—that is, upon the word of those, who witnessed them—unless the course of Nature is to be superseded by a standing miracle. And those who reject Revelation avowedly because it is supernatural, can hardly find fault with the evidence for it because it obeys so implicitly the order of Nature.

But then it is said that more evidence might have been given, for instance, as to the life of Christ after His death. But how? By the inexorable law of survival of the fittest, while all were invited, and but for their resistance and defiance might have witnessed His triumph, only a few, chosen because of their faith in Him, were enabled to become witnesses to the risen Lord. And if the defiant rejection of the people at large had been overruled by sheer force of miraculous demonstration, what would have become of the

course of Nature, what especially of human nature itself in all its choicest spiritual gifts, such as faith, moral discernment, redemption from evil by inward clinging to the good? And be it remembered that to redeem humanity from evil according to the course of Nature is the object of Revelation.

We conclude, then, that Revelation, in offering to the observation of mankind a human life which all men of that age and country might see and judge for themselves, has done all that the Analogy of Nature (supposing that necessary to be preserved) permitted in the way of positive or experimental evidence; and we urge further that, if we would apprehend it rightly, it must not be separated from the rest of the evidence, amongst which it occupies a place, indispensable indeed (Nature being what it is), but in no way paramount. That epithet might, indeed, with more propriety be applied to the third kind of evidence, that, namely, from effects to causes, which is to be found in the manifestation of the Spirit of God in history. For by this Revelation is submitted to the moral scrutiny of every man, and it is thus that we can decide (and each man for

the conduct of his own life must decide) whether the effects are consistent with the supposed causes and worthy of the Creator of whose Spirit they are the religious expression. And the special point for our argument is not merely that Christianity is to be judged by its moral fruits, which is, to a certain extent, the case with all religions, but that God has permitted us to ascribe all the natural and moral effects of the Christian Revelation to the continuous operation of His Spirit, from which human admixture can be by degrees eliminated; and so it follows that He has been pleased to submit His own works and attributes to the moral judgment of His creatures. If the special operations of the Creator had terminated with the life of Christ, or even with the establishment of the Christian community, there would have been nothing of which men could have asked whether it was morally or religiously worthy of God; and though Christians have been but too ready to claim for their own even crimes or follies the Divine inspiration, yet, had no such claim been possible, we can easily see how fatal would the void have appeared in the array of

testimony with which Revelation has to face the criticism and scepticism and indifference of mankind.

It is further to be noticed that the Revelation of the Spirit, by which this kind of testimony was introduced, is regarded in the history not as a mere result of what God has done, but as intended, arranged, and foretold by Christ Himself, who in the most express terms proclaimed that everything in the Church that was done according to the will of God would be due to the guidance and consoling help of the Holy Spirit. So that if men are inclined to admit that the spirit and tendency of the Christian Revelation is good, they must either ascribe that goodness to the will and power of God, or else reject as untrue the account which Christianity (though admitted to be a morally good system) gives of its own origin.

We may sum up the argument of this chapter in some such form as this: Seeing that Nature, in order to obtain belief, presents to the human mind three kinds of evidence, and therefore compels her offspring to demand

the same of those who would persuade them of any truth; seeing also that Revelation has been so framed as to afford each^s of these three kinds of evidence in their order, and each of them good of its sort, thereby betraying an essential likeness with Nature; we conclude therefore, by strict process of reasoning according to experience and the necessary laws of the human understanding, that the two systems proceed from the same Cause or Author, who, both in the course of Nature and method of Revelation, has designed to have the evidence for His existence, and claims upon our love and worship, submitted to the decision of such ordinary faculties as He has endowed His creatures with.

CHAPTER VI.

ON THE REVELATION OF THE FATHER.

IN common life, he who puts a question has by that very fact the power of dictating what shape the answer must take, for it must at any rate be such as meets the special point which the questioner chooses to raise. And whatever may be our opinion as to the power of Nature to make God known to us, there can be no doubt as to her power of so asking the question as to demand answers of a certain kind; and, not only this, but also of rejecting any idea of God or any account of His attributes which does not correspond with the natural order of things, these being supposed to be His handiwork, and having at this moment gained so complete a mastery over the

human intelligence that no opinion inconsistent with them has, or ought to have, any chance of being accepted. Nature's question is not merely whether there be a God, but whether there be a God who can be thought and spoken of in the way that she requires. So that Revelation, like every other theory or system, has to submit to a very rigorous test indeed, from which there is no possibility of escape, save by taking refuge in superstition, which may be defined as believing in that which is contrary to Nature.

Broadly speaking, the relation of Revelation to Nature in respect of the Creator may be expressed in two ways: First, the main ideas of Revelation must be such as Nature suggests, or, it may be, verifies, the suggestions being collected from the history of religion upon the earth, and the verifications from the results of investigation into law; second, the main ideas of Nature must be reproduced in the Christian account of God, or, at the least, seen to be in harmony with the teaching of Revelation. A truly noble field for the argument from Analogy to work in, and however restricted by our present capacity and materials, in itself

quite illimitable in extent and power. Like all knowledge and all speculation, Analogy does of course fail to penetrate the innermost secrets of matter, life, and spirit, and is in itself of a comparatively humble aim and modest bearing. And this it is necessary to keep in mind, for much objection against Revelation obtains its apparent force by asking for more in the way of demonstration than the human faculties can reach or the course of Nature allow. With this caution, then, we proceed to point out briefly, and, it is to be feared, but superficially, some of those features in which the God of whom Christ bore witness answers to the picture of the Creator which Nature delineates in outline or insists upon as being the representation to which all other pictures must conform upon pain of being rejected as unfaithful to the original.

1. The moment that we try to think of God in Nature we must be struck with the manner in which He withholds Himself and His creative power from the cognizance of man. Whether any certain information can be collected from our experience of things as we know them concerning God

is a question upon which men differ, but there can be no dispute that the information is at best very small, and does not touch those essentials of Divine Being which we so long, and very naturally, to know. In the way of Nature, God has placed what must be called, in comparison with the extent of the universe, narrow limits upon such faculties as we possess. And when, by means of reason, putting together with the utmost laboriousness such information as the senses give us, we try to trace created things back to their source in time, we find ourselves brought to one definite resting-place, where human inquiry as to the origin and course of Nature appears for ever likely to terminate. In Nature all roads lead at last to the sun, with just perhaps the possibility of a guess or glimpse beyond. And thus the sun plays the part of mediator between the Creator and His creatures. We can see in it the operation of powers that are to us elementary things, though for all we can tell, or rather as we must conclude, they have been in existence either as causes or effects from eternity. And the sun itself, while explaining nothing, or next to nothing, of the

forces that were before itself, still less of any mind that designed it, testifies nevertheless very plainly that such forces exist, and, judging from their effects, were intended to confer upon the creatures of God such things as light, life, gladness, and the sense of the glory of the Creator.

Now the life of Jesus Christ is the manifestation of God's will and purpose in redeeming, just as the sun is the manifestation of the same will in creating, the world; in both we see the need of mediation between such as the Creator is and such as we are. But beyond thus pointing out the parallel, we propose to leave it to the reader to work out, because it cannot in strictness be said to belong to the class of positive analogies to which we almost promised to adhere: the things compared are too vast and too remote to be altogether comprehended by pure reason. But, allowing this to be the case, who can resist referring to such an Analogy, or resist its force when pointed out? His conception of Himself as the Mediator, who was the light of the world, the sustainer of spiritual, as the sun of physical, life—the Being through whom alone access is to be had to the Creator—would

alone justify the Analogy by which it is in turn itself explained. In the way of religious knowledge we stop at Him, as in Nature we stop at the sun. He testifies to something, some creative primal power beyond Himself, about which He tells us as much as it concerns our moral life here that we should know, and no more. Surely this limitation of religious information in strict Analogy with the limitation of natural knowledge is very striking. Had He been merely an extraordinary man, transported by the enthusiastic though erroneous belief in His own specially-given capacity to know and make known God, would He have repressed His Revelation within such narrow, yet such natural, limits? Would He not have said something to satisfy the cravings of His followers that would have appeared to Him and to them real and solid, though reason would afterwards have had to pronounce it spurious or non-human?

But there is more than this. There seems no doubt that a large part of the best religions of the world was due to the worship of the sun, as that through which life and light come to men, around which we revolve as a centre, in which we live and

move and have our physical being. So that Christianity may be regarded as the transfer of worship, as soon as mankind was ready, from a material to a personal mediator, from the adoration of Nature to the worship of a moral being. But upon the thoughts which are suggested by this further Analogy we do not enlarge, for to do so would carry us still farther away from the sphere of strict reasoning into that of the religious imagination, whose bow we cannot bend, nor perhaps the opponents of the Revelation either, else they might cease to oppose and we to answer them.

The two ideas of God to which we next pass are to be regarded as expressing the highest and most essential notions concerning the Divine Being, to which the intelligence of man and his moral or emotional consciousness respectively have attained. The first of these declares that God must be thought of (if at all) as One; the second, that He must be thought of as the merciful Father of His creatures. We proceed, therefore, to point out the relation of Nature and Revelation to each other in respect of these great thoughts.

2. The unity of God was first decisively

announced by the Christian Revelation in such a way as to render it a permanent possession of human thought. We do not even except the Jewish religion, partly because it must be regarded as a preparatory anticipation of the Christian, but still more, because, like Islam, Jewish monotheism was a very partial and imperfect representation of the true doctrine. It was negative, in the sense of denying the existence of any God save the God of the Jewish nation, rather than positive in the sense of affirming the true Unity, *i.e.* that God is One and the same in all His dealings and all His relations with mankind. And it is important to remember that, in the very heart of Christianity itself, there has been a long and unceasing struggle against the polytheistic spirit, and that practical monotheism has only in comparatively later times been able to establish itself as the only satisfactory, if not the only possible, creed for reason to affirm and hold.

Now this inherent difficulty in the establishment of monotheistic belief throws a strong light upon the course of earlier religious history, in which we find that, in spite of many earnest attempts, men

either did not grasp the idea of the unity of God at all, or if at all, then imperfectly, or if perfectly, then not permanently. What, then, was the cause of this inherent incapacity or this ever-recurring weakness? The answer is simply this: That Nature, until its course and constitution are known, does not suggest the idea, or, as we might put it, does not ask with sufficient clearness the question, "Is God one?" Polytheism is a perfectly possible and not at all unnatural creed. The sun itself, which has done so much to originate the beliefs of men, fails us here, for it is but one among the starry host to whom men have paid divided homage. Nor did the conception of righteousness, supposing it to have played a larger part in the formation of creeds than can at all be proved, avail to establish the idea of the unity of God, in a world where evil might justly be assigned to another equally potent deity, or where at the very best the righteous will of the Creator appeared to be constantly interfered with and His judgments broken in upon by chance or fate or some malignant and powerful being. So that we are not to wonder that, even under an express Revelation, much more in the religions

which had only Nature for their guide, monotheism was of very slow and precarious growth.

The case, then, stands thus : Revelation challenged the attention of mankind to the true doctrine, and by the mouth of a few Jews asserted, in spite of the appearance of Nature to the contrary, that unity was the right interpretation of Nature's course and constitution. And now, after generations of weary waiting, Nature, when properly appealed to, comes in afterwards to acknowledge the correctness of the challenge, and to verify the doctrine which Revelation put forth, as (what it was) practically a new thing in the world of thought. We know now, as men never knew before, that Nature is fashioned according to one plan : it is open to us to decline to see any will at all in Nature, but it is not open to us to see more wills than one. The bare conception of law, of the isolated oneness of the earth, of the uniformity of human nature, began long ago to make this the only possible conception ; but the later march of discovery has stamped it with the seal of absolute truth. Primitive atoms cannot have had more than one Maker ; gravitation is not the thought of two

minds ; the law of conflict and survival (with all the moral issues therein involved) is not the expression of two contradictory wills. So that, not to prolong discussion, Revelation has been more than justified by the Analogy of Nature in the prophetic declaration of the unity of God.

Now this combination of two Dispensations to enforce the true doctrine of God upon mankind may appear a matter easy to be explained, if we choose to forget that the doctrine only appears so obvious because religion has taught it for nearly two thousand years ; or how easily either Dispensation might have remained silent or spoken in undecided or hesitating language. Once more we must observe that we lose some of the strongest arguments for the truth by taking things for granted. But even apart from this we have to point out that if the Jews, including the Saviour Himself, did not know it by some experience of their own, then they guessed it, and that rightly from some intuition of Nature, which Nature as then interpreted did not warrant. And the thing to be accounted for is, how they came by their intuition so strongly and clearly that it survived and triumphed before the

knowledge of the course of Nature, or of Nature as a course, called by men Evolution, came once for all to justify their prescience. The very philosopher who argues that God cannot be known, confesses his obligation to the early Christians by not thinking it worth while even to make mention of the existence of gods as a possible belief. So that, even upon so plain a theme as the unity of God, Analogy finds opportunity for vindicating the divine origin of Revelation, and of attributing it to the Author of Nature, the unity of which Revelation first proclaimed, and human research has, somewhat tardily, substantiated.

3. The Fatherhood of God is a doctrine more or less clearly arrived at by many religions, and is perhaps the root of all religion wherever it has passed into a moral stage. This involves, it will be seen, an inversion in the order of the Analogy, for natural religion now comes first to announce, and Revelation to verify and establish, the truth. But how real a thing must an argument be that can bear to be thus twisted about, and set now in this light and now in that!

The truth before us has been apprehended by

the human mind in exact proportion to the force and clearness with which Nature suggested it. The bare reason of things would indeed indicate that, as men must think of God as the highest conceivable Cause, Fatherhood must in some way be attributed to Him, and that in spite of polytheism itself—*Divum hominumque pater*. But while reason could do little more than silently leaven the human mind with this thought, experience (so the most competent authorities assure us) was bringing it home to the imagination through the medium of the all-embracing, all-protecting, omnipresent Sky, from which, so it appears, the name of God in many languages has been derived. And yet, although men arrived at the idea very generally and early, though it was a true and worthy conception of the Creator, and though it was always a religious, and at times even a moral, force in the world, it never gained a consistent, still less an exclusive, hold upon the human heart. There seems to have been wanting a touch of reality—that is to say, of the actual relations and obligations involved in the connection of parent and child—to give the bare idea

vitality, and to make it morally interesting. Reason was never quite able to convince itself, things being as they are, that the Author of Creation intended to have Himself thought of as a Parent, and the imagination that caught a vision, perhaps but transitory, of an Eternal Father behind the veil of the sky, could not deliver itself from the conclusion that in the sense in which the Creator was the Father of man, so was He of all living creatures. Still less could the mere imagination prevail against the new knowledge that was abroad in the world, overclouding the religious aspect of the sky in proportion as it gave a clearer insight into its material composition. And so men hesitated, and finally lost their way, about what is perhaps the greatest truth that the mind of man has ever aimed at.

Now at this point Revelation, in its turn, comes in to verify the teaching of Nature by exhibiting the idea realised in actual fact, in what we might call a positive working shape, for in it God is set forth as the Father of Christ, who is also the "Son of Man," calling all men His brethren, and who showed by actual experiment

that a perfect human life was compatible with Sonship to God. So that what reason points to and Nature had endeavoured to inculcate is here proved by example, and thus the something wanting, the touch of reality that gives life and power to the musings and emotions of mankind, is hereby supplied. And then the machinery of religion, which may be defined as the truth in respect of man's relations to God, began to move under the breath of inspiration, no longer fitfully, as when every now and then great and enthusiastic spirits have applied themselves to throw energy into its various parts, but smoothly and regularly, and with no more likelihood of coming to a stop than the wheels of Nature itself. For there does not seem any probability at present that mankind will go back from the belief that the Creator is also their Father, or that they will be able to dissociate their belief from the Revelation of God in Christ, or to hold it in any other way than that which the Sonship of Christ makes so easy and so convincing for them.

The next ideas of God which we shall consider are two, of which one belongs to the very essence

of Revelation, but has little apparent connection with Nature, and the other is absolutely necessary to Nature, but has little or nothing to do with Revelation. These are that God loves the world and that He rules it by undeviating law. What relation, then, do the two systems bear to each other in respect of these apparently antipathetic conceptions? Is there any interference with one another, as would be the case if a God who rules by law were incapable of love, or a God who loves unable to be thought of as ruling by law? Or are they barely consistent with each other, as would be the case if each, without repudiating the leading principle of the other, nevertheless betrayed no affinity towards it and gave it no support? Or does the essential idea of each find abundant, though latent, similarity in the other so as to suggest the inference that they are counterparts in one comprehensive system designed by the Creator of all things? If the latter alternative can be at all established, it will have to be conceded that the argument from Analogy has gained a vital triumph.

4. The love of God is the first article of the

Christian creed, for if He does not love the world, then the motive and reasonableness of Revelation no longer exists. And this love was boldly and positively asserted by the Christian religion from the very outset in the face of that despondency and hesitation which was the result of man's experience of natural things. For Nature had not succeeded in putting mankind upon the road that led to faith in the love of God. It is true that reason would seem to affirm that God must be thought to care for a world which He created and continued to sustain, and also that the beneficent aspect of Nature's works had not escaped the attention of the best minds as testifying to the same truth. But among men confronted with so many dark and sad experiences of life, the truth made little progress and showed no vitality. In such a scene as this love seemed out of place. It was not a word that expressed any distinct attribute of creative power; it did not naturally present itself as a first impression from the experience of things as men knew them; and yet, if love cannot be gathered from a first impression, how can it be proved by process of logic? Perhaps

God loved some and not others, or some at one time and not at another, or perhaps the good, or perhaps the beautiful, or perhaps the wise; but that He loved all the world in all its aggregate of toil, sin, conflict, and woe, seemed an impossible idea.

The love of God is, then, the characteristic note of Revelation, the challenge it threw out to Nature, the critical assertion by the veraciousness of which it must be judged. There is no difficulty in the fact that the assertion, when made, was taken by the human mind upon trust, because it was associated with the belief that God had proved His love by the mission of Christ, and if we might start from that primitive faith now, all argument, whether from Analogy or not, would be quite unnecessary. But what we have to show is not that God loves the world *because* He sent His Son into it, but that we may gather from the course of Nature itself, as men now apprehend it, a reasonable probability that the Creator does love the world, and *therefore* may be thought likely to have sent His Son to redeem it.

Perhaps, before we come to the more

scientific aspect of Nature, we might fairly allege the results of a more mature and enlightened experience, due in large measure to the steady moral progress of the human race. And we might state them in some such proposition as the following: that whatever we instinctively or by general consent term "natural" is associated with pleasure to the partaker thereof. To explain the meaning of this in detail. Thus, men must live, and therefore everything connected with the partaking of food, from the bare gratification of hunger up to social festivity, is united with pleasurable sensations. Again, the human race is to be continued, and therefore everything connected with marriage, home, and the bringing up of children affords natural pleasure. Again, in order to live a man must work, and therefore in a virtuous and well ordered life, work and the rewards it brings and the successive steps upwards it involves are all sources of happiness. So also the effects of scenery, of the seasons, of discovery, of invention, and many other things included in the constitution of Nature.

Pain on the [contrary seems naturally associated with moral evil and abuse; and if men were reasonably virtuous might almost disappear, save in what pertains to sickness and death, which as the link that connects us with the unknown universe must remain, and are so treated by Revelation, as a mystery not to be solved by our present faculties. It would be very foolish to seek to explain away the existence of evil, but we may fairly urge, now that we have had experience of the growth of man in comfort and happiness, that Nature in her most real and deepest utterances does so far indicate a beneficent purpose or upward tendency as to make the proclamation of the love of God credible to the reflecting mind.

The above argument is perhaps one that appeals more to the feelings than the reason, and would not therefore avail with those who take the pessimist view of life. On the other hand, we may claim for it that the feeling which responds to it is that of the larger part of mankind, taken at their best and most natural selves. But as though Nature were resolved in the end to justify

expressly the incomparably daring assertion of Revelation, "God so loved the world," we have learnt in these later days that happiness is, by the law and necessity of things, associated with life—that it is the mainspring, as it were, which sets in motion creative energy and progressive civilisation. For the survival of the fittest means, when translated into the language of morals, the survival of the happiest, for life in Nature is identical with happiness in man. We maintain the struggle for existence because the pleasure of victory makes conflict possible, and happiness, as a state of mind, is the reflective sense that victory has been attained. Through pleasure it is that we emerge from evil to good, from a lower state to a higher, from inferior grades of civilisation to the superior; this law of existence being taken here merely as a fact that everyone admits, and not as an exclusive philosophy of things about which there may be many disputes. So that, whatever may be the impressions that different minds form as to the actual *state* of things, which means their views as to happiness in the abstract or as to the happiness of the human race, they

must admit so far as their own is concerned, that the actual *course* of things sets forth a progress to life through happiness, experienced by each man as he obeys the law of his existence; Nature itself keeping pace with his endeavours by constantly discarding the evil and conserving the good. In other words, we may justly infer that the Author of Nature has so arranged as that happiness and life shall go together, and be the appointed destiny of mankind, so far as we will appropriate them by the methods which Nature prescribes, reason discovers, and virtue practises. But to will to make persons happy is the specific action of the quality termed love, and the only test whereby its presence may be ascertained. We might therefore conclude even from Nature that the Creator loves the world, but this is to impose a heavier weight upon the argument than our purpose requires. For us it is sufficient to affirm that the order of Nature, now that men are beginning to perceive what it is, gives an exceedingly strong probability to the Christian doctrine, that God loved the world and

therefore sent His Son to redeem it from evil. And as the preachers of this doctrine, thus justified by later investigation, could not have inferred it from anything they knew or had experience of, and have themselves expressly disclaimed any natural origin for their belief, it would seem that the argument from Analogy is as strong as could well be imagined.

5. That the Creator works by invariable law is as necessary to the student of Nature as His love is to the religious believer; this granted, it cannot further concern him, so far as he is merely a student of Nature, whether will or fate, or matter itself, is to be regarded as the origin of all things. Now the attitude of Jesus Christ towards the laws of Nature will come on for consideration in its place, but so far as regards His testimony to His Father's method of operation, an attentive reader of the New Testament will certainly discover nothing inconsistent, but much that is compatible, with the idea of pure law. Morally and physically, that is to say both in His relations towards men and phenomena, the Father was regarded

as directing all things by an unswerving will, that was always working consistently with itself, and an overruling mind, that was always pursuing one plan. The proof of this lies upon the surface of the history, and must be left on the whole to the knowledge and judgment of the reader, who will also be asked whether a single sentence of Christ can be alleged that impugns the doctrine of the reign of the law. But perhaps the reader will be helped in this inquiry if we go on to show that two doctrines, eminently characteristic of Christ, are nothing more nor less than the religious expression of the idea of universal law.

In the first place, one of the attributes most certainly ascribed to God in the New Testament is Providence, or that which in the prescience of an all-seeing mind arranges all events and shapes them to the furtherance of its own supreme design. Not to quote instances, the Sermon on the Mount (St. Matt. ch. vi.) is a complete and sufficient account of Christ's teaching in this respect. Now if we think of God as Nature seems to tell us to do, namely,

as setting in motion a few (or one) simple laws acting upon a few (or one) kinds of elementary materials (which is as far as our knowledge will warrant us in proceeding) we gain a clear conception of the reasonableness of divine Providence. It is no longer a merely mystical expression of God's infinite and transcending power, but a plain account of what He does in ways that men themselves imitate, and achieve great results in proportion as they imitate them correctly. For provision is the knowledge of results following by fixed law from causes over which we exercise control. Thus our provision that a friend has reached or will reach Edinburgh a few hours from the time he left London is possible, because we place confidence, liable to be disappointed only by that species of human imperfection called accident or caprice, in an innumerable series of arrangements which we have made to secure that precise result. So that we have no difficulty in comprehending the doctrine which Christ taught in strict Analogy with Nature, that God numbers the hairs of our head, or does not let a sparrow fall un-

noticed; everything must happen in this and not in another way. It is perhaps not necessary to point out that we are not trying to show that God may be omniscient, which were a very impertinent task, but that by putting Revelation and Nature together, God has made the method of his Omniscience in some degree intelligible, and therefore rationally credible, to His creatures.

But there is, in the second place, another characteristic of Christ's doctrine, more important for our own present argument, and not nearly so well known. The invariable rigour of law suggests and explains that *severity* of God, which at all times all thinking men, nay all men without thinking, have ascribed to Him. The course of Nature moves with inflexible directness, careless it should seem of the humanity that, with all its hopes and fears and sensitiveness to suffering, falls crushed beneath its wheels; nor does it to our vision regard moral distinctions, still less the cry of human pain or the prayer wrung from mortal agony. "Never morning wore to eve but some heart

broke," and that from no fault of its own, but by the pressure of merely material causes, which no care can avert nor innocence disarm. This is why men rebel against God, and it is this which makes their professions of faith often so sadly unmeaning. To know that it is His law enables us to acquiesce, but does not help us to believe.

Now if there was a man anywhere who might have been expected to shut out this view of God from his religious teaching, it was surely Jesus Christ. Filial knowledge of His benevolent intentions, which He so frequently proclaimed, a heart touched in every fibre by compassion for His brethren, a mission which obliged Him constantly to rely upon the love of God, these and many similar reasons would have compelled a merely human teacher to disguise, as far as possible, the truth from himself and his followers. Whereas it forms a conspicuous feature in Christ's teaching about God, for no other reason that we can think of than that He rightly interpreted the Analogy of Nature. Thus He contemplates the death,

perhaps the painful death, of a harmless bird as simply something that the Father assents to, and yet not one of them is forgotten. The Giver of rain makes no distinction between the just and the unjust. The fact of a man being born blind must be accepted just as it stands, and not put down to the fault of anyone. So the tower of Siloam falls and kills people no more guilty than the rest—the very kind of accident that arouses natural resentment in our souls. But it was in the dealings of God with the people in the way of approaching destruction, that Christ's perception of the immutable severity of divine law becomes particularly predominant. Thus His reference to the Flood and to the destruction of the Cities of the Plain is an instance of the argument from Analogy employed by the Lord Himself to describe the settled method of God's rigorous justice, proceeding in its course which nothing could avert when Himself had been put to death; and however much His heart might bleed inwardly, He nevertheless with unsparing hand and terrible detail, with all kinds of pathetic touches

to heighten the effect, foretells the downfall of the Jews, as the certain consequence of moral law working its own punishment. It was thus that He looked Nature and History steadfastly in the face, giving to them a religious interpretation, but never yielding to the temptation of explaining away the inexorable severity with which Nature and History do the will of God. So that the Analogy holds good even under so decisive and searching a test as this. And the outcome of it all is, that we gain this for a definition of practical religion on God's side; it is "grace working by law."

The way in which this idea of "practical religion" is carried out in the scheme of Revelation is such, that in it God is represented as offering Redemption to man in strict accordance with the Analogy of Nature, thereby enabling man to accept it without doing violence to his own moral constitution. And this brings us to the last point of the Analogy, the treatment in Revelation of man's free agency.

6. Moral freedom, as distinguished from philosophical notions about free will, forms an

essential element in the constitution of man, and must be recognized by every system, religious or otherwise, that purports to be established for his benefit. Now the union of "grace and law" is accomplished as soon as we remember that law is not merely, perhaps not chiefly, to be regarded as expressing the overruling will of God; it is quite as much the control or limit that He places upon His own will in order that ours may be set free. We are not in the least ashamed of these anthropomorphic expressions, for if the Almighty had intended us to think of Him under other than human forms of thought, doubtless He would have enabled us to do so. Law, then, is essential to freedom. Tyranny means simply a will that acts upon no discoverable system, but only to please itself. The children or subjects of the tyrant are not free to act, because they cannot calculate the consequences of their conduct, whereas in Nature they know what will follow, and order their conduct accordingly. And this was just the teaching of Christ about God's method of dealing with us, long before

human investigation had enabled us to realise that it is Nature's also. Because God's laws are so inexorable, therefore man must repent: this is the burden of every discourse, the warning of every parable. "On whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder." And thus the knowledge of unalterable law both fixes the standard of amendment, which may be defined as conformity to the law, and also gives the motive for man's self-determination to that change in the direction of goodness which religion calls repentance. Upon this delicate topic a single word too much or too little might have thrown the Lord's teaching out of harmony with Nature's; but no such word is to be found.

And furthermore, what we may call the tone in which Christ represents the Father as addressing Himself to His creatures, abundantly justifies the Analogy we are seeking to establish. For as Nature and Revelation agree in presupposing that the operations of God are regulated by law, it follows that He must *recommend* His ways to the judgment of His creatures, in

expectation that He will be justified before them, in proportion as they inquire and obey. This is perhaps the exact point at which the idea of a merciful Creator melts into that of a loving Father, for this is the very secret of all parental action towards our children. The laws of Nature are written upon the surface, or hid beneath the depths; but they are always *there* where men seek for them in the right way, nor do they force men to obey them in any other way than by the consequences which disobedience and ignorance entail. Even so God *recommends* His Son to mankind as the embodiment of true and saving religion, leaving them to appreciate His merits and His work for themselves, and putting no force upon their will, save the evil results that rejection of His claims brings with it in natural order. A lovely touch in the Parable of the Vineyard expresses this natural expectation on God's part. "But last of all He sent unto them His Son, saying, They will reverence my Son." Nor is there the least impropriety in thinking of God as "expecting," so long as we make sure that

His "expectations" will in the event be fulfilled. As, to crown our Analogy, it has been in Nature and Revelation alike. Who, save the Creator, could have expected that the race of savage beings who first crawled upon the earth would in time come to discover the laws which guided the world from the dust of which they had sprung? Or who, save the Father, could have expected that the human beings, who in the very lowest depth of moral abasement put His Son to death, would in time come to worship Him as their redeeming God? And thus is God justified by His children alike in Nature and in Revelation.

The above considerations are now submitted in all confidence to the reader's judgment, in the hope of doing something to convince fair minds that doubt indeed, but do not prefer doubt for its own sake. And such may very fairly be challenged at this critical point in our argument, to point out any radical dissimilarities that might be set against the profound likeness we have been alleging, and, as we think, pro-

ving. Is there a single idea in the revealed account of God which Nature pronounces to be inconsistent with the Creator or Cause from which she came? Very glad would the author be to examine such, if only for the reason that a good answer to objections often has more effect upon the mind, though illogically, than the statement of positive proofs: it is easier to show that two things are not unlike in certain particulars, than that they are alike generally. But he cannot discover any dissimilarities for himself, and does not know that any are now being alleged. So that, in the absence of any such unlikeness, and in the presence of such resemblances as present themselves without an effort to the inquiring mind, we have a right once more to conclude: that the account of God given in Revelation is so much in harmony with the methods of His creative work made known to us in Nature, as to raise a strong probability, irresistible until rebutted, that the same Power called both into existence, and designed that, taken together

they should afford to His creatures such an idea of their Creator as might produce in them those emotions of love, fear, faith, together with holy obedience, that go to form a complete and saving religion.



CHAPTER VII.

ON THE REVELATION OF THE SON.

THE Analogy between the course of Nature and the Revelation of the Son must, it is plain, move upon very different lines from those upon which we have been constructing the Analogy between Nature and the Revelation of the Father. For God being regarded as the Cause of both systems, the Analogy consists of a resemblance of methods and attributes that may be discovered in each of the two as of one who Himself is quite outside of them, save in the relation of eternal Cause and never-ceasing effects (we mean outside of them in respect of His essential being which cannot be known by such as we are). But the Revelation of the Son took place within the limits of

Nature itself, and under circumstances that made Him, being Man, as much an object of knowledge, or at any rate of inquiry, as any other human being; so that the Analogy consists, speaking broadly, of the relation which His manifestation presented to the general sum of things called by us Nature. And this is a matter more of general description than of the bringing together, for purpose of strict comparison, particular ideas such as we were engaged upon in the last chapter. Perhaps the subject might be not improperly raised by the question, Is the manifestation of the Son such as we may fairly predicate "naturalness" of it? And this difference of point of view, together with the different treatment it necessitates, is an advantage to our plan, both because it helps us to cover a larger field, and also keeps the argument off from that artificial symmetry which thoughtful minds are wont, and that with justice, to distrust.

The history of Jesus Christ, like that of other men, can be presented in the threefold aspect of life, character, and teaching, in each of which respects the question of "naturalness" can be



submitted to the decision of reason. But to a considerable extent the question in each case is decided by the New Testament record and by the common confession of mankind, as soon as it is asked. And this must be taken as the reason why we do not feel compelled to enter at length into circumstances of which the reader must be supposed to have information sufficient at any rate for him to test, what after all no one denies, the general naturalness of Christ's manifestation in history. The real danger is, here as elsewhere, rather that men should overlook the cogency of facts so well known and so commonly accepted, that they do not stop to observe their significance. And there is special reason for recalling to mind at this part of the argument how easily these natural touches and aspects in the history of Christ might have been absent, and how their presence in such really overwhelming force can only be accounted for by the supposition that Revelation is in accord with Nature because it comes from the same source—if man had made Nature (or even understood it) we might *then* have attributed the naturalness of Christ's manifestation to man's

unaided agency. In this state of the case, then, all we feel it necessary to do is to mention the special features in the Revelation of the Son that go to make up this appearance of naturalness, and to call attention to some less known considerations that make it, not one of appearance only, but of real and inward conformity.

1. The life of Jesus Christ, from His birth to His death was, with one exception to be noted presently, a purely natural human life; this is what the Christian instinct has apprehended under the doctrine of His perfect manhood. In so far as that life lay within the limits of natural order (His entrance into, and departure from which, are clearly understood by Christians to be supernatural) it was lived in what we might almost call ostentatious conformity to all the conditions that Nature imposes upon human beings. The pains which the history (short as it is) takes to bring this fact out are really quite extraordinary. His birth was that of other men, His early years were those of a working-man in a village home. We are informed, incidentally it might seem so far as the narrators were concerned, but of Divine purpose so far as the

future history and completeness of the Christian religion is concerned, that He felt all the common bodily wants—hunger, thirst, pain, weariness—and shared the common blameless weaknesses of humanity—such as temptation, doubt, surprise, disappointment, and even embarrassment. This last, by which we think His conduct towards the Syrophœnician woman, and again in the case of the adulteress in St. John's Gospel may fairly be described, is of importance because it depicts Him as enduring that perplexity which Nature inflicts upon us in what men call a choice of evils. Then, too, the history, by merely passing touches, takes care to let us know that He discharged excellently all the common relationships of life such as son, brother, master, servant, host, guest, friend, citizen, patriot, and king ; thereby showing how, out of the common stuff of Nature's manufacturing, a religious life might be lived on earth and by man. He loved flowers and children because, in addition to their natural charms, they taught Him something about God. The very weakness of human nature He so endured as to consecrate it to God and to a Divine purpose, and the tears of Christ are stored in the

treasure-house of human memory. That He was in all things like unto us (sin only excepted) was one of the most certain impressions made upon the minds of those who had the best means of knowing Him, and it is because they have so depicted Him that He has gained so complete a hold upon the heart of mankind. And all this was done by men who, believing as they did in His supernatural origin and destiny, had the strongest inducement to pass over the merely human aspect of His life. And we may surely assert that if the account of Him were merely a tradition of a noble life by devoted followers, this belief of theirs would have added some touch of unnaturalness or betrayed some lack of sympathy with customary order that would have marred the completeness of our Exemplar, and so hurt our faith.

That our Lord's conformity to Nature was not merely accidental, but formed part of His own self-conscious intention, proof of a very remarkable and convincing character can be alleged. As a mere matter of historical criticism no portion of His life presents so much difficulty as the account of His temptation, which must, to be true in any

sense at all, represent His own views and thoughts about that mysterious event. And yet, if we look at it, it is clear that the victory consisted in the determination upon the part of a Being conscious of supernatural powers, not therefore to depart from the order of Nature, but to do His work in life as other men do theirs. The inducement to error in this way constitutes the entire force of at least two out of the three temptations, namely, to support the wants of Nature then and thereafter by miraculous power, and to gain the adherence of the people by miraculous defiance of Nature's laws. It seems, we must venture to say, almost impossible to over-estimate the conclusiveness of such an Analogy as this, all the circumstances being taken into account.

This brings us to the exception above alluded to. There is a unanimously concurrent testimony that Jesus Christ had, and exercised for purposes of good, a power of doing miraculous works. Now let us at once admit that no fair argument can ever find an Analogy in Nature for powers avowedly supernatural, we shall but deceive ourselves if we try, as men sometimes do. To say, for instance,

that He merely accelerated the processes of Nature entirely forgets that the time which these processes take is an integral part of the laws, still more of the course, of Nature. We must, then, accept this part of His life as we accept the Resurrection, because the dispensation to which it belongs, when taken as a *whole*, presents analogies with Nature of such a kind as to amount to a strong proof that the *whole* is from God. And having done so we may easily perceive that no Revelation of God could have been complete that did not show to us an irresistible outburst of Divine love, that could not be controlled whenever there were wrongs to adjust or suffering to relieve. And if, we may add, the Revelation of the Son had been devoid of all miraculous works on His part, His origin and destiny remaining what the history represents them to be, the foundation of the Christian faith would not have been thereby affected. We do not therefore believe in Christ because of His wonderful works, but in His works because first of all we believe in Him.

We affirm then that, in the common phrase, "the perfect humanity of Christ," there resides a

notable Analogy with human Nature, or rather with that part of Nature called human; and we press this argument the more urgently upon the reader's notice because its very familiarity detracts from the effect of its appeal to our intelligence, so that we have need to remind ourselves in how many other ways God might have revealed Himself or even his Son otherwise than He has done, had He not designed, perhaps we might even say, had He not been constrained by His own consistency with Himself, to make the Revelation in accordance with the course of Nature, and so enable His creatures to judge concerning its truth for themselves.

2. The consideration of Christ's moral being, which we next approach, has given the author more anxiety and the performance of it less satisfaction than any other part of his work. The difficulty of making a comparison between something wholly moral and Nature—which is, to say the least, material before it is moral—is sufficiently plain; and yet, on the other hand, Nature has a distinct claim to a voice in the matter. For if a person appears assuming to represent the moral attributes

of the Creator, Nature can insist that these shall be such as meet with her approval, and may be properly predicated of the ideal man, whose form and fashion she sets us upon constructing out of such moral materials as the order and constitution of the world afford. Now the moral ideas which men have, as a matter-of-fact, gathered from Nature, may perhaps sufficiently for our present purpose be indicated in the attributes which they have assigned to their gods, one or two of which we will therefore go on to consider. We may, however, fairly plead that this particular Analogy cannot be properly accomplished till more has been done by human inquiry, in the way of showing how morality is related to material Nature.

Nature's first and simplest demand would seem to be that the perfect man should possess the various qualities which are called virtuous or good. But as these are made up of contrasts—*i.e.* those that are associated with what we call strength or weakness respectively—there is an inherent difficulty in combining them in one character, over which difficulty Polytheism stumbled, and ended by assigning various characteristic qualities to dif-

ferent divinities, in despair it should seem of concentrating them in one; and thus it failed in the task which Nature sets the reason of man to do.

Which task, however, has been accomplished in the Revelation of Christ. For it is this very combination of two sets of qualities that gives Him the first moral claim upon our allegiance. On the one hand we have tenderness, meekness, humility, sympathy, patience, and many more similar qualities; on the other hand we have heroism, physical and moral courage, indignation, the love of liberty, the spirit of command. For the most striking illustration of this let us take His public entrance into Jerusalem, which we boldly call the most heroic act in history, and which, nevertheless, was specifically associated with meekness and sorrowful weeping. So again we have united the royal dignity of a King and the absolute humility of the Saviour; the strenuous will and the submissive resignation; the lofty resolution and the patient endurance. But not to go further into detail we assert, perhaps without the chance of being contradicted, that the account of Christ's moral qualities has been so arranged as to

leave that impression of symmetrical completeness which Nature asks for.

Nature's second demand of the perfect man may be described as that abstract quality called holiness or righteousness, which is always predicated of God (the voice of reason coinciding with the instinct of healthy reverence) wherever the mind of man has apprehended the unity of the Divine Being. The will of God then becomes identified with moral law, and is thereby placed beyond the reach of our criticism. Just as men accept the physical phenomena of Nature as final, beyond which it is useless to strive to penetrate, so do they, so must they, accept as final the moral attributes of the Creator; or if they refuse to acknowledge His existence, then we may substitute for that word the ideal man who would fulfil, supposing him to exist, all the righteousness which Nature makes possible to her offspring. There is an almost infinite suggestion of moral attributes in Nature which, if so it please our stubborn wills, we can adore and love. But criticism implies that the thing criticised can be brought into relationship with similar things for purpose of comparison,

and we cannot do this in the case of Nature, there being only one world known to us: there is no possibility of saying that there is too much of this or too little of that; that there are shades of good and evil which we can set off against each other; or (above all) that the character in which these attributes inhere is good or bad, better or worse, than any other.

And so there arises the idea of abstract unimpeachable holiness as belonging to the perfect man. That this ideal is fulfilled in the account of Jesus Christ can hardly, we think, be denied especially in view of the plain fact that criticism has hitherto failed to make an impression upon it. The word "character," which has come to be applied (wrongly as it seems to us) to His moral Being, conveys an erroneous notion about Him. For character, as the word implies, is a very marked and definite thing; it is the stamp impressed upon a particular man's moral constitution, so engraved and fashioned, raised here depressed there, light in one place dark in another, as to afford a distinct notion what manner of man he is. But this is quite unlike

the account we have of Christ, of whom we surely cannot say that He was better in one respect than in another, or that He diverged from the standard of goodness which Nature has taught us to set up or to acknowledge when set up by Him, or that He was of any particular type or cast of character at all. However we may explain the fact, it remains true that the history is so devised as to place Him above the power of moral analysis in the same sort of way as Nature is planned to reveal the incomparable and undefinable holiness of the Creator.

Nature's third demand, which concerns rather the working of the perfect character in actual practice, is that it should display a constant sympathy with good and antipathy towards evil; a truth which the religious instinct has expressed in the doctrine common to all mankind, that the gods punish wickedness and reward virtue. Now it is one of the happy results of recent discoveries that the justification of this demand, together with the meaning of this sympathy and antipathy, are found embedded as it were, in the moral strata of Nature itself. For the modern doctrine is that,

by the course of Nature is meant an increasing tendency on the part of man, to improve himself and his surroundings according to the law of development, which Nature lays down for reason and experience to find out and profit by. Whence it follows that all men who would be accounted good must love that which makes for the carrying out of Nature's plan, and hate that which makes against it.

Now it is not too much to say, that the moral history of Christ in its practical aspect may be summed up under one or other of these two conceptions, and that He realised absolutely Nature's ideal. This will come before us when we treat of His redeeming work; at present a mere glance at some of the best known features in His moral conduct is sufficient. Sympathy with right meant with Him the meekness which attracted the sorrowful, the earnest call to repentance, the mercy that pleaded with them and for them, the sacrifice of self to save men from sin, the freely-granted pardon, the exhortation to do the will of God, the aching heart and burdened spirit, the lamentation over the city that "would

not" allow Him to save her from destruction. Antipathy to evil took the form that one who knew the design of Nature must needs make it take; a terrible indignation against those whose capital crime was this, that they kept from the way of righteousness men, who, in themselves, were quite capable of being saved. He saw His opponents as men, who, by causing "little ones to offend," hindered the will of God for man's improvement revealed in the course of Nature. Nor was His wrath a casual or exceptional breaking forth of anger just as occasion called for it; it glowed at white heat in all His discourses and parables, as those who care to look for tokens of it may easily discover. And it can only be explained, together with the denunciations of punishment to which it gave birth, as expressing the Divine determination to put down all that stands in the way of the fulfilment of God's benevolent intention for man's ultimate good. Of this assertion those who apply themselves to the study of the New Testament, no matter with how little learning or talent, are competent judges. As children of Nature

we know that her practical morality may be summed up in love for what is right and hatred for what is wrong, and we can see the moral being of Christ on its practical side summed up in the same affections, all cross lights and contrasted qualities that form the infinite variability of human character being in His case omitted. And when we have realised the true state of the case we must then decide for ourselves as to what conclusion it legitimately points.

The last demand that Nature makes is that the perfect man should have that complete sympathy with herself, with the course and order of things, which may be termed happiness in living or the mere joy of existence. Testing this once more by the standard of what mankind have attributed to their deities, we find that to be associated with natural things in the way of pleasure and interest was a cardinal point in the religious ideas of classical paganism, which, we may observe, as being pre-eminently a nature-religion, affords us very apt illustrations. But in the grave and serious monotheism of the Hebrews the same thought is expressed with in-

comparably more of dignity and moral worth: "God saw everything that He had made, and behold it was very good." And the works of God again declare His glory and show forth all His power; returning, as it were, joy for joy: "O all ye works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord; praise and exalt Him above all for ever." But at this point once more the deeper research of modern days has come in to sanction this association of the sense of joy with the course of Nature, and to justify the demand for it from any character claiming to be perfect. For, as we have already noticed, the course of Nature is so ordered that all animate beings advance to a higher stage of excellence by the mere joy of existence, which arises out of the victory over conflicting circumstances in the struggle for survival. The capacity for joy lies at the moral heart of Nature, let it be taken away and there would be no reason why sentient beings should care to prolong life or to continue the conflict. So that Nature cannot choose but demand of all who would represent her moral characteristics to perfection, that they should discern and appropriate this joy of progress.

as being the necessary condition of all moral continuance.

Now, as we well know, this is not the first nor the most characteristic view of things which the Christian Revelation presents to our notice: rather it protests against the mere satisfaction with things as they are and against the mere enjoyment of the best of all possible worlds as sure to end in terrible moral confusions. And so Christianity makes its first appeal to the heart of man by depicting the Man of Sorrows as expressing the Divine sympathy with the sorrowfulness of life, and this, in obedience to the cry of humanity, which suffers so much at the hands of Nature, whose very joy is a survival out of much unhappiness.

And this first impression, with its inexhaustible cup of consolation for the sinner and the sufferer, endured for many ages of moral disorder and deep misery, until, in accordance with a law from which not even the greatest truths, if they are one-sided, are exempt, it was seen to be in imperfect harmony with Nature, and so gave rise to reactions which had their roots and their justification in the purely

natural gladness of living. Thus in the semi-pagan revival before the Reformation, and in the movement of the eighteenth century, of which Nature was the password, the principal actors were thrilled with the joy of life, action, knowledge, and humanity. To them Nature was all-sufficing; and they insisted, often with forced laughter echoing over a troubled scene from sad hearts, that men had only to follow the leadings of Nature and be happy. And so, resenting the sorrowful view of life, they fought Christianity to the very death in the very spirit of an overwrought and therefore not permanent reaction.

Which reaction has now in great measure abated in proportion as earnest minds have come to see how true the story of the Man of Sorrows is to experience, and how essential to any adequate moral rendering of the world in which we live. Now, therefore, if ever, is the opportunity for Christianity to do its part in the work of reconciliation, by completing its own representation of the moral being of its Master. And this it can do by claiming more distinctly than hitherto, upon the plain testimony afforded by Christ's words

and life, that joy of existence which Nature demands and He so plainly possessed. For be it observed that He Himself speaks never of His sorrowfulness (as an abiding quality), more than once of his joy, nor does His life present merely the aspect of unceasing sorrow, but also of cheerful, hopeful, laborious energy; lived indeed towards the latter part in the deepening gloom of the shadow of the Cross, which again was relieved by the radiance of the resurrection. It affords, perhaps, a hint how much more is yet to be got out of the Christian religion, that it might be difficult to quote one discourse of any celebrated preacher in which the joy of Christ is expressly and exhaustively treated. The plan of this work forbids any detailed account of this feature in His moral being, but we may remind the reader of one or two points that bear upon it.

We call attention, in the first place, to the fact that upon one memorable occasion He displayed an exultant joy, as marked as His moment of intense sorrow in Gethsemane; for we read (St. Luke ch. x. 21) "in that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit," and the word used (*ἠγαλλιάσατο*) is as much descrip-

tive of the strongest possible feeling as the words used to describe His agony. The occasion was the return of His disciples with good news concerning the effect of their preaching, by which intelligence His joyful sympathy with the progress of goodness was powerfully excited. Analysed, this sympathetic joy will be found to be derived from the destruction of the power of evil conceived ideally (v. 18); from the gathering in of persons to the kingdom of heaven, which equals the last achievement of moral progress (v. 20); from His entire acquiescence with the will of God, revealed as it is in the course of Nature and of history (v. 21); and, finally, from the consciousness of being an instrument of blessedness to others (v. 23). His parables, again, are steeped in the gladness of Nature's operations, being founded upon happy experiences of domestic and social life, agriculture, and trade, or upon simple natural phenomena, in all of which the better side of things predominates, though the evil is never once lost sight of: even in such a parable as the destruction of the husbandmen He specially notes that the kingdom will be given to another

nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And from the beginning of His ministry to the end of it there is a fulness of joyful anticipation both for Himself and for mankind when redeemed by Him, which has never been approached in the teaching of any other man.

But what for ever determines this question for Christians is His own testimony to His spiritual joy. As though to leave this last impression upon the heart of man, He goes to betrayal, agony, and death with the words "my joy" repeated emphatically in His last discourse and closing prayer to God. And all Analogy, now that men have begun to understand the course of things, justifies the assertion that He bore and conquered death because of the supreme joy of existence to which Himself testifies. If He was human in the perfection of His sorrow, He was divine, as Nature accounts of divineness, in the perfection of His joy, so that we do Him wrong if, in His name, or to carry on His work, we throw ourselves out of sympathy with the natural gladness of things; although this fault is not to be confounded with that stern and necessary

protest against selfishness, self-satisfaction, and deadness to sin and suffering which the contemplation of the joyful side of Nature, taken by itself, is apt to promote. The tendency of the life of Christ as of Nature is always towards unity, wholeness, combination of opposites, adjustment of contradictions. But without entering further on the joy of Christ, which we suspect to be full of hidden beauties and deep analogies, to be revealed hereafter, we say simply that, contrary to what might have been expected beforehand, it betrays a complete resemblance to that which Nature suggests as being the most suitable spirit for her children to be possessed by.

3. The naturalness of Christ's teaching to which we now turn might almost be taken as conceded by fair opponents; at any rate, the answer which Revelation makes to the demand of Nature becomes more decisive as the demand assumes a more peremptory tone. Now the course of Nature, being made up of forces that are ever tending by fixed law to certain progressive results, must be held to be sufficient for all the purposes (other than religious) of humanity,

and the knowledge of this course as acquired by reason and experience in like manner must be held sufficient for the same purpose: supernatural information, except for purely religious instruction, is as fatal to the course of Nature as supernatural intervention itself. Now this being so we are to remember, what has been already pointed out, that not by one single word did Christ give any opinion about natural phenomena, or assign for them supernatural causes. He did not interfere in His teaching with any knowledge that men have, or may acquire, of the universe, of its laws and processes, nor is there anything that men say or think at the present moment in the investigation of Nature which requires to be altered because of anything that Christ said or taught. In everything He paid scrupulous deference to the prerogatives of reason, and never committed Himself to any opinion that reason can even criticise, still less pronounce inaccurate. This is, of course, as it must needs be, one of those general statements that are asserted as true, subject to disproof from facts, which in this case may be safely challenged; but there

is also one piece of positive proof as well. All religious systems must contain a cosmogony of some sort, and it is here that they come into conflict with science; even the primitive and artless cosmogony of the Hebrews having been subjected to the common lot of being strenuously disputed over. But the Christian cosmogony, as contained in the first thirteen verses of St. John's Gospel (for so it certainly is), presents nothing that can conflict with any positive demonstration of reason from the apprehension of phenomena. It is a purely spiritual or religious account of Creation so constructed as to fall in with any material or scientific account that the human mind may attain unto.

But though Nature does not claim by itself to afford a religious knowledge of God so as to bind upon us the obligation of obeying and adoring Him—and this, we say, because of the hypothesis with which we started, and which would perhaps hardly be disputed even by Theism, which has never been wont to rely merely upon arguments drawn from the constitution of Nature, such as, for instance, the argument of design—

yet it does claim to be able to supply to the religious spirit the materials out of which its teaching is composed, just as it does in the kindred spheres of poetry and morals. To which must be added on the part of the teacher a genuine appreciation of Nature's aspects and voices, upon which a religious interpretation is to be placed—for in religion as in other things Nature will not endure to be thrust aside or dispensed with. Now that this, and much more than this, if it were thought necessary to go further into details, was fulfilled by the teaching of Christ, no one needs to be reminded. Surely no one ever made so natural a use of natural scenes as He did. He grasped clearly the secrets of God's working in Nature, and thus was able to use it to explain and illustrate the same working in the spiritual order, bringing out at every step in His teaching analogies the most beautiful and subtle. Thus, to take the first few examples that present themselves: He spoke of Himself under such illustrations as light, food, drink, a vine, a shepherd, a bridegroom, and the like. The two rites He ordained were merely washing

and partaking of food applied to religious purposes. His parables ranged over the common scenes or duties of daily life. He said one of the finest and deepest things ever said concerning flowers, in order to contrast the beautifulness of God's creation with man's artificial splendour. The sight of children suggested to Him a living picture of the Heavenly disposition. The sun and stars above, mountains and hills below, were also pressed into the same service. And so He drew religion from Nature as other men draw poetry, art, law, or morals, which He for His part left to each man to do in his own sphere as God had appointed, never interfering with the march of the human intelligence in pursuit of its own proper aims, but submitting Himself, as became a dutiful Son, to the conditions and limitations which His Father has imposed upon His created work.

Thus far, we think, there will be found no serious difference of opinion between the students of Nature and Revelation respectively, as to the Analogy which the Lord's teaching presented to the course of Nature, but the question as to the

relation of His teaching to natural morality gives rise to serious controversy, and must be separately considered. Much that has been said in this chapter, must have struck the reader as being only something that could not help being said in such an argument as this; something on the other hand may have been propounded to draw the bonds of Analogy between the two systems closer than could have been expected beforehand. Meanwhile, we ask the reader once more to discover or even imagine any other reason for the phenomena we have pointed out, than that which the history itself assigns—being the perfectly adequate and reasonable explanation that both systems had the same Author. And if he can find any resemblance in all the long roll of human experience, or if he can by taking thought imagine how it came to pass except by the power of God, let him erase this chapter from the tablets of his mind, and forgive the writer of it for having intruded upon his attention to no purpose.

CHAPTER VIII.

ON THE MORAL TEACHING OF CHRIST.

UP to this point it has been possible to avoid all controversies with those who have made the book of the world or the book of Revelation their special study, for the writer has simply accepted what each are agreed upon in a general way as being true, and also essential to their respective dispensations. Differences of opinion concerning details or special topics, which, however important, are still subordinate, he has been able to pass over, not because he has no opinion of his own about them, but because, following herein the example of Butler, he can regard them as lying outside the lines of his argument. And it is astonishing how well the two sets of students get on together,

so long as one does not use the authority of religion to enforce some interpretation of natural order, or the other retaliate by denying an historical event in the supposed interests of Nature. But we have now arrived at a point where there exists a serious and substantial difference of opinion, and where the two may be compared to armies encamped in the same territory which each asserts belongs in whole or in part to itself. Into this dispute we must therefore enter so far as may be necessary to establish an Analogy between Nature and Revelation precisely in respect of that wherein there is a present appearance of contrariety and discordance ; such Analogy being all the more effective because it will have been won, so to speak, out of the fire.

The question is none other than this: "To whom does the field of morality belong?" Can we discover what we ought to do by the experimental investigation of Nature (including history), or must we accept the methods and standards of moral excellence from a divine revelation especially given us?

Let us remember that we have postulated

throughout that Nature must be regarded as sufficient for all the purposes which, judging by our experience of things, were designed by the Creator, and which culminate in that vast phrase: "The growing civilisation of mankind." So that the interpreters of Nature are compelled to affirm that morality, or the duty of man towards man in the various relationships of life, may be gathered by reason from Nature, that such morality is adequate for all the needs of the human spirit, and that conduct adjusted by this standard is good in every sense of that word.

On the other hand, Christians, equally jealous for their Master's honour, have seemed to assert—we say *seemed*, for it may be that popular Christianity has committed itself to more than its own best authorities would allow—that Jesus Christ revealed moral truths which reason could not otherwise have discovered; that the foundations of His moral teaching were not merely superlatively excellent in degree (which all admit), but *sui generis*; and, further, that believers in Him have special means of deciding rightly questions of common morality, which they ought to employ,

and we suppose the world at large to defer to, by the mouth of doctors and theologians. Thus, such and such a thing is wrong upon Christian principles, such another thing has been decided by the authority of Christ; a certain policy for instance, say a war, is pronounced to be against Christian morality, though, as the other party rejoins, it may have been begun from the customary motives that decide such transactions. Which assertions are sometimes warmly repudiated, and in its hottest moments the common voice of public opinion accuses those who make them of exhibiting what it calls the spirit of priestcraft. Or if the said policy be accepted by Christians in general, then they are open to the censure that their morality is below that of Nature and humanity. And thus arises an unhappy, and surely an unnecessary, quarrel.

Now the gist of the dispute lies in this. Men can only accept a moral doctrine upon the ground of reason working by experiment, or upon the authority of the person who offers it, such authority in turn depending upon their belief that the teacher has a divinely-given right to tell us what

we could not have found out for ourselves, and therefore must receive without criticism. So that morality comes, in the last resort, to rest upon a Revelation attested by miracles, which the interpreter of Nature is at once driven to reject, and so cut the whole matter short, sometimes, it must be confessed, in an acrimonious and uninquiring spirit. The Christian believer, on the other hand, is equally positive that Christ has done something for morality which surpassed the unaided powers of man, and he in his turn is apt to grow contemptuous towards Nature—Nature, of which his Master never said one word that was not sympathetic and respectful. And as is so often the case, either is more able to harass and confound the other than to establish his own case, even to his own satisfaction.

We have thus then an admirable field for testing the conciliating power of the argument from Analogy, and we begin by asking, whether these pretensions in the way of moral teaching are anywhere in the New Testament expressly claimed for Christ or by Him. Surely not; at least upon the first view of things. It does not anywhere appear,

that He was communicating to the world moral truths, which, but for His intervention, must have remained in abeyance for ever, for this is the true description of a supernatural teaching. Now, going a little below the mere surface, let us submit the teaching of Christ to the most obvious and decisive test, that of originality. To adopt a familiar and practical view of the subject, we may speak of originality as having regard to the method whereby moral improvement is to be gained, to the standard proposed for our attainment, and to the particular maxims inculcated upon us as containing the essence of the whole. Now the method of Christ was that of cleansing the heart, of working from within outwards, of acting upon the spirit, of making the tree good first of all. And His standard of excellence was that of self-sacrifice, of giving up ourselves, even life itself, in the assurance that this was to gain the very life for which we were created. Now to call this original, in face of well-known facts, is really out of the question: Nature had certainly set men upon *this* track long before His time. Curiously enough a superficial view of the two most famous nations of antiquity is suffi-

cient to settle the matter. Was not the purification of the inner-self the essence of all that was most excellent in the moral philosophy of the Greek? Was not the sacrifice of self to the higher claims of duty and patriotism the secret of the dominion which the Roman had acquired over the world? What Jesus Christ did was to combine these two together, to make them into living forces by His exquisite way of putting them, and by the incomparable example of His own life and death. But this is not the part of one who aims at superseding Nature, but rather of one, who was enforcing, with new spiritual energy, what others had tried to promulgate and establish before Him.

The case is even stronger when we come to what is perhaps a more definite test, namely, the special commandments and maxims which Christ laid down in His teaching. He made it part of His work to correct the imperfect or perverted maxims of "them of old time," but the new ones were not above the standard of enlightened Gentile teaching, though put with infinitely more vital power and practical persuasiveness. Indeed, He expressly accepted the old law in its true meaning in words

that might be well regarded as decisive: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy but to fulfil." And in agreement with this declaration He refused more than once to give any new commandments of His own, referring inquirers, who tried to get from Him "counsels of perfection," to the old Law, as quite sufficient to confer eternal life—if kept. Nor did He ever let fall any hint to show that in His opinion men were unable to discover moral truths or put them into suitable maxims; it was the doing that He warned them was so difficult. In proof whereof let these three considerations be duly weighed.

1. Jesus Christ never interfered with existing institutions or customs which the moral teaching of that day allowed, though He spoke strongly concerning religious abuses. Thus, He said nothing about slavery or war. On the other hand, that one most certain law of Nature, for if *it* be not a moral law of Nature's own making, then there is no such thing, namely, that a man should have but one wife, and should not part from her, so long as the condition of the married tie was fulfilled, He did

most strenuously enforce. Religious ordinances again, such as oaths, He dealt with, but not with any that are only moral.

2. He gave utterance to many moral dicta, which in spirit bore strong resemblance to the sayings both of Jew and Gentile teachers. This is frequently urged as an argument against Revelation; and Christians have tried to nullify it by pointing out special features, which make His moral maxims not merely different in degree, but different, that is, supernatural, in kind. But it is another felicity of the argument from Analogy, that the more similarities abound, the more likely is it that Nature and Revelation proceeded from the same cause; and every discovery of fresh correspondence with the admitted truths of other teachers has for long seemed to the present writer a strong point in favour of the Christian religion. For it shows that the founder of our faith did not supersede the natural morality which His Father had given to His children; nor again their natural powers for finding it out by reason and inquiry, in this presenting a strong contrast to other founders of religious movements who have

not been apt to treat the moral constitution of Nature with that deference, which we are beginning to see is due to it.

3. The special directions which Christ at times gave to meet particular cases are, so far as we can judge, of a practical character, and suited to the wants and duties of common human life. No doubt they can be made to have a supernatural appearance, in so far as impossibility of attainment would give them that appearance, by being pressed in their literal meaning. But if we put aside metaphorical expressions (such as turning the other cheek, which His own conduct subsequently explained), or those injunctions which were limited to the very special missionary work upon which His disciples were engaged, and which required unusual and striking effects, we shall find that His practical advice was such as common morality would approve, and wise men would try to follow. Thus *unconditional* forgiveness of injuries is no part of Christ's doctrine; as the conduct of the king, who ordered his servant to be sold because he could not pay the debt, and forgave it only upon his prayer for mercy, plainly

shows. Take again the case of the owner of the vineyard, who insisted that the contract with his labourers should be strictly kept; of the lord, who so sharply censured his servant for not employing his money to advantage; of the slave, who was not excused his work in the house because he had done it in the field. But in a multitude of well-known facts we can only appeal to the general effect of the whole, and test it by a crucial instance. And this we consider to be the Lord's particular and detailed injunctions concerning quarrels, which we are too apt to dismiss as impossible of performance, because we do not like to make the attempt. These are, first of all, to try private remonstrance: "Tell him his fault between thee and him alone;" then arbitration: "Take with thee one or two more;" then law: "Tell it unto the assembly;" then finally the open breach until repentance has made it up: "Let him be to thee as an heathen man and a publican." It would be difficult to point out any course of conduct more reasonable, more consistent with experience and common sense, or more likely to be practically effective than this. And He appears to have

enlarged upon this subject contrary to His usual wont, because in quarrels it is a proper course of action at each step, and not merely principles or rules, that helps men to keep themselves in the right.

So far then we think that the protest against supernatural interference with the moral course of Nature is warranted by the teaching of Christ Himself when closely examined. But the proposition, which satisfied perhaps the colder piety of the last century, that Christ merely republished the code of natural ethics in a very effective manner, and illustrated it by a life of peculiar sanctity, will never content, nor ought to content, the genuine Christian instinct, which demands for its Master's work far more than this; and when we look at the facts of the case does not ask in vain.

For to sum the whole matter up in one brief word, what Christ did was to make morality religious, by turning it into the very material out of which a religious life is woven: just as He did by human life and character, with the scenery of the world, and with history, so did He by moral teaching. Morality in His hands became a duty which we owe to God, which He

has constituted in and by the order of Nature, and therefore expects of us, which He will judge and reward. Once more we must appeal to the reader's knowledge of the New Testament to verify an assertion so commonplace as this, only adding a few brief examples to set him upon the right track. He inculcated the very ordinary duty of obedience to the civil powers in such a way as to make it of Divine obligation by adding the words: "Render unto God the things that are God's," and again, while submitting Himself in His own person to the Roman authority, by saying: "Thou couldest have no power against Me, except it were given thee from above." Duty to one's neighbour, even though expressed in the old language, becomes quite a new thing in respect of motive and obligation, when it is realised that all alike owe a primary duty to God, and to love one's neighbour as one's self—surely the perfection of nicely-balanced rational morality—gains another significance when God is proclaimed as the Father of all men without exception. Not to take anxious thought about the morrow does not appear a very fruitful or valuable piece of advice, except it is

associated with belief in a loving Providence, in whose sight the very hairs of our head are numbered; and forgiveness of injuries is but an impracticable undertaking for most men, till they have recognised their own need of forgiveness from God. Again the very method of morality, *i.e.* the purification of the inward spirit, is a process that has but little chance of being generally adopted, unless it is associated with the reward, that follows upon it in natural order, of "seeing God." Similarly the standard of morality, *i.e.* sacrifice of self, is seen in quite another light when it is offered to the Creator of the world, and accepted by Him as the fulfilment of His laws impressed upon the course of Nature. But beyond this mere statement we need not now proceed, for the method of morality is involved in the Christian doctrine of Redemption from evil, and its standard in the Christian law of self-sacrifice, both of which we are next to enter upon. Let us, therefore, conclude the matter by repeating that Christ gave to morality that which Nature could not give it, the vivifying and enlightening power of a true religion.

The result of our investigation would seem to lead us to the conclusion that both sides in the dispute, as before described, will retain what is rightly their own, and surrender the territory which they could occupy indeed but not govern. The pre-eminence of reason in discovering the methods, fixing the standard, and drawing up the maxims of morality according to the course of Nature, is seen to be all the more unchallenged because Revelation is made by one who claims the Author of Nature for His Father, and who therefore, as filial instinct would compel, takes care that the Creator's arrangements in the universe should be respected and upheld. On the other hand the pre-eminence of Revelation in fitting the moral order of things into a larger scheme, giving it religious sanctions and influences, and so putting it into a practical working shape, is equally incontestable. The one surrenders the power of doing right without God, the other that of adding a supernatural morality to Nature's ordering. And this surrender of certain supernatural claims, or half-claims, is really a very happy result, for the more of the supernatural

that we find in Revelation, the more likely is it to be brought into conflict at some point with Nature, and then as reason has in the last resort only Nature to go by and judge by, men will be tempted to decide that the divergence between the two, creates so strong a presumption against the identity of their origin, as that no presumption from Analogy can rebut it. And so an end of all attempts to maintain the truth of Christianity upon purely rational grounds.

And let us say further, that out of a merely barren conflict we have been enabled to draw a deep and fertile Analogy between Revelation and Nature in respect of their relations to morality, seeing that both are found in co-operation to produce those moral ends which Nature propounds but cannot in practice attain; for the perfectly sufficient reason that man cannot by his own power, that is from such information as Nature gives, attain to a satisfactory knowledge of his relations towards the cause of his own existence. And yet such knowledge forms an elementary and indispensable requisite to a perfect morality, which is at root nothing but

a system of duties following upon ascertained relationships, so that for man to order his conduct aright, it is not enough for him to act as though the existence of God might be left an open question, which appears to be the agnostic position; he must try and satisfy himself by every means in his power whether there be or be not a God whom he can approach in prayer and in spirit. And to men who admit this duty in terms, whatever be their practice concerning it, the argument from Analogy is of great value.

But whatever may be thought as to the force of the Analogy which we have in this chapter attempted to draw out, it will probably be granted, that the attempt to bring about a better understanding between the advocates of Revelation and the interpreters of Nature is not alien from the spirit and intention of this treatise.

CHAPTER IX.

ON THE ANALOGY OF REDEMPTION WITH NATURE.

THE Christian doctrine of Redemption from sin, which is equivalent to the religious method of making people good, implies a condition of evil in which men are placed, their incapacity to escape from it, and the exhibition by Divine power of a suitable and sufficient remedy. The design, therefore, of the present chapter is to inquire whether the method of Redemption which Revelation discloses, is, so far as concerns these three particulars, in accordance with the Analogy of Nature or not. And we must beg the reader once more to observe that, inasmuch as our object is to bring the method of Redemption into comparison with Nature, it follows that the various

doctrines to which the fact of Redemption has given rise, and which, as being based upon the express words of Holy Scripture, are exceedingly dear to religious minds, are, and must be, omitted from consideration; and this not because they are unimportant still less untrue, but because they are the deductions of the spiritual reason from Revelation and not Revelation itself, and therefore cannot be brought into comparison with the course of Nature, which certainly exists above and apart from any reasonings of ours concerning it.

But, perhaps, any prejudice on this account will be disarmed if we go on to say that the account of Redemption to be employed in this chapter will be taken, not only from Scripture, but from that very part of Scripture which the common judgment of mankind has concurred in accounting the most perfect description of the redeeming process that has been vouchsafed to us. And here the word process is to be noted, because it indicates that inherent difference between the old Analogy and the new which the state of opinion and of knowledge forces upon us. As in Butler's estimation Nature was a con-

stitution of things once for all fixed, so was Redemption a transaction once for all completed; and he contented himself with collecting various passages in which Christ's mediatorial work was described, and then accepting the generally received deductions from them. But for us, though certainly finding no fault with what has gone before, just as Nature is a simple, definite, and intelligible *course* producing certain phenomena, so must Redemption be conceived as a *process* in human, which is also natural, history, producing certain spiritual results upon the moral disposition of mankind. We must, in short, try and discover Redemption, as it were, in actual working operation, just as men seek to surprise Nature in her secret laboratory.

The ingenious reader will have guessed to what Scripture we are referring. We know that to St. Paul it was given to comprehend that part or aspect of Christ's life called Redemption, and to expound it to the reason and conscience of mankind; and this not surely because of any merely intellectual aptitude, but because his own spiritual experience had enlightened him as to the spiritual history of mankind. So that the seventh and first part of

the eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, in which he recounts his own spiritual life, may be justly called a religious history of human nature, in which indeed it almost appears to lose itself.

The main facts of the history are very simple, and coincide with the three before-mentioned conditions of the Redeeming process. There was, first, the consciousness of sin, together with the law that forbade it; then the struggle between himself and sin in which, as victory decided absolutely for neither party, the issue was a kind of moral death; finally, the victory by means of Christ and His redeeming power. Are these, then, facts of Nature and in Analogy with it or no?

The first question, the answer to which carries with it the rest of the argument whose direction it shapes, is this, what in the economy of Nature and the phraseology of science is meant by "sin" and "law." - Now the course of Nature is, as we have understood throughout, a progress or development from a lower stage of existence to a higher, which progress on its moral side is commonly called the growth or spread of civilisation. To make ourselves clear it may be well to add that the word

stage may be taken, as the reader pleases, to denote either different sections of natural progress separable from each other and each with its own resting-place, or else merely a continuous journey (as from London to Edinburgh) which, though passing over various railway systems, is practically the same journey in the same train, the various systems combining to bring it about and to give effect to one intention.

Now it is clear that at every point in that journey, as it is reached by any part of mankind that is visibly obeying Nature's law of progress, there is a standard of moral conduct appropriate to that particular stage of development, just as there is a standard of comfort, knowledge, or mode of living. There is a constant cessation of practices and maxims which are suitable only for a lower stage, and a retention of those which are suitable for moral advancement, reason making an unconscious selection from the old and also elaborating new ones as experience widens. Of this law all moral life is one continuous illustration; thus a dog owns inwardly and conforms outwardly to a different standard of conduct from that of his

progenitors, when they ran free from man's control upon the face of the earth. But then it is a simple matter-of-fact that individuals bring, and must bring, into each stage of moral progress the impulses and ideas which they have inherited from previous and less perfect ones, even as the best trained dog cannot altogether overcome the primary instincts of his nature. Any way of stating this truth will answer our purpose; but perhaps the philosophy that traces all moral conduct to the two primary instincts of self-preservation and reproduction is the most available for our purpose, because these instincts are just as strong (perhaps stronger) in the civilised man as in the barbarian, and yet have to submit to the many laws and checks which reason following experience, and experience following Nature, have devised for the regulation of human conduct. So that these two instincts (to say nothing of any others) give rise to natural impulses, which religion calls temptation, to give way to actions which may have been quite right and permissible at one time, but are now quite against our own interests and those of society generally. In plain words sin is

the tendency to revert to a lower type, according to the impulses of those animal, and, therefore, anti-social passions which St. Paul calls the "law of the flesh." A striking use of the word "law," because it seems to show that conduct at one time lawful—*i.e.* in accordance with the then stage of moral progress—intrudes itself into the higher stage under the plausible and not altogether unwarranted plea of being also in conformity to Nature's law. Sin, then, is the tendency to revert to the lower type, or, as we might call it (using the phrase somewhat loosely) a survival of that which is unfit.

It is plain from the above account of things, that moral law must be identified with the voice of the higher standard, acknowledged by reason and conscience to be just, proclaiming to the individual that he is transgressing the course of Nature by immoral reversion. This voice may come in different ways—from a man's moral perception, from public opinion, from positive enactment—but its meaning is always that our duty, as prescribed by Nature, is to share in the general advancement of humanity to the higher type. Hence ensues the common struggle of the worse against the

better nature; of passion against law; of natural sinfulness against natural righteousness; which, common as it is, required, like other great truths, to be discovered, when the time came, by the genius of some great man. And the credit of this is due to St. Paul, or rather to Revelation, which fastened the discovery in the heart and conscience of mankind as the utterance of absolute truth, long before the characteristic discoveries of the nineteenth century came to vindicate the way of God in Revelation by demonstrating it to be in entire Analogy with the constitution of Nature, or rather one might say, to be an account of Nature itself.

The way in which this discovery came about is very plainly made known, and is in no way different from the history of discovery in general. St. Paul saw his own moral history transfigured in his past relations with Christ, and the whole moral history of mankind transfigured in his own, for, law being universal, what was true of himself was true of all the world. He first of all became convinced that the higher type had been presented to him, and that deliberately yet violently, of his own free will, and with all the force of his temper

and character, he had preferred the lower—Judaism to Christianity, Caiaphas to Christ. This discovery let him into the secret of his past spiritual history : that there had always been a lower and a higher type presented to him, sin and the law ; that he had been the victim of a perpetual struggle, of which he could not say that defeat had been altogether decisive ; until at length the real test came—the only one that could be decisive to a man of his austere character—the test of willingness to cast off the personal pride of his own traditionary and national opinions, and to yield to the persuasions of a new and loftier religion. And then he had failed as completely as the lowest of the poor sensuous creatures whom hitherto he had despised ; so that he found out the truth once for all about sin, and once for all made it known to the world, by which it was received as consonant with man's common experience of himself. And we claim, in the fresh light of recent investigation, that the Christian doctrine of sin exhibits an Analogy with Nature of the most positive and deep-seated character, that is not to be denied or set aside by any fair mind.

Man's natural condition in respect of moral evil having been thus expounded, we pass on to the consideration of his capacity to recover himself from it. And here let us note attentively how St. Paul treated the subject, for it is most noteworthy. Strange as we may at first sight think it, he does not blame himself, but offers himself to himself, to his readers, and to God, as an object of compassion. His cry is not "O sinful wretch," but "O wretched man." And he speaks of his condition as one of death, whereas a man can hardly be found guilty of dying. It was a state of suspended animation, of a paralysis of motives, of an incapacity to be of use to himself or others. He had not brought it upon himself, but with the better part of himself had striven against it, and thus discovered that he was as powerless to escape from it as to raise himself from the grave, or, as we might now say, to avoid the struggle for existence which Nature prescribes for all her creatures. This, then, was his deliberate, albeit impassioned, judgment about his own condition, in which, if he was right, and surely Analogy suggests that St. Paul was likely to be right

in his own domain of thought, as other great spirits are in theirs, then is the necessity of Redemption by Divine power established, and the presumption against any supernatural interposition of God turned into a presumption in favour of a Divine completion of creative work in Nature by an analogous work in history.

But was he right? So far as starting from an experience of the phenomena about him, and accepting them after proper inquiry as the objects for reason to exercise itself about, can make a man right, so far at least may we believe that St. Paul was more likely to be right than wrong. In the Epistle to the Romans, which is his one strictly scientific treatise, he begins by calling attention to the fact that all civilisation was then reverting to some of the worst faults of the lowest types of morality—instead of the prophets, the Pharisees; instead of the philosophers, the Græculus esuriens; instead of the Scipios, the Cæsars. And had he lived later he might have seen that the moral reaction of the time of the Antonines availed only to arrest, but not to cure, the disease of humanity, which was eventually accomplished

by Christianity, with the assistance (and in the present state of the world, so small and so well-known, the remark is significant) of fresh materials to work on. And besides this he started throughout from the plain fact that every individual man had sinned and had fallen short of the glory of God; that death, *i.e.* the state of spiritual struggle, reigns over all; that the bare idea of a human being, born under our conditions and inheriting our tendencies, and yet never reverting to the lower stage, was a quite impossible and irrational conception. That men could not save themselves from evil was, in St. Paul's scheme of positive philosophy, a plain deduction from the admitted fact that they had not done so in any one single case.

And his own experience had further warned him that good intentions could not be accepted in lieu of righteous performance. With the true instinct of philosophical insight he assigns to them their real value, namely, of alleviating the sense of merely personal guilt, and so preparing the mind for the influence of redeeming power: "I obtained mercy because I, who was as touching the righteousness of the law blameless, did it in ignorance and

unbelief." But none the less had he been a "blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious," and would so have ended his days but for the interposition of God. In respect of good intentions, zealous and self-sacrificing effort, knowledge of the Scriptures, prayer and religious exercise, he had nothing whereof to accuse himself, and yet had been all the while in the wrong, and dwelling in the weak and beggarly elements, an expression which seems as though intended to fit in with the conception of sin as a reverting to lower or elementary types. And he drew from his own failure the frank conclusion that no one would be likely to succeed, a rare example of a correct generalisation from a perfectly honest investigation of a man's own individual experience of himself.

This exposition of St. Paul's doctrine, though far too brief to be in itself satisfactory, must be taken as sufficient for the purpose to which we are now to put it, namely, of testing its truth by the information which reason collects from the course of Nature as now understood. To a large extent, indeed, it must be confessed that man's moral capacity is a question of feeling and prepossession,

and that arguments on both sides are apt to take the form of rhetorical descriptions of human strength or weakness in order to persuade him to own himself weak or to think himself strong. Reason and experience are here as elsewhere the only guide; but cases there are, and this is one of them, where these oracles like them of old may be bribed by the prejudice of those who consult them to give contradictory answers. But if we consult them in the light which the discovery of the course of Nature, moral no less than physical, throws upon the facts of human life, we may perhaps perceive some grounds for concluding that St. Paul's account of the matter is positively true, due regard being paid to the necessarily relative and somewhat shifting conditions of the problem to be solved.

And yet it may well be that, as might be expected of every natural as opposed to forced Analogy, the problem solves itself by the mere juxtaposition of facts. We have seen that according to St. Paul's view of things the evil of moral life does not consist merely in the habitual commission of sin, but in the state of conflict in which without hope of anything like absolute victory we find ourselves per-

manently involved, and the bare existence of which appeared to him a kind of spiritual death, our spiritual nature being what it is. So consistently does he hold to this, that the state of moral unconsciousness or absence of striving which we should more properly call death he expressly calls life: "I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came sin revived and I died." But now this deathlike condition of conflict is the very position into which the inexorable power of Nature by its own fundamental law fastens up every being capable of moral sentiment, for the very method or design of Nature implies that men must advance on the path of moral progress by means of conflict, struggle, and survival. So that the agonised struggle of humanity is but the appointed course of things and man's death is Nature's life.

This might well be thought to be decisive as far as our argument is concerned; but as the attitude of Nature towards morality is beset with difficulty and controversy, it may be good to point out how the matter stands when the argument of Analogy is brought to bear upon it. And first the much debated question whether words like "duty"

and "ought" are words of Nature's vocabulary, and binding upon the conscience without the aid of religious sanctions, is answered distinctly in the affirmative. For the course of Nature being a tendency upwards according to the law of advancement, there is a necessity that mankind should also advance, and a duty upon individuals to share in the upward tendency, and so to conform to what is Nature's most essential idea. And the consciousness of duty is merely the apprehension of Nature's inner law. But here we come once more upon that with which we have all throughout been familiar, namely, how Nature sets questions and does not answer them, or demands duties without conferring the power of discharging them, being ever "careful of the type and careless of the single life." And this is just how St. Paul apprehended the matter and described it in words which, allowance being made for difference of subject, might fairly be called as true as a scientific formula: "We know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin;" and again: "The commandment which was ordained to life I found to be unto death."

That this opinion is not the utterance of a diseased conscience, but the statement of positive truth to be verified by reason and experience, let the following brief considerations (out of many) be adduced to show :

First, Nature inflicts the penalty of spiritual death, as defined above, for one offence, as much as for many—any single reverting to the lower type is equivalent to a definite falling short of the standard of duty which she exacts. This explains that part of St. Paul's teaching which, if he were speaking of sin under the aspect of guilt and punishment merely, would seem so shocking to the sense of justice, namely, the solidarity of mankind in respect of evil, for "God hath concluded all under sin." But taken as a description of the state of misery to which the transgression of law by reverting has reduced the human race, it is simply a statement of facts as we know them. There is in the first place a law of sin transmitting its evil effects from generation to generation, and making obedience to duty practically impossible ; and there is in the second a deadly blow struck against the individual conscience which is all the more sensitive

to shame in proportion as the man is striving successfully to maintain the higher type.

But secondly, Nature annexes pleasure to the gratification of instincts quite apart from their morality, whence it follows that as a matter of practice, the words "ought" and "duty" have in Nature's mouth no supreme authority over those who choose to assert that for them happiness lies in the life of sensuousness or selfishness—taking these as the embodiment in society of the two primary instincts. These affirm that whatever meaning the words ought to have upon the minds of men, *they* intend for their part to go on their own way of finding life, which the very absence of moral conflict makes easier and pleasanter to them. Considering how the temptation to sin for the pleasure thereof is embedded in the constitution of man, and how natural it is to do in one stage of advancement what was right in a lower, it does seem a perilous undertaking to persuade the mass of mankind from evil by a reliance upon the superior happiness of virtue.

To this may be added, that, as there is no possibility of undoing the evil effects of reverting to the

lower type, Nature knows nothing of the moral effects of forgiveness. St. Paul's repentance could not bring Stephen back to life, nor undo what Saul of Tarsus had committed against the Church of Christ. Even so men, by their own evil deeds or imperfect characters, prevent the higher type from asserting itself, thwart the course of Nature however unintentionally, and draw others after them to perhaps worse excesses than themselves have reached. Then they become conscious of what they have done (and if they do not, then they are even lower than those who struggle and fail, and all moral Nature may be said to be against them), and find no remedy. It is here that religion becomes an instinct, for unless there had been some power of changing evil into good, it is clear that the gloom which settled at first upon St. Paul's mind must have, in his case as in others, deepened into an abiding despair and distrust of self, of Nature, and of man.

We have, however, now come to topics which all serious men take into account; and we need only mention further that, in what concerns the practical treatment of her offspring, the course of

Nature makes but little distinction between the man who reverts to the lower and the man who struggles to maintain the higher type. Innocence and sin are too often blended in one common doom, or often the first suffers because it is good, and the latter survives because it is evil. And upon any view of the matter Nature's demand for obedience is addressed to creatures who, for all she can make them certain of, will be dead, and for ever, to-morrow. So that without going further into well-known details, we conclude that the explanation of man's condition in respect of evil, which is obtained from Nature and which we have called the tendency to revert to the lower type, explains that state which the apostle called death, his account of which has gone far to stamp upon the human imagination that consciousness of its own weakness, and that incapacity to escape from evil, which it asserts to be true.

We shall at this point take occasion to observe that the hope of realising by gradual development a universal morality far transcending anything we can conceive at this time, does not enter at all into our present subject, however much our sympathies may go along with it. For it is clear that morality,

like everything else that can be called natural, must always remain a course having its roots fixed in the far distant past; hence, however high the race may ascend, there will always be the same tendency on the part of the individual to go back, and perhaps as the conscience grows more sensitive, the struggle will be more death-like, and the consequences of downfall more irreparable. Ignorance, passion, selfishness, will be relatively the same, that is to say, bear the like proportion to the highest attainable type of conduct that they do now. Similarly the idea of duty as self-abnegation in the interests of humanity does not now come up for discussion, though, as it involves the idea of sacrifice, we may have to allude to it further on. Let it be granted that it is Nature's highest standard of moral perfection (which, however, we cannot do), still man's incapacity to attain that standard, without the conflict of which we have been saying so much, remains just as it was before. St. Paul, for instance, had given himself up to serve the cause of humanity as he conceived of it, with what results he himself knew but too well. In fine, to sum up the whole argument, if St. Paul was in any way

right in describing the natural struggle in the heart against evil as a spiritual death, then it must be a power greater than human that bids the soul to rise up and live.

The condition of man in respect of evil, and his incapacity to redeem himself from it, having been now traced to their place in the natural constitution of things, of which they form an essential part, it remains finally to point out that the remedy provided in Revelation is also in accordance with the Analogy of Nature, and such as will fit the occasion. To effect this there must be the introduction of a new power with new influences and surroundings to determine the will or help the will to determine itself (whichever way we choose to put it) away from the lower to the higher type, affording us moral leverage from without, and means of self-purification from within, and turning the conflict into a conscious victory over evil in obedience to the demand of Nature herself.

Now this power is explained by St. Paul in one brief phrase of expressive gratitude: "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Now, it is most observable, that as in the seventh chapter he

confined himself to the simple fact of the death of sin, so in the eighth he says nothing of other aspects of Christ's redeeming work, nothing of pardon for guilt or release from punishment, thereby justifying us in following Butler's example of leaving these and other doctrines to the domain of theology proper. Nor does he even so much as allude to that absorbing topic, namely, the self-sacrifice of Christ as fulfilling the highest moral standard, and as being on that account the means by which Redemption was accomplished, which must be our warrant also for reserving that doctrine for separate discussion. What he sees and insists upon is that Christ has become *the* power of good to him and to all who believe; and that simply by virtue of the influence of spirit upon spirits which is the most efficacious instrument of moral power, and which Nature provides in abundance for all the relations of men towards each other, but does not (thereby confessing, it may be thought, her own moral incapacity) permit us to feel in respect of the duties which we owe to the moral Ideal, or to Nature herself, or to Nature's author. In fact, ignorance is the parent of sin, and agnosticism

the supreme moral evil from which Redemption is required.

The way of Redemption is then summed up by St. Paul simply in the person of Jesus Christ and His moral power over the hearts of men. And if we attend to the further amplification of this primary idea in the eighth chapter, we shall perhaps see that it means in St. Paul's mind that by His Revelation the mark of religion was stamped upon all Nature, the course of which was transfigured as by a celestial light into the expression of a Divine will. And then for the law of succession of phenomena was substituted the spiritual influence of God upon the dispositions of men through Jesus Christ, such influence being simply the voice of Nature made audible, and her method, that is the plan of her Creator, made intelligible. And thus is revealed a purpose of goodness, an affection of love, an intention towards holiness, which gives to human character the spring or moral force necessary for virtuous living and for victory in the struggle against evil. For the discovery of law has no inspiring effect upon the character, whereas the discovery of a purpose instantly and

naturally breeds a purpose in the mind of the discoverer, there is something which he can fall in with, and help forward, and live up to. And the idea of a transcendent wisdom carrying forward, by express intention, the whole moral life of mankind becomes to us, when we apprehend it, or rather as St. Paul would say, are apprehended by it, such as St. Paul described at the close of his argument in the ever memorable verses that end the eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, in which, identifying every effort of man towards moral progress with the predestinating will and irresistible influence of God, he surrenders his spirit, his imagination, almost his very personal being itself, to the contemplation of the moral glory by which the course of Nature was, as he saw it in the light of Revelation, encompassed.

And though it is not in man to discern the future history of his race, yet let us predict this for a certainty: to the dominion of mere law man by the instinct of moral advancement will never return, and yet except between "grace" and law there seems no other option. That dominion has perished for ever under the handling of St. Paul

ust as every imperfect system makes way for another and a better : all which he himself saw as the law which presides over all advancement in moral as in other branches of knowledge, *i.e.* where the higher discovery supersedes the lower by mere force of being what it is. If, for instance, men are urged not to revert to the lower type because to maintain the higher makes for happiness, they will, in the present state of thinking, reject this advice as being, what in truth it is, a veiled threat and thinly disguised attempt to override their freedom of choice and action. And in this temper (rightly or wrongly makes no matter), besides catching at all excuses for indulging their own passions or tastes which Nature but too plentifully supplies them with, they may perhaps put this question : “ Is the law of advancement so certain a thing that we or any one else should be obliged to adapt our conduct to further it ? ” And then there may arise a doubt even in the minds of the most enthusiastic believers in the progress of civilisation whether there is any reason, seeing that law is only an induction from experience, for feeling sure that there may not be a cessation

of progress and a permanent reverting to a lower moral type universally: it does not follow that because Nature is advancing to a higher type to-day that it should do so for ever or even for to-morrow. But on the other hand if the course of Nature be the expression of a righteous will then it does follow that, come what will and no matter what happens to the course of material phenomena, that will must always be directing all things and all men to a righteous destination. So that even the very morality of Nature depends for its permanent and decisive value upon the existence of an underlying will.

If it be said in answer to all this that even the existence of will in and over Nature does not alter the facts of the case, or make life less of a conflict with death for its appointed end, we may urge in reply one special influence of Christ's spirit upon ours to which St. Paul in this chapter drew marked attention: "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (see also Galatians ch. iv. 6.) Till Christ came we were as children wandering through the desolate

rooms of a house whose owner we did not know; since His time the world has been alive with the voices of children, and may, if we accept the Christian revelation, become a real home to us—so long as we remain in it. The author is not of those who would deny or explain away the evil which exists in the world, and which is at once the reason why men need a religion, and yet cannot feel themselves able to accept it when revealed; rather we find in this contrast the supreme conflict between reversion and progress, the final struggle for a religious life, which here and everywhere is Nature's common law. Only let not those to whom the gloomy view of life comes easiest treat their impression, which is and must be relative to themselves, as though it were a reasoned conviction concerning the condition of the world, for *that* could only be attained by a comparison with other worlds impossible to be made. And on the other side the belief, that the course of Nature is the work of a Father's will raising His children by slow degrees to standards of goodness quite beyond our present means of knowing or even guessing, is one that presents no kind of improbability in the

existing constitution of things, and is itself nothing more nor less than the Redemption of man from the dominion of evil.

This concludes the Analogy of Christ's redeeming work with Nature in respect of the disease to be cured, the incapacity of the sufferer to save himself, and the kind of remedy proposed, all of which have been traced to their place in the existing constitution of things, and found to be the very counterparts of the phenomena which Nature is now seen to disclose. We think we shall do well to leave it without a word further to the candid judgment of men themselves.

CHAPTER X.

ON THE SELF-SACRIFICE OF CHRIST TO DEATH AND HIS RESURRECTION TO LIFE.

ALTHOUGH St. Paul does not in the above-quoted chapter of his Epistle to the Romans make mention of the sacrifice of Christ as being the means whereby Redemption from evil was wrought out, yet there is no truth upon which (as to the essential fact) the common consent of Christendom is more united, or the testimony of the Scriptures themselves more certain. It will, therefore, be a capital point of importance in our argument, if we can prove that so distinctive and vital a part of Revelation is analogous to the course of Nature, and such as the economy of Nature would lead us to expect.

Now the idea and practice of sacrifice is an inseparable adjunct of man's spiritual and religious history: that is to say, there are certain instincts which desire and provide for themselves sacrifice in some shape or other, almost as surely as the bodily instincts lead us to satisfy bodily wants with food. So universal an effect demands a cause not less universal, and we must follow the example of all the deepest modern thinking in refusing to account for it by any partial or secondary cause; thus, to ascribe the existence of sacrifice to superstition is almost as useful as to account for fire burning us by its having heat-giving qualities, it does but put us upon the further inquiry into the origin and meaning of superstition. The genesis of which, in respect of sacrifice, is plainly something of this sort. The idea of sacrifice was born and bred in men by the course of Nature from which they came (either in whole or in part), and in the midst of which their physical and moral life grew up and developed itself. But having no rational knowledge of what the course of Nature is, they caught at certain aspects or tendencies of it, which answered to

their inward thoughts, and embodied these under all sorts of forms, good and bad, sublime and grotesque, in their creeds and religious practices. Thus, all sacrifice bears *some* Analogy to *some* part of the course or constitution of Nature.

Now the Christian doctrine of Redemption by one definite self-sacrificing act, the consequences of which are supposed to last through all time, is quite peculiar to Revelation, and does not at all look upon the face of it as though it formed part of Nature's ordinary operations, or was derived by men's reason or emotions from anything Nature could teach them. It claims to be the work of the Creator of all things, and, therefore, if the claim be true, must be an absolute interpretation or embodiment of Nature's law or method of sacrifice, of which, at the time when Revelation was given, nothing was known or even guessed at—certainly among the Jews. But now that the course of Nature has been in some degree revealed to ourselves in modern times, it can be brought into comparison with the history of sacrifice in Revelation, so that we have now clearly come to a very definite and also decisive point in our argu-



ment: Was the sacrifice by which Christ emancipated mankind from the dominion of evil analogous to the kind of sacrifices whereby the course of Nature is carried forward on the path of physical and moral progress? If it was, then the presumption that both dispensations were derived at first hand from the same Author becomes almost irresistible, for the science of the nineteenth century is once more seen to be justifying the religion of the first.

The account which we shall give of the law of sacrifice in Nature will be, as is becoming, but brief, and if in drawing a mere outline of a vast and interesting subject we err against the present state of knowledge, we must make our excuses beforehand. But perhaps no exception will be taken to the general statement that, taking into account the fact of the struggle for existence, the course of Nature proceeds along its path by means of the sacrifice of the weaker to the wants and power of the stronger. That which survives does so not merely out of the destruction of others, but by means of the destruction which itself inflicts. That all things prey upon each other is true in

the natural, animal, and moral world. In the natural world the destruction, so far as concerns the thing destroyed, is neither conscious nor voluntary; in the animal world it is the first but not the second; in the moral world it is both.

And yet side by side with this phenomenon we find also that the course of Nature is carried forward by the tendency which the classes of things preyed upon have to survive over those that destroy them. Setting aside for brevity's sake the world of matter, with the single remark that, in the action and reaction of material things upon one another, the law of sacrifice is woven into the very tissue and fibre of Nature, we go on to point out that the animal world presents the spectacle of a number of violent or strong (in respect of individual members) races, whose nature it is to prey upon a number of mild or weaker races, whose destiny it is to supply means of subsistence to their natural enemies. And yet, and herein lies the whole secret of the moral law of sacrifice, as a mere matter of fact the violent races perish and the mild survive. To a large extent Nature herself has brought this about by changes in the surface

of the earth, climate, and so forth; but apart from this we see that this law or state of things is inherent in the innermost constitution of natural life. For the violent races by means of their very violence, and by what we may call the consequent lack of social aptitudes and virtues, have an inevitable tendency to die out through mutual rage, slaughter, and rivalry, whereas the very treatment they inflict upon the mild races does but increase the natural tendency which those races have to multiply, to succeed, to survive. To begin with, they have certain habits, which really means a particular kind of ethical character, that enable them to propagate rapidly, to unite for social welfare, to cultivate self-restraint and toleration, above all to develop, under stress of danger, the mental faculties required to adapt themselves and their modes of living to the demands which Nature makes upon them. So that by degrees there comes about a kind of animal civilisation; the more the violent and anti-social races destroy their weaker but social neighbours, the more do they bring about their own destruction, and the more persistent, by virtue of the very treat-

ment they inflict, do they cause the opposite type to become.

Out of this conflict in due time man emerged or found himself placed in it, and forthwith proceeded with the superadded resources of the rational faculty to carry on the same process. The violent races were sacrificed to his needs by being in part exterminated, in part subdued to his will; the weaker races are also sacrificed to the same wants without scruple, though, so humanity teaches, without needless pain or destroying. And the gentle, serviceable, and social qualities among animals are habitually encouraged by him with the result (whether he intends it or not) of promoting and diffusing that general comfort and happiness which is so far the design of Nature that all creatures strive after it. The violent races are, on the whole, destroyed, otherwise they would destroy man; the mild races are, on the whole, preserved, otherwise man himself would perish: so that the rule of man helps forward Nature's law that gentleness and not violence is the persisting and surviving type of character. And among all the deep and true sayings that

ever fell from the lips of the Son of Man, none in respect of natural philosophy viewed morally was ever more profoundly true or prophetic, none ever betrayed a more sympathetic insight into the Analogy of Nature than this: "Blessed are the meek, for *they shall inherit the earth.*"

Now the law of sacrifice in animal life reproduces itself in the moral life which began with the origin of man. The natural impulse of the violent characters (whether in races or individuals) is to prey upon the milder, to make use of them, to bend them to the service of their own passions and appetites. Of this truth the customs of early societies, the institution of slavery, military tyrannies, invasions, the treatment of the aged and infants, afford sad and sufficient instances. But then once more this course of conduct did but increase the already innate superiority of the milder characters towards persistency of type by bringing out the social virtues that make for survival. And without such conduct all the more precious qualities of human nature could never have come into being, for meekness, patience, equity, unselfishness, sympathy, and reasonableness, are the growth of con-

ditions caused by violence, injustice, and vice. But these qualities, when once engraved into the moral constitution, have a natural tendency to cause the characters in which they inhere to endure and spread by such influences as the following: The body is purified from passions that enfeeble the very source of life; the characters of the members of a community adjust themselves so as best to leave each person free to live his own proper life; above all, intelligence, wisdom, and learning, find their natural place and room to develop themselves in the bosom of the gentler types of character. And these not only survive themselves, but, being just as determined as the others to assert their right of existence, they by degrees supersede, modify, press out of being the more violent or anti-social characters. For in proportion as the violent use violence to the gentle, so do they create qualities which are more persistent than their own, and these, as experience attests their value, are taken up into the moral being of the whole race, and especially of those peoples or persons who already excel in natural vigour but require to be disciplined and softened. And thus the course

of civilisation proceeds on its way, the sacrifice required becoming more moral and inward, not of works, such as life, labour, or fear, but of spirit, such as will, duty, and love.

In these last words we have come upon sacrifice in the act of changing from passive acquiescence into moral or voluntary action, so as to require the word "self" to be placed before it. And this it does when men become conscious of an obligation to surrender some right or submit to some wrong for the sake of others, and in obedience to a demand made upon them by some law or power of Nature. This is, of course, a description of the ideal, or perfect, self-sacrifice, but we need not occupy ourselves with the perversions or errors to which the instinct of self-sacrifice has given birth further than to note their existence: to sacrifice one's self is an instinct derived from our conscious participation in the methods whereby the course of Nature advances to a higher moral type, but the bare instinct itself requires to be directed by the dictates of reason in order to be preserved from error. But simply regarding it in its ideal form we may analyse self-sacrifice into four compound parts: the thing

offered, the persons on behalf of whom the offering is made, the particular good which the offering is expected to bring, and, finally, that (be it person, or idea, or institution, or what not) to which the offering is made.

Concerning the first three of these no further description need be given than that they range over the whole field of conduct and relationships; wherever a human being feels himself called upon to give up anything for the material or moral benefit of another person, there the law of sacrifice as ordained by Nature is in full operation. But the fourth requires to be carefully considered and clearly understood, more especially when self-sacrifice is passing from a moral into a religious duty. There must be always a *something* to which the sacrifice is made, and this *something* is always Nature in one or other of the aspects she presents or the duties she inculcates, and we may doubt whether even in the most cold and abstract morality there can be self-sacrifice without the consciousness that it is being offered at some shrine or another—in religion of course this is a necessary accompaniment. This *something* may assume almost as many

shapes as Nature herself : thus, sometimes it is conceived as the will of God revealed in the course of events ; sometimes the moral influence of a supremely good man whose orders are a law to us ; sometimes an abstraction under which Nature presents some aspect or product of her own as that to which self-sacrifice is due, for instance liberty, patriotism, truth, and the like. And so it is always something higher than the person who makes the sacrifice, something august and venerable, that has a natural right over him, before whose sanctity he bends his spirit in obedience if not in awe. Much more is it higher than the persons on whose behalf the sacrifice is offered, with whom it must never be identified unless to the confusion of all logical order. It is indeed always above, just as these latter are always below, the sacrificing person, inasmuch as they are on a lower scale of moral being, and are themselves to be improved by the sacrifice which they are incapable of receiving or sometimes of understanding, of which indeed they are very frequently the mere brutal insensate agents.

Two illustrations will make this account of the normal type of sacrifice sufficiently clear. The

Roman general of old devoted his life on behalf of his fellow-soldiers that they might conquer in the battle to something which, on the moral side, was the idea of patriotism, and, on the religious, the will of the gods. The famous French lady submitted to her fate in obedience to the genius of Liberty, whose statue she addressed in such pathetic terms, in the hope that out of her death the blessings of ordered and peaceful freedom might descend upon the nation, which, in the very name of Liberty, was committing such atrocious crimes. And of all such the only fitting description is to be found in the incomparably beautiful language of Scripture: they "all died in *faith*, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them and embraced them."

The reason why such stress is laid upon the *something* to which sacrifice must be offered is very plainly because there must be some power to give effect to this *faith*, without which self-sacrifice would be irrational, because useless. Which office of evolving good out of evil, of fulfilling the designs of those who make the sacrifice (which is equivalent

to accepting and rewarding it), may with perfect truth be said to be performed by the course of Nature, to which, prior to and apart from the Revelation of a Divine will, mankind owe a supreme allegiance. And so we see the mistake of those who place humanity upon Nature's pedestal, because they confound that to which, with that on behalf of which, sacrifice is offered. As it has been said with pathetic wit, "we men know man too well to worship him," so we may add, "or to sacrifice ourselves to him," even though we love and ought to love our fellow creatures (or humanity itself) too well to refuse to sacrifice ourselves on their behalf. Nature herself decides this question, and insists that there shall be something to which, for this is ever the attitude of sacrifice, we may look up and commit ourselves, and identify our lives with it. All which the course of Nature, infinitely grander and more real than any abstraction called humanity (itself only a part of Nature) can possibly be, can in some sort provide for her offspring. We may not, of course, deny to any the right of fashioning out of Nature's materials their own idols and setting them up as objects of worship,

only we are sure that, things being as Nature has constituted them, they will never succeed in getting the common sense of mankind to join in their adoration.

With the law or method of sacrifice in Nature as we have just expounded it we now proceed to compare the sacrifice of Christ under each of the four above-mentioned heads. But so plain is the Analogy upon the mere bringing of the two things together that it can be expressed in a sentence or two.

1. That to which the sacrifice of Christ was made was no part or aspect or idea, however noble, of Nature's furnishing, but absolutely the course of Nature herself regarded as declaring her Creator's will. Upon the human side, which is all that the natural reason can deal with, it was because God had made the course of Nature what it is, that the Son of God understood, by an intuition of Analogy, that He who came to save the world must die for it, thereby correctly interpreting in their profoundest depths the laws by which the universe is constituted by its Creator. And thus the faith which made self-sacrifice pos-

sible was wrought in Him, because He recognized the will of a supreme Being that could and would accept His offering, first by loving Him who made it; secondly by making it eternally efficacious for the moral salvation of mankind. All which, as the history shows in very many places, was expressly understood by Himself, as for instance in such expressions as "drinking the cup which His Father had given Him." But what *man* could interpret the course of Nature as being the expression of a Father's will calling for the death of His Son?

2. That which Christ offered was no mere individual thing taken from the mass of natural phenomena, but the crown and consummation of Nature's moral course, the one perfect thing towards which that course incessantly aims, namely, a perfect character, a stainless life, a will in harmony with the will of its Creator. So that the sacrifice was, by the very nature of the case, complete, and made once for all; even if the offering could be made a second time it would but be a repetition, and therefore inferior to the first. The object of Redemption being the moral good of man, and the means, as prescribed by Nature, being

the sacrifice of goodness, it follows that if the goodness be absolutely perfect the redeeming work is accomplished, "for by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." But what *man* could impress not merely himself, or his disciples, but the whole Christian world with the idea that he was able to offer to God a blameless life, in our Lord's own words, "to fulfil all righteousness"?

3. That on behalf of which the sacrifice of Christ was made was not merely a particular nation or generation of people, but the whole of Nature, animate and inanimate alike, which, in St. Paul's view, was groaning and travailing in pain, and (included in this) the whole family of man. There was no limitation as to time or place, no conditions as to character or rank, all mankind was included within the scope of redeeming grace, for "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." And this conception of the universality of His sacrifice was not merely the thought of His followers after His death, but was distinctly apprehended by Himself as the

result of His redeeming work. "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." But what *man* could conceive the idea of dying for the world?

4. The object of Christ's sacrifice was not to effect any particular moral reformation, or establish any special moral goodness, but finally to break the power of evil. Just as we have seen in Nature that violence preys upon mildness, and thus promotes its own decay and the ultimate triumph of the type which in respect of the individual is weak, but in respect of the race is strong and persistent, so may we see in Revelation exhibited in Christ's redeeming death. The violent wickedness of man in its most aggravated spiritual form seized upon a perfect example of mild goodness, and destroyed it with all kinds of bodily and mental torture; and then, according to Nature's invariable law, the mild and gentle type of character prevailed over its own destroyer, and being, as it is, the embodiment of the social qualities that make for survival, itself survived, and became persistent through the Spirit of God working in that society of humanity called the Church of Christ, whose purpose of

sanctifying the world through the effects of Christ's redeeming action is thereby also traced to its place in the constitution of Nature. But of this hereafter. What we have to understand now is that Christ's self-sacrifice is in complete Analogy with the course of Nature, of which, indeed, it is an absolute exhibition and representation under the form of a perfect moral Ideal. The mind of Christ, in fact, caught the true meaning of that spirit which, as His Father had implanted it in Nature, became a law to Him; nor is the effect of this at all diminished (we may say in passing) by the fact that He was aided in this interpretation by such Divinely appointed helps as the Old Testament Scripture. And so, in language which, as it was His own, shows how plainly He apprehended this effect of His self-sacrifice, He has become the spiritual nourishment of mankind. The very mild or social qualities which made Him an easy prey to human violence have passed into the moral constitution of the race and been absorbed in it, besides being the food of every separate spirit that has believed in Christ and drawn goodness from Him. All which is plainly set forth as His

own idea of His own self-sacrifice in that one characteristic and explanatory act of His, the institution of the Lord's Supper. But, once more, what *man* could conceive the idea of so living and so dying as to become the spiritual food of all mankind, and to stamp upon the heart of man those social and persisting virtues, the surviving of which is nothing less than the moral progress of the world?

The Analogy between Revelation and Nature in respect of sacrifice has now been established as completely and decisively as the kind of argument admits of, and much more so than could have been at first expected. Incidentally there has also been explained that very important claim which Christian instinct has always made for the self-sacrifice of Christ, of being final and complete, and so of never-ending effect so long as the moral world endures. We are so accustomed for various reasons, the opponents of Christianity themselves hardly objecting, to take for granted this quality, for which we may venture to coin the phrase of "once for all-ness," that it does not occur to us how difficult it must be to make the claim

good to the natural reason of mankind. For the difficulty is where to find a standard by which the truth of so momentous a claim can be tested, men's ideas of right, or beauty, or usefulness being transitory and relative, and therefore incapable of providing that fixed standard which is indispensable to reason in testing works that are ascribed to God Himself; though, as we have said before, we do not enter upon the question, whether other faculties may not approach religious truths without such help. Such a standard, however, is supplied by the course of Nature, being the one permanent and universal law whereof reason makes us aware, so that the self-sacrifice of Christ may be accepted for what it claims to be, because it is a complete realisation of what Nature bids us aim at, and has herself been proceeding by, on her journey towards moral perfection. Must we not say then that Revelation is due to the same cause as Nature, and, compelled by the facts revealed no less than by the necessity of human thinking, pronounce that cause to be a beneficent will? True, indeed, it is that the discovery of resemblance is a matter of opinion, almost, one might say, of taste; but if

we cannot persuade men to do it for themselves we shall certainly hope that they will not, using the name of reason to which we no less than they appeal, refuse to allow the Christian advocate to argue from similarity of phenomena to identity of origin.

Inasmuch as St. Paul completed the scheme of Redemption through sacrifice by his doctrine concerning the Resurrection of Christ, we have included it in this chapter, though the treatment of it requires much caution, and is entered upon with some reluctance. For upon its physical side, and as an event in history, the Resurrection, being supernatural, cannot by any ingenuity of ours be brought into Analogy with Nature; it must be accepted upon other grounds such as the evidence of the witnesses, or as being the crowning point of a dispensation which exhibits such convincing analogies as we have been considering, and from which it cannot be severed without practically overthrowing the whole history. But taken upon its moral side as being a victory over evil and involving the rising of mankind from the death of sin, it *is* in Analogy as we shall shortly point out.

The course of Nature with respect to sacrifice is this: that if any man within the limits of his personal life gives up that which is his own for the sake of others he will obtain more good, more happiness, more success, more of spiritual life, than if he resolved merely to please himself. But in respect of personal existence, which is not so much a possession as that which itself possesses, Nature is so far out of Analogy with herself that she leaves her offspring in complete ignorance whether she carries out her own law or is unable to do so: if men surrender life they may hope and trust for the best, but the book of experience is closed at the grave, and in the presence of death Nature lays her finger upon her lips. Everything that men give up in obedience to Nature's law of sacrifice she promises to give them back in other and better forms, and makes her promise good; but not life itself, concerning which she promises nothing. Hence, the Resurrection of Christ is in moral accord with the general method of Nature's operations, in that it carries that method one step further and applies it to that personal existence without which the promised victory of good over evil might



be reasonably pronounced unreal if not delusive. If sin be the consciousness of death, Redemption, to be complete, must involve the consciousness of life. The absolute extinction of personal life that has been voluntarily given up at the demand of Nature, with all the joy of existence, and the many fibres that twine the individual life with the lives of other persons, would be, to say the least, exceptional, and contrary to that sense of equity which Nature somehow manages to make her creatures expect of her. Whence it follows that although the Analogy does not hold in respect of physical life, there is a moral presumption for the Resurrection, at least as strong as the natural presumption against a miracle; nor ought we to feel surprised if there be any Revelation that clears up the apparent discrepancy in Nature's working, and displays one harmonious law covering the whole field of human experience. And to this extent, but no further, the Analogy may be pressed.

What then we may learn from St. Paul's doctrine of the Resurrection to life is, that, according to the moral custom of Nature in parallel cases, such a Being as Christ could not be per-

manently holden of death, and that by His rising to life Redemption was completed by the introduction of such moral influences as the following: That life is more persistent than death: that the good survives eternally: that natural equity, which is God's law, restores to every man what he has given up in obedience to the law of sacrifice: that violence does not answer even in respect of the individual life, although it seems, within those limits at least, so triumphant, but that mildness does answer: that the perfect moral character, which would seem to be the end and aim of what Nature produces, cannot ultimately be dissipated into the material elements that form the physical basis of life. We are not called upon to decide whether man could or could not have attained to Redemption from evil without the assurance of a future life; it is enough for us to say that, Nature being what it is, and the necessity of Redemption being what Nature says it is, the Resurrection of the Man who offered Himself to death in obedience to the call upon Him is plainly adapted to give to human character a vital and

effective impulse towards goodness ; and, further, that it solves the problem of rewarding men according to their works without exciting their selfish tendencies. And, it may be added, that, as a matter of fact, all that religion has yet done for the moral regeneration of man has, by common confession of all concerned, derived no small part of its inspiration and power from this one source. For our Lord certainly gave Himself up to die in the belief that He should rise from the dead ; the apostles gave themselves to the missionary task of establishing the Christian Church in the belief that this had come to pass in His case and would be extended to theirs ; St. Paul made the fact of Christ's being alive an integral part of his doctrine of Redemption ; and, finally, the Christian reason accepts it now, as it has done always, and presses forward to spiritual victory in the confident assurance that eternal issues are at stake. And if reason for want of a positive Analogy appears to hesitate, Faith can accept the Resurrection of Christ as the crown and consummation of a dispensation, every other part of

which displays profound and essential similarities to the course and constitution of Nature, which has made us what we are.

ADDENDUM.—The Resurrection of Christ regarded in its relation to the future life (and indeed the future life itself) is not included in the scope of this work, because, taken on its physical side or as an historical event, it is supernatural and therefore not to be brought into Analogy with that Nature of which we have experience. And no doubt this is the reason why Butler passed it over. Moreover, the whole subject has been of late very much gone into, although the present writer must not be supposed to agree altogether with all that has been advanced by zealous Christian advocates. Thus the use of the word immortality is somewhat misleading, inasmuch as it seems to beg the question of the indestructibility of the vital principle, and to suggest a view of life which experience, if it does not contradict, neither does it warrant. Even more questionable, though evidently urged with good intention, is the attempt to adduce the fact of the

Resurrection of Christ as a positive proof of the future life, as will appear from the following considerations. 1. The Resurrection of Christ contradicts an otherwise universal experience, whereas our future life, as being beyond experience, is neither proved nor disproved by anything reason can tell us; so that for this, as for other obvious reasons, it is easier for mankind to believe in their own future existence, than in the evidence which is alleged on its behalf. 2. If we regard the future life as a rising again from the dead, it is plain that this rising again must be in our cases a very different thing from the Resurrection of Christ, which is not, therefore, a case in point. 3. Holy Scripture does not make any prominent use of Christ's Resurrection to prove the future life of man. 4. If it had been designed to afford such evidence the course of Revelation would surely have been so ordered as to make it more convincing. 5. The truth which Revelation makes known to us, as the sum of all Christian teaching, namely, that God is our Father, affords, if we will but take the word Father in its natural sense, a much more convincing proof that God, who is not the God of the dead but of the

living, will not leave His children in death, nor suffer His beloved ones to perish for ever.

But leaving this, there remains a point upon which a brief word must be spoken, because it touches the credit of the two authors (if we may for a moment join together an inspired and un-inspired writer) to whom alone in these pages we have appealed. St. Paul, in his fifteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, *seems* to be proving the rising again of all men by the Analogy of Nature; and Butler sets out by *apparently* alleging a presumption in favour of the future life from the same Analogy. Both have been much objected against, and, we are convinced, owing to a misconception of their real meaning, which will pass away if we pay attention to what their argument really means to say. For in both cases they are using the argument of Analogy, not to establish a presumption in favour of the future life, but to rebut supposed presumptions against it; for the capital error of the Corinthian doubters, as of modern unbelief, was to take for granted that Nature, as we have experience of her operations, affords some proof that man cannot

or will not survive death. Thus the Corinthians felt some difficulty as to the connection of the future body with the present one, to which St. Paul's argument from the Analogy of a seed that dies and lives again was a perfectly logical reply. Again, Butler had in his mind the position of those who thought that there was something in the nature and power of death to make a future life, if not impossible, at least incredible, to which his arguments once more were quite as complete an answer as the objection required. The course of Nature, the testimony of the senses, the opinion of reason have, and can have, nothing to say on one side or on the other. We know that men die, but of the forces that may give them life hereafter, or whether such forces there be, we know nothing. Only there is a superficial, and, because superficial, therefore ever recurring, tendency to suppose that we have some knowledge upon the subject, to infer that death means of necessity absolute dissolution, to argue from what we see here to the invisible future. Against which prejudice of our understandings, or rather of our bare senses, argument is necessary, and both

St. Paul and Butler used it to meet the form which the prejudice had assumed in their own time. But it is only when they are taken to mean more than this, to be advancing a positive proof instead of merely answering an objection (and perhaps Butler does at times write as though to meet a bad objection were the same as alleging a good argument), that an apparent advantage is gained over them. And this we may be very sure of, that there is always a true meaning in the utterances of such men as these (setting aside inspiration) that survives the wear and tear of time, and may readily be discovered if we will look for it, and try to separate the jewel from the mere accidental surroundings peculiar to the time or conditions under which they wrote.

CHAPTER XI.

ON THE REVELATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

THE Revelation of the Spirit, as it may be thought the most characteristic, so certainly is it the most surprising to the natural reason, of all the doctrines of which the Christian religion is composed. At the time when Jesus Christ left the world a few hundred persons believed, not without misgivings in their own midst, that He was the Son of God, that He had risen from the dead, and that He was the destined Messiah of the Jewish nation. Out of these materials, which must, at this distance of time, appear so slender as to be well-nigh incredible, there was to be established an universal religion, which should redeem mankind from evil, and bring the whole world into submission to the

true God. *Some* power, whether human or Divine, devised the institution of a voluntary community in which the Spirit of God might dwell as an abiding and life-giving influence, and might carry forward the work of Christ to all nations and for all time; and the design has so far succeeded that Christianity is at this moment the professed religion of civilised man. Confessedly this is the most astonishing phenomenon in all history, and seems by the very strangeness of its success, and by its unlikeness to anything that might be expected to be devised by the human mind, to invite the explanation which we have to give, that the Revelation of the Spirit in the institution of the Christian Church, being the *act* of God, was in accordance with the Analogy of Nature which is His *work*, and that therefore it has combined with the same Nature in carrying out the designs of one Supreme will. Which is what we have to prove in this chapter.

The account of the Revelation of the Spirit we take, of course, just as it is written in the Acts and Letters of the Apostles, regarding it only under that aspect in which it is capable of being brought into Analogy with Nature; which must be our

excuse, if to the pious Christian sentiment we seem to speak unworthily of the work of the Holy Spirit. Only one feature there is, very prominent upon the narrative as we have it, that it may be desirable to insist upon at the beginning. The Revelation of the Spirit and the growth of the Church were not the results of an unconscious operation on the part of men who were being led whither they knew not, and, as is the case in all similar great movements, doing simply what work lay before them without an idea as to the marvellous results that were to grow out of their performances. On the contrary, the mind of Christ planned and foresaw everything, and His followers distinctly realised the end and extent of the designs they were chosen to carry out. Although the kingdom which He founded had, at the time of His death, dwindled by the law of survival of the fittest, expressed by Him in His oft-repeated words of pathos, "many are called but few chosen," to the "number of names that were together about one hundred and twenty," who alone could have been present at its formal institution, yet as to its institution and ultimate triumph He never permitted Himself or them to doubt.

He told them that the Holy Spirit would be sent unto them, and that in His power they should accomplish greater things than He had done. He announced the future glory of the kingdom into which many would come from all quarters of the earth in which it was to be preached, and He figured its growth and appearance under such forcible images as the tree that, when it is grown, "shooteth out great branches so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it." He spoke of Himself as coming on the clouds of glory and judging the whole earth. And all this pre-science, together with the vast anticipations which He sowed in the hearts of the first Christians, has been literally verified. Why? Because, we answer once more, Christ, as representing the mind of God to us, framed the Christian dispensation upon the same lines as Nature organises communities upon, and committed to it that religious work, which Nature suggests, strives after, and finally welcomes as the gift of God.

Organisation, though a word of large extent, is becoming, through the progress of thought, more and more definite in meaning; and if, as

seems likely, the method of organisation can be reduced to one type running through all Nature, the argument from Analogy is so far more thorough and complete. But we are concerned with the organisation of communities, and especially, as representative of all the rest, of those two which are based upon the two great pre-rational instincts before-mentioned, namely, reproduction and self-preservation. For the family and the nation are natural to man in the sense of being necessary and not voluntary; he *must* be a member of these societies; nor is he able to separate himself from the obligations which membership imposes upon him. Now the growth of the family and nation is one of the most interesting and extensive subjects that the modern way of thinking has opened up, and very much yet remains to be settled concerning it. But enough is settled to enable us to condense the spiritual aspect of this growth (which alone belongs to our subject) into the following brief account, which is in no sense scientific, except that it does not contradict the results of comparative investigation.

Broadly speaking, we might say that the family

and the nation were formed by the education of the primary instincts as the race grew in reason and experience. When the earliest progenitors of mankind became capable of taking a rational survey of themselves and their surroundings, they found themselves living as members of a loose aggregate of individuals called a tribe, and under the necessity of making some attempt to subordinate the gratification of their instincts to the social life of the tribe, the bare existence of which involved the consequence that each man should place some restraint upon his conduct so as to leave room for his neighbours to live their lives. So that the tribe soon organised itself downwards and upwards; that is, into the family and the nation. Taken outwardly, these consisted of groups of persons whom the natural operation of the two instincts brought into relation with one another. Thus the reproductive instinct collected together blood relations, put a line of demarcation about them, united them in a house or home, and placed them under the government of the father. Similarly the instinct of self-preservation gathered together masses of men according to the

chances of descent, language, invasion, conquest, migration, commercial intercourse, settled them in one district, and so formed the city or nation. This, too, had its own boundaries and its own head, together with all the links that joined it into one organic whole, each man finding his own life in that of the society, and preserving the first by defending the second.

Societies thus formed have, like everything else in (at any rate) animate Nature, an internal life as well as an external framework, and this, not for the sake of insinuating an Analogy, but because it is the right word to use, we must call spiritual or the spirit of the community. It may be defined as the development, upon the basis of the primary instincts, of the social qualities that preserve the organisation; and if this be thought but a loose account of the matter, we must remember that until men know more of matter, life, thought, they cannot be expected to discourse adequately of spirit. We can be much more certain of its existence and more able to discern its effects than we can describe it as it is in itself, even as the Lord, with His instinctive grasp of

essential truth, expressed it—"the Spirit bloweth where it listeth, and ye hear the voice thereof, but cannot tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth." In the family it might be termed domestic love; in the state social or political duty. We can see that it grows up in the bosom of the organisation by the conflict of many wills, out of many experiences of what is best for the community, by the natural tendency of the higher characters to influence the lower, and by the duties which different relationships impose upon the various members. It is like the air men breathe in common and unconsciously, and so sustain their lives. In short, the original instinct, when acted upon by social influences, becomes a moral ideal, itself a permanent source of feelings, duties, and laws that constitute the life of the community.

Which ideal, again, as it is perhaps hardly necessary to point out, acts upon the members of the society as a moralising influence. Thus domestic love purifies the character from gross sensuousness, and also from innate passionateness of temper, which mere contact with the lives or wills of

other persons is apt to produce. And the spirit of social duty in the same way cleanses the soul of its inbred selfishness, by securing our personal existence along with that of the society. A large proportion of human conduct consists in what men do for the sake of their family or their country, and if for any cause the spirit of love or duty dies out, then the body perishes along with it, just as certainly as, when the body is destroyed by some external shock, the spirit ceases to operate. Whether by external blow or internal decay, or, perhaps from both combined and inviting each other, different branches or specimens of organised societies are always coming to an end; but the instinct, being permanent, is always framing new ones, perhaps of a higher type, out of the ruins of the old.

Here, then, we have the original type upon which Jesus Christ, by some power or other discerning the lines upon which Nature constructs her social edifices, founded and caused to be built the Christian Church: and if the resemblance should seem so exact and so obvious as to excite suspicion of its genuineness, we reply that it is

not our fault if, as soon as ever we look at the dispensations just as they are, the Analogy between them should assert itself without need of forcing or explanation. First of all, answering to the inherited instinct, we have the religious sentiment, which has good claim to be considered the first universal idea of man's rational intelligence that experience develops. This sentiment is by common confession the consciousness of the unknown, which is involved in the very notion of knowing, for knowledge is to acquire, as it were, mental possession of part of a vast hitherto unknown world. Every human being, as he becomes conscious of his place in the universe, becomes aware of himself as related to unknown causes of phenomena (himself included) with whose existence his senses make him acquainted. Now this consciousness Jesus Christ turned from a negative into a positive thought, by revealing the source of all created things as a Father, who had also sent His Son to be the King over the world, and so the original idea passed into the spiritual power by which families and nations are constituted. Only, that being not an inherited instinct but a rational idea, the community formed

upon it was one of voluntary association and not of force or legal obligation. To the family of God and the Kingdom of Christ every man *de facto* belongs, but it must rest with his own will, or with the will of others in making known the state of the case to him, whether he actually joins it or not.

Hence the Revelation of the Spirit takes the form of a proclamation of a new spiritual family and spiritual kingdom to all mankind. And thereby it accomplished what the family and nation are plainly unable to do, namely, the organisation of humanity as a whole. We are conscious of the existence of untold multitudes of human beings in whom, inasmuch as we have no definite relations with them, we feel no interest nor acknowledge obligation towards them. The utmost that can be said is that if it came in our way to do them good we should do it, and that the pleasure of learning something about them, and so of realising the common bonds of humanity, creates a kind of agreeable sentiment towards them. But Nature is the reverse of sentimental; and, perhaps, for fear lest we should overlook plain obligations lying close at hand, does not do much to encourage the notion of

responsibility lying outside the limits of actual friendship; perhaps, indeed, she condemns it to failure beforehand by the air of ironical respect which somehow she manages to throw into her reception of large and enthusiastic phrases. But let Nature say what she pleases, the thought that a larger sympathy ought to be created between man and man merely as men is plainly a good one, and the Revelation of the Spirit comes in to redeem it from the region of impractical theorising by uniting all mankind into one family and one kingdom, in strict Analogy with the course of Nature herself, and upon the only basis—that of religion—sufficiently real and also comprehensive to bear the weight of an universal social organisation. And if we were not so accustomed to take surprising things for granted merely because they are in the Bible, we should be filled with amazement at the way in which a few Jewish people took in without an effort (or rather with just so much of effort as to show that Nature was not altogether their teacher) the idea of the unity of the human race and of their own duties towards it. They simply became convinced that mankind was a family of

which God was Father, and a kingdom of which Christ was King, and that the Christian Church was founded to be the realisation of these truths. Hence (after a short and very natural reluctance) all men were made free of the Church simply as men, however much the entrance might be narrowed by conditions which (rightly or wrongly we do not discuss) were thought to be necessary. And so men are brought into actual relationship one with another in the only way, it should seem, that Nature left open for the Divine purpose to work by, except by departing from Analogy with herself. As a mere plain piece of fact, we are connected with all generations past, present, and to come; nor was there ever a man who lived upon the earth of whom we can say for certain that we may not be brought into personal contact with him at some time or other, or that his fortunes may not be in some inscrutable way linked with ours. In fact, Revelation first proclaimed the organic unity of man, which modern thought is now engaged in tracing out. The practical or religious discovery came first, the intellectual or scientific verification comes afterwards, and an

Analogy between Nature and Religion is once more established as complete and profound as any that we have yet discovered.

The Spirit by which the Christian Church was animated can be as well perceived and as little explained as that which constitutes the spiritual life of any other society. We define it simply as every influence that the Revelation through Christ of God's attributes, relationships to us, methods, and intentions, could bring to bear upon the minds and hearts of those who joined the heavenly society. Thus the Spirit is emphatically the Holy Spirit because it reveals the absolutely holy will of God as constituting the law of righteousness to which our obedience is to be paid. Again, it is the Spirit of love, because the parental love of God is revealed as the Spirit that binds the human family together. Again, it comprises all the mild or social virtues ("the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance"), by which, as exemplified in Christ, humanity grows from a lower to a higher stage in moral advancement. Yet once more the Spirit carries on the



law of self-sacrifice to God, being as it is the eternal Spirit through which Christ offered Himself without spot to God, and in the bosom of His Church calls upon His people to make the same offering "well pleasing, acceptable to God." And this Spirit was the vital air of the society which all the members breathed in common, or, to use the scriptural expression, "into which they had all been made to drink." It grew from the beginning out of the co-operation of many wills and characters, each affording something that others lacked to the spiritual development of the Church. Hence also came in natural order, laws, institutions, doctrines, ceremonies, and all that completes the Church or attends its development in history. Hence also came distinctively Christian qualities, growing up out of the association of different persons in one community, who thereby became partakers of one spirit, such as liberty, toleration, patience, interpretation of Scripture, missionary energy, the sense of eternity, and, the greatest of all, charity. And as men learnt politically to preserve their personal life by social combination in the state, so they learnt religiously

to save their souls by spiritual combination in the church.

To complete the Analogy we point out finally the moralising effect of the Spirit upon the members of the community, for which the technical theological word is sanctification. Very plainly the spirit of the family or of the nation does not reach the whole moral nature of man, or cover the whole extent of duty and conduct. The mere existence of other societies all founded upon some common idea and tending to some element of moral perfection proves, if proof were needed, that men may live up to the spirit of the family or the nation, and yet be very imperfect in many important particulars of conduct and character. But, as the least consideration will show, the Holy Spirit exercises over the dispositions of men an absolute influence towards good to which nothing is wanting and nothing can be added. In so far as it is the Spirit of the Creator of the human personality it must be capable of penetrating into every part of the creative work with a power, so commonly attributed to the Spirit of God in the Bible, of searching, reproving, convincing, purifying, en-

couraging, together with many similar moralising influences. Being again the Spirit of the Father, “of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,” there is no fragment of the duty of men towards each other which does not come within the scope of the Holy Spirit, duty being conditioned by the relationship into which the Revelation of the Spirit has organised all mankind. But, above all, since the Spirit represents the will of the Author of Nature, of which will the course of Nature is also the result and the expression, it follows that the course of Nature is pledged, as it were, to the task of moralising the character of the whole human race, or, according to the familiar Christian doctrine, that it is designed by the Providence of God to produce, as its ultimate fruit, moral perfection. Whence comes that one magnificent thought, which has perhaps done more than any other single thought for the consolation of man and the vivifying of morality, that the course of the world in Nature and in history is so arranged as to educe or evolve good out of evil, and that all the terrible trials and conflicts of human life are part of the Divine plan for discern-

ing between good and evil, with the view of promoting and preserving the one, and destroying and rejecting the other. And so goodness, which abides the test, emerges out of it, survives, and becomes persistent.

Thus, then, to sum the matter up, we see that the Christian Church has prevailed in the world merely because it was designed and constituted in Analogy with the course of Nature, in the midst of which its lot was cast in order that it might develop itself in accordance with the laws of the universe, of which the Author of Revelation was also the Creator. The tree might be divinely planted, but it drew its nourishment from Nature's soil—was breathed on by the same airs and refreshed by the same showers as those which kindly Nature sheds upon her own offspring. Hence we know exactly why it was not unfaithful to its Divine origin, but grew up to be the goodly tree we see now. A comparison with its only rival, the religion of Islam, will illustrate our point. If that religion had been as true and as important as the Christian, if its followers had been as sincere and self-denying, it must still, by the nature of the

case, have, in the long run, failed, because its method of propagation involved a radical departure from the Analogy of Nature, according to which it is not the force that exacts the sacrifice, but the mild and social qualities that offer it, which become persistent and pass over into the moral constitution of man. So that, quite apart from their intrinsic merits, we have no cause for wonder that the one failed after the brief triumph such as violence can win, to obtain a permanent place in the progressive civilisation of the world, or that the other succeeded in establishing itself as the religion of humanity—a very astonishing thing indeed, let it be remarked, until the explanation is forthcoming. And if, as we have been setting about to show, the Christian Revelation is in Analogy with Nature, then so long as Nature remains natural, her offspring will remain Christian.

This book, it must be remembered, is not intended to afford an answer to the moral difficulties concerning Christianity, which must be removed or mitigated by propositions addressed to the wants and feelings, the desires and the conscience of men, and if these difficulties are more real and valid than

mere objections of the reason, so also must the answers to them be. But then moral difficulties have always a tendency to shape themselves into intellectual objections ; men must eventually enter upon this course in order to justify their beliefs or unbeliefs to their reason, and so arguments against a religious interpretation of Nature and of the world grow up easily and thickly in minds that feel the inherent sadness and uncertainty of all things. It is then, and only then, that counter arguments addressed to the reason have any use or place, and if they do not succeed, as perhaps it is impossible that they should, in rooting out the difficulty from its seat in the heart of man, they can at least hope to effect something in cutting down or pruning away the various intellectual doubts in which the moral difficulty from time to time asserts itself. As an illustration of what is meant, an argument may be quoted which the author remembers to have met with and which struck him at the time as the final and perfect expression of moral doubting. An excellent writer, apparently without any prejudice against the Christian religion, observes of certain reasons advanced on its behalf, that they

presuppose the veracity of the Creator of Nature, and that even this was more than could in strict reason be granted. A hundred considerations spring up within our minds to rebut this objection which seems so audacious and irreverent, though it may be but the cry of a wounded and despairing spirit. But in the way of reason it is doubtful whether it can be answered at all, except by an appeal to the course of Nature, taken just as it is and for no more than it displays to our reasoning faculties. For whatever else be dubious or misleading, the course of Nature forms the standard of truth by which every doctrine or belief may be tried. Nature does not alter her ways nor deceive us; so long as like causes produce like effects, and laws operate in the same way, and there is the same upward tendency towards higher types, so long if we make mistakes or evince ignorance it is only by our own fault or lack of insight; 'tis not Nature but self that leads us astray. So that if we have a Revelation that exhibits an Analogy with Nature in all essential particulars, we must assume that it comes from the same Author, even if we have no previous ground for presupposing His

veracity, unless, indeed, in spite of the consistency of Nature we choose to assume His inveracity, which is the logic not of doubt but of madness.

Now it is not to be denied that the moral difficulties that take their origin from the evil, the sadness, and injustice of things, may be intensified by the many failures and shortcomings which, spite of its success, mark the history of the Christian Church. For when the heart of men is fit to die within them at the sight of what things are and the thought of what they ought to be, they are told of a Holy Spirit Divinely given to found a heavenly kingdom, and they see Christendom what it is and what it has been ! They half unconsciously think that God should be interfering more plainly in the moral order and even be superseding the natural course of things ; failing this they turn away in anger and impatience. But such men are invited to consider that Christendom is what it is and what it has been, because, come what would, the Giver of Revelation will not depart from the Analogy of Nature of which He is also the Creator. We began by affirming the union of Nature or natural religion with Revelation, we conclude the argument by

seriously, even solemnly, reiterating it. The tree was Divinely planted, but it has been spared no storms, no tendency to internal decay, no loss of branches, no mutilation at the hands of men. We are bound by the history of the past to believe that God having once for all given a Revelation by Christ through the Spirit, in order to complete His own creative work, will not in religion, any more than in Nature, depart from the method of slow and orderly development by natural causes. To interfere with the ordinary workings of the human mind and will would be to divide His own unity, to break up Nature into fragments, and to defeat His own purpose by taking from Revelation its one persuasive argument over the reason of man—its appeal to the Analogy of Nature. And against the melancholy experience of evil and failure, the Christian will be able to assert that if we join together the course of Nature with the doctrines of Revelation there will emerge a Divinely beneficent purpose visibly moving upwards by slow yet orderly progress, in which individual men, though sorely tried and often sacrificed, do not ultimately perish, but “shall be accounted worthy” (worthiness in morals

being equivalent to fitness in Nature) “to obtain that world and the resurrection from the dead.”

The reader has now before him the necessary materials for deciding whether the resemblance between Nature and Religion, in the very important and critical article we have in this chapter been considering, has been made out to the satisfaction of reasonable minds. Before coming to a conclusion it will be proper for him once more to consider whether the persons concerned in the institution of Christianity were likely, out of their own minds, to hit upon Nature’s methods; or how it was that among the multitude of paths that were open to them they struck with unerring insight into the right one, in spite of innumerable inducements, which, to the purely human intelligence, might well seem overwhelming, to allow themselves to be more or less diverted into wrong ones. And then, perhaps, he will see good reason for concluding that the history which these persons gave, altogether disclaiming for themselves any merit in the undertaking, and attributing it with one voice to the Spirit of God, contains a simple, true, adequate, and intelligible account of the whole matter. It

will then remain for himself to say whether the circumstances of mankind being such as plainly need and invite the aid of religion, it is worth his while to argue himself out of a belief in that religion which casts a guiding and consoling beam of light upon the mysteriousness of life, and which on the one hand claims for itself an Analogy with Nature, and on the other brings Nature into harmony with the universe.

CONCLUSION.

WE do not propose to add anything by way of explanation to the Analogy which we have been tracing, and which must be left to speak for itself. Neither does the argument admit of being summarised in any more compendious form than that in which we have already stated it. We merely remind the reader that we undertook to establish a resemblance between the course of Nature and the events of Revelation sufficiently strong to warrant the belief that both dispensations were derived from the same Cause. We took Nature to be the sum of all phenomena, of which experience informs us, and the course of Nature to be that way of regarding those phenomena, which reason is now bidding us to adopt, all disputed points, such as the freedom of the will, or the origin of life, being purposely avoided. Similarly we confined

our view of Revelation to those events which can alone be specially ascribed to the will of God working outside of the course of Nature, just as it must be supposed to have done before the course of Nature (as we know it, or as it belongs to our part of the universe) came into being. With the laws and methods of Nature we have, then, compared the whole history of Revelation, beginning with its external appearance and superficial relation to the world in which it was given; taking next the kind of evidence upon which it is supported; thence passing to the essential part of our subject, namely, the attributes of God; the life, character, and teaching of Christ; His redeeming work and self-sacrifice; lastly, the work of the Spirit in the institution of the Christian society. In carrying out this comparison we have never been obliged to stop to answer objections, or to explain away incompatible features, or to remove obstacles, the only apparent exception being a discussion as to Christ's moral teaching, where, as soon as a misapprehension was removed, the argument proceeded with the same smoothness and exactness which we venture to claim for it as a whole, and which, where natural

resemblance is the point at issue, is the best proof that it is one of fact and not of fancy. And as the result of the comparison, we have found that the events and methods of Revelation have been framed in exact accordance with the laws that guide the course of Nature; that this resemblance is not counterbalanced by any contradiction or dissimilarity between the two, of which no trace has appeared; that in very many cases truths concerning God and man have been proclaimed or acted upon in Revelation, which were subsequently discovered and so verified by man's natural reason; and that for this and for other equally incontestable reasons it is impossible to suppose that Revelation was the work of men to whom, more than to most men, the meaning and methods of Nature were totally unknown. We see, too, that all this has been so managed as that the Christian religion should succeed in doing the work for which it was intended, simply because it grew and energized in conformity with the natural order in which it was placed, and further that no disturbance in man's reliance upon that order, or in his way of apprehending it has been caused. In short, we might sum

up the effect of the whole, in the truth which we have more than once taken pains to point out : that Revelation gives to the course and constitution of Nature that religious significance and spiritual efficacy which, though consistent with all the best and strongest impressions wrought by Nature upon the mind of man, is not capable of positive demonstration to his reasoning faculties.

If from this union of the two systems in the dispensation of one will, there emerged a religion that was contrary to man's interests or that laid upon him any unpleasing burden, it is tolerably certain that not by argument merely would he be induced to accept it. But seeing that Christianity is not a religion of this description, involving as it does no further burden than that we should discipline our wills and order our lives in obedience to the Father who loves us, and has sent His Son to redeem us from evil, there can be no valid reason for striving against the conclusion to which the argument from Analogy seems to lead us. Nor does Nature appear disposed to approve of treating it as an open question, to be settled by each man for himself as reason or prejudice may

direct him. For at this particular juncture she is interposing to declare very plainly that there can be no happiness for men, and no moral life for the human race, until the doubt, so grotesque in one view, but so horribly real and fatal in another, be in some way set at rest, whether man is better than his Creator, and upon a higher scale of being than the Cause of his own existence.

All which is now submitted to the reader's judgment, who, as the matter is one of pure reason deciding as to the evidence from similarity, is asked to approach the consideration of it by as far as possible laying aside all presumption on one side or the other. But justice to the memory of Butler requires us to observe that a previous presumption for or against a given belief is not to be confounded with the probability, one way or another, which may be all that rigorous investigation may bring us to. Nothing has been more commonly, and sometimes not without scorn, urged against him than his assertion (to put it in his own words), "in matters of practice this will lay us under an absolute and formal obligation, in point of prudence and interest, to act upon that

presumption or low probability, though it be so low as to leave the mind in very great doubt which is the truth." Now to our ways of thinking this sounds strange enough, yet if we will but attend to the meaning of it, and endeavour to find what is the true principle upon which it rests, we shall see that, though concealed or spoilt by a poor and transient form of statement, the truth at which he was aiming is of permanent value and importance.

The thought so prevalent in Butler's time of the importance of a prudent regard for our own personal salvation and happiness has been turned by the progress of the religious and moral spirit in man into the clean contrary. Or rather we might say that this regard has been (not at all lost, but rather) merged in a joyful enthusiasm for the welfare of the human race. But in that case we should state his proposition in another form, namely, that he who goes about to deprive the world of its religion embarks upon an undertaking so full of peril to those whose interests he desires to serve, that prudence may well counsel him to speak warily or to keep silence altogether even in presence of but a "low probability." For the moral strength

of the position occupied by the defender of religion, as Butler clearly understood, lies in the fact that the consequences of error on his part are as nothing compared with those on the part of his opponents. If there be no God and no future life, then they who have tried to persuade the world into a belief in the Fatherly love of God and to cast a gleam of delusive happiness upon the life of man, will, together with those they have misled, sleep in the dust of endless death, careless alike of blame and failure. But it is difficult to over-estimate the responsibility of those who, if the contrary hypothesis be true, have diverted men away from the faith that might have made them happy and virtuous, by standing between children and their Father: to such the future life itself, no matter what blessings it may bring them, must, by the very fact of its own reality, bring also a bitter condemnation of the mistaken ignorance in which they strove to shut up their fellow creatures. So that if prudence do not teach a man to act upon a low probability in his own personal belief (and we do not say that it should) it ought certainly to avail, at least so far as to make him careful how he inter-

poses to prevent others from believing what he himself has given up. And Christians will remember that it was to the instinct of personal prudence that their Master appealed in His terrible warning addressed to those "who made little ones to offend."

There is the greater reason to urge this, because there is an idea got abroad that moral seriousness of intention is sufficient without the prudent reasonableness that leads a man to decide rightly, that is as things are, and not wrongly, that is as things are not. Which it might well be if personal interests were all that is at stake. Now it was against the want of moral seriousness that Butler directed his injunctions of prudence, because he lived in an age which was in this respect singularly "dissolute," idle, and superficial; even in men like the great philosopher and great historian of that (English) century the strong instinctive sense of intellectual fairness, which was their chief ornament, was notoriously not united with a corresponding earnestness of moral purpose. Now that this, in its worst and grosser manifestations, has happily passed away, it becomes the task of prudence to insist that the want of intel-

lectual sincerity in the matter of religious inquiry leads to results almost as fatal as a deficiency in moral seriousness: things are, to use Butler's expression, what they are, and if we mistake them, we and others cannot escape the consequences whatever they may be. And what we say is, that the intellectual sincerity applied to the question of religious truth by those who object to Revelation bears no fair proportion to the same quality as employed in the investigation of natural phenomena. Men take for granted any popular view of the Christian religion, and, in assailing that, conclude that they are disposing of Christianity itself. They assume, naturally enough, perhaps, as a matter of temper, but surely very improperly as a matter of cool and cautious reason, that the opposition of Revelation to Nature is what their antagonists in this or earlier times have stated it to be, and that the two are therefore incompatible, and the former unworthy of a rational intelligence. They do not, in short, inquire for themselves; nor, although they now and then let fall hints that they are not satisfied with the popular rendering of Christian doctrine,

do they ever go into the matter with the view of seeing what is the real truth of the case. Nor is their tone and language, even though they may allege some justification from that of their opponents, at all times worthy of themselves and of the immense seriousness of the issue at stake. For instance, we may see that the men who write the most forcible things against the Christian religion, and take indeed the most pains about it, are in many cases men still young ; who, having revolted from the strict religious opinions in which they were brought up, rush with a perfectly genuine conviction into the opposite extreme, forgetting what all the world besides can see, that they are above all other men bound to exercise patience, to let experience do its work, to give themselves time to make up their minds for themselves, instead of allowing them to be made up for them by any passing impulse, or any rising wave of opinion, or any influence of some great and honoured master of thought. So that we shall venture, upon the whole, to assert that, due allowance being made for alterations in men's ways of regarding and stating things, Butler's appeal to

the sense of prudence and cool consideration of what is best for the welfare of man is not become at all obsolete.

But the writer will not further pursue a topic so delicate in itself and so little in accordance with his own personal feelings, that only the sense of duty to the illustrious author, whose method he has presumed to copy, would have induced him to say as much as he has. He is far too sensible of the faults and tendencies which beset the weakness of human nature when engaged upon such great matters as the investigation (whether friendly or hostile) of religious belief, and far too keenly alive to the possibility of having yielded to their influence in his own work, to take upon himself to make accusations, for the sake of making them, against other persons wiser and more capable than himself. In the treatise which he now concludes it may be that what seems to him (and was certainly intended to be) cool and cautious reasoning from admitted facts will be condemned by others as ingenious and even uncandid misrepresentations

of the case or perverted deductions from mistaken premises. But this is for the reader to decide. And in this spirit he bids those who have accompanied him thus far, farewell.





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