Thornwell —

Review of Paley's Moral Philosophy and Analysis of Butler's Analogy

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REVIEW OF PALEY'S MORAL PHILOSOPHY.

given by
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to
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Dr. Paley's system of Moral Philosophy, like most other modern treatises upon the subject, is divided into two general parts. The first discusses the *theory* of morals, the other comprises the *rules* of life; the first is *speculative*, and the other *practical*. His design, in the theoretical or speculative part, is to determine the nature and criterion of right, to trace moral distinctions to their source, and evolve a principle which shall enable us to settle our duty in all the circumstances in which we may be placed. With him, accordingly, the theory of morals bears very much the same relation to practice as subsists between theory and practice in other sciences. His rules are all applications of his speculative principles, and his speculative principles have, evidently, been adjusted with a view to their practical results.

There are obviously three questions which every complete system of moral philosophy must undertake to answer. 1. How we come to be possessed of the notions of right and wrong? whether by that faculty which perceives the distinction betwixt truth and falsehood, or by a peculiar power of perception, which is incapable of any further analysis? 2. In what the distinctions betwixt right and wrong essentially consist? or, what is the quality, or qualities, in consequence of which we pronounce some things to be right and others wrong? 3. What are the actions that are right, the things that must be done or avoided?

The two first questions exhaust the subject of theoretical morals; the last comprises the whole province of practical duty. The first two questions Dr. Paley answers in the first two books of his treatise. The remaining three are devoted to the third. In the first two he unfolds the *science*, in the other three the *art*, of a virtuous life.

The method pursued in the speculative part is, after a definition of Moral Philosophy, first, to show the *necessity* of some scientific system, in order to ascertain an adequate and perfect rule of life, and then, from the phenomena of our moral nature, to *deduce* and *construct* such a system. The end which Dr. Paley has steadily in view is the *discovery of a perfect rule of life;* and the only claim which, in his judgment, can commend moral philosophy to our attention, is the claim to teach us our duty, our whole duty, and the reasons of it. If it cannot discharge this office, it is, in his eyes, nothing worth. Philosophy, as a reflective exercise of reason upon the phenomena of consciousness—an effort to reduce our knowledge to unity by seizing upon the

principles and evolving the laws which regulate it seems to be entirely ignored by him. Philosophy with him aspires to no more exalted function than to explain the theory upon which practical rules depend. It is simply the antithesis of art. Hence his definition—"Moral Philosophy is that science which teaches men their duty and the reasons of it."* It is related to life, as the science of agriculture to the business of the farmer, or the science of navigation to the business of a sailor. It prescribes rules, and tells us why they should be observed.

Its end or office being thus exclusively practical, he proceeds to show the importance of such a science, by exposing the inadequacy of the rules that men are likely to adopt for the regulation of their conduct, if not instructed by philosophy. This is done in the first five chapters of the first book. These rules he makes to be the law of honour, the law of the land and the Scriptures. To these may be added conscience; for, although Dr. Paley does not formally mention it as a rule, in connection with the others, it is clear, from his chapter upon it, that he contemplated it in that light, and regarded it as no less defective than the laws of honour, of the land and of the Scriptures. There are certainly men who profess to be governed by the dictates of conscience; and if these dictates are an adequate and perfect rule of life, there is no use, according to Dr. Paley's conception of its office, of such a science as Moral Philosophy. His vindication, accordingly, of the science which he proposes to expound, implies that, *without it*, there are no means of arriving to a complete standard of duty. We shall be left to guides that are unsatisfactory and uncertain. The practical tendencies of his mind are here very conspicuously displayed. Instead of attempting to prove, from the nature of the case, that science *must* furnish the rules of art, and that no art can be considered as perfect until the theory of its operations is understood and developed, he takes a survey of human life, notes the laws which different classes profess to obey, and exposes their incompetency to answer the ends of human existence. His argument is briefly this: We need and must have a science of morals; because experience shows that, independently of it, men are liable to serious mistakes in regard to their duty. No rule, not derived from it, has ever yet been perfect. He then assumes that the rules already mentioned exhaust the expedients of man in settling the way of life.

The vindication of moral philosophy, upon the ground that all other means of compassing a perfect rule of life are defective, most evidently takes for granted, that *it* can supply the defect—that *it* can teach us, and teach us with at least comparative completeness, the whole duty of man. In the second book, accordingly, Dr. Paley undertakes to evince its competency to this end, by evolving a principle from which an adequate and satisfactory solution of all moral questions may be extracted. It is here that he determines the great problems of speculative morals, concerning the nature and origin of our moral cognitions. Here, then, we must look for his system of moral philosophy.

From this general view it will be seen that the first book is an answer to the question, do we need a science of morals? The second book an answer to the question, is the need which is felt supplied by such a science? If this be, however, the order of thought, the discussions of the first book should have closed with the fifth chapter. The sixth and seventh chapters of that book

* Book I, chap. i.

are out of their logical order. The seventh chapter should have concluded the discussions of the second book, and the sixth chapter, in its present form, should have been omitted altogether, as having no conceiveable connection with aught that precedes or follows. That a man should make the tendency to promote happiness the very essence of virtue, and a corresponding tendency to promote misery the very essence of vice, and then gravely conclude, after an enumeration of the various elements that constitute happiness, "that vice has no advantage over virtue,"* even on the score of expediency, is a real curiosity in the history of literature. Dr. Paley's whole system proceeds on the assumption that happiness is the chief good of man. Virtue and vice are respectively determined to be such by their relations to this as an end. A discussion, then, of happiness, which should have been in harmony with the rest of his system, ought to have included such an enumeration of its elements as would show, at a glance, that it was the privilege of the virtuous only. As being the end of virtue, its tendencies to that end should have been made conspicuous and manifest. But nothing of this sort has been attempted. The chapter contains little more than judicious and wholesome reflections, preceded by low and degrading views of the comparative worth and dignity of pleasures, upon the best methods of getting through life with tolerable comfort. It adds nothing to the work, and might be subtracted from it without the slightest diminution of its integrity, as a scientific treatise. It is a mere interpolation.

Having settled, in the second book, his speculative doctrines, Dr. Paley proceeds to a classification and detailed consideration of human duties, which occupies the remainder of his treatise. These he divides, in conformity with prevailing usage, into three general heads: 1 Duties to our neighbor, or relative duties. 2. Duties to ourselves; and, 3. Duties to God. Relative duties he again subdivides into three classes 1. Those which are determinate, and are consequently embraced under the category of justice; 2. Those which are indeterminate, and are embraced under the category of benevolence; and, 3. Those which spring from the constitution of the sexes.

Having given this general outline of his treatise, what I now propose is to subject his theory of morals to a critical examination, and then make some remarks upon what seems to be objectionable in some of the details of the work.

The fundamental principle of his system is contained in the answer to the question, what is that *quality* in consequence of which we pronounce an action to be right? This he makes to be *utility*, or its tendency to promote happiness. "Whatever is expedient is right." The process by which he is conducted to this conclusion is brief and simple. He begins with an analysis of moral obligation, and in order that his account of it may be exact and discriminating, he first inquires into the essence of obligation in general, and then proceeds to expound moral obligation in particular.

Obligation, in general, he resolves into a strong sense of interest, prompting obedience to the commands of a superior. "We can be obliged to nothing,"† he openly avows, "but what we ourselves are to gain or lose something by; for nothing else can be a violent motive to us. As we should not be obliged to obey the laws of the magistrate, unless rewards or punishments, pleasure or pain, somehow or other, depended upon our obedience; so neither should

* Book I, chap. vi., sub. fin. † Book II, chap. ii.

we, without the same reason, be obliged to do what is right, to practise virtue, or to obey the commands of God." A strong sense of interest, then, which Dr. Paley denominates "a violent motive," is essential to obligation. But is every appeal to our hopes and fears, every prospect of advantage, or every apprehension of calamity, to be considered as creating an obligation? Are obligation and inducement, in other words, synonymous terms? Dr. Paley answers that they are generically the same, but specifically different. Obligation is a particular species of inducement—that species which results from the command of a superior, or of one who is able to curse or to bless. This circumstance, that it results from command, or is the expression of authority, is what differences duty from every other form of interest. Hence his articulate definition of obligation in general postulates inducement as the genus, and the command of a superior as the specific difference. "A man is said to be obliged, when he is urged by a violent motive resulting from the command of another."*

The peculiarity of *moral* obligation, as contradistinguished from obligation in general, consists in the person who prescribes the command, and the nature of the motive to obey. In this case, He who commands is God, and the motive to obedience is drawn from the future world—the hope of everlasting happiness, or the dread of everlasting misery. Moral obligation may, accordingly, be defined as that strong sense of interest, or "violent motive," prompting us to obey the commands of God, and arising from a conviction of endless retributions beyond the grave.

The doctrine of a future state of rewards and punishments is consequently fundamental in Dr. Paley's system. There can be prudence but no virtue without it. An action becomes right only by its relation to our future interests. What *binds*, what presses as a violent motive, what creates the sense of duty, is the hope of heaven or the fear of hell. "They who would establish," says our author,† "a system of morality, independent of a future state, must look out for some different idea of moral obligation, unless they can show that virtue conducts the possessor to certain happiness in this life, or to a much greater share of it than he could attain by a different behaviour."

From this analysis of moral obligation, it appears that the will of God is the matter, and the retributions of a future state the form of it; that is, the will of God determines *what* we are bound to do, and our everlasting interests *why* we are bound; or, as Dr. Paley expresses it, "private happiness is our motive, and the will of God our rule."

The will of God being the standard or measure of right, the question naturally arises, how is the will of God to be ascertained? The answer is by inquiring into the tendency of an action to promote or diminish the general happiness. Utility is the exponent of the Divine will, as the Divine will is the exponent of right. Whatever is expedient God commands, and whatever God commands is morally obligatory. Dr. Paley regards his doctrine of expediency as only the statement, in another form, of the Divine benevolence. To say that God wills the happiness of his creatures is, with him, equivalent to saying that whatever is expedient is right; and accordingly the only proof which he alleges of this fundamental doctrine of his theory is his proof of the

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* Book II, chap. ii. † Book II, chap. iii.

benevolence of God. "The method," says he,* "of coming at the will of God, concerning any action, by the light of nature, is to inquire into the tendency of the action to promote or diminish the general happiness. This rule proceeds upon the presumption that God Almighty wills and wishes the happiness of his creatures, and consequently that those actions which promote that will and wish must be agreeble to Him—and the contrary." Too much praise can hardly be awarded to his vindication of the benevolence of God; it is neat, clear, conclusive, presented in two different forms, in neither of which can it fail to produce conviction.†

From this brief analysis, Dr. Paley's whole theory of morals may be compendiously compressed in a single syllogism. Whatever God commands is right or obligatory. Whatever is expedient God commands. Therefore, whatever is expedient is right. The major proposition rests upon his analysis of moral obligation—the minor upon the proof of the Divine benevolence, and the substance of all is given in his remarkable definition of virtue, which, logically, should have followed the exposition of expediency. "Virtue is the doing good to mankind, in obedience to the will of God, and for the sake of everlasting happiness."‡ The matter of virtue is expediency, which becomes right or obligatory, because it is commanded by God, and supported by the awful sanctions of the future world.

In estimating the merits of Dr. Paley's theory, two points must be particularly attended to, as these are the cardinal points of his argument—his analysis of moral obligation, as yielding the result that the will or command of God is the sole measure of rectitude—and his vindication of expediency, as an universal measure of the Divine will from the Divine benevolence. Upon his success or failure here depends the success or failure of his treatise.

Is an action, then, right, simply because God commands it, and that upon pain of eternal death? Is it the *command* which makes it to be right, or is its being right the cause of the command? According to Dr. Paley, it is right, *because* commanded. According to the common sense of mankind, it is commanded because it is right. If it is the will of God which creates the distinction between right and wrong, the difficulty which Dr. Paley felt, and which he has endeavored to obviate,§ would manifestly embarass all our judgments in regard to the moral character of the Divine administrations. "It *would* be an identical proposition to say of God that He acts right;" a contradiction in terms to say that He could, by any possibility, *act wrong*. We cannot escape the conviction—it is forced upon us by the constitution of our nature—that there is a rectitude in actions, antecedently to any determinations of will, and that this rectitude is the formal cause of their authoritative injunction upon the part of God. To this eternal standard we appeal when we vindicate the ways of God to man. We do not mean, as Dr. Paley suggests, when we pronounce the dispensations of Providence to be right, that they are merely consistent with themselves—for that is the substance of his explanation—but that they are consistent with a law which we feel to be coextensive with intelligent existence. Right and wrong are not the creatures of arbitrary choice. They are not made by the *will*, but spring essentially from the *nature* of God. He *is* holy, and therefore his volitions are just and good.

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* Book II, chap. iv.
† Book II, chap. v.
‡ Book I, chap. vii.
§ Book II, chap. ix.

According to Dr. Paley, a different arrangement of the adaptations of the universe would have changed the applications of all moral phraseology, and made that to be right which is now wrong, and that to be wrong which is now right. There is no other difference in the properties expressed by these words than the relation in which they stand to our own happiness. For aught that appears, God *might* command falsehood, perjury, murder and impiety—and then *they* would be entitled to all the commendations of the opposite virtues. Actions and dispositions are nothing in themselves; they are absolutely without any moral character, without any moral difference, until some expression of the Divine will is interposed. It is not till God enjoins it, and it becomes connected with everlasting happiness or misery, that an action or disposition acquires moral significancy. Such sentiments contradict the intuitive convictions of the race; and he grievously errs who imagines that he is exalting the will of the Supreme Being, or reflecting a higher glory upon the character of God, by representing all moral distinctions as the accidental creatures of arbitrary choice If no other account can be given of the excellence and dignity of virtue, than that God *happened* to choose it, and to take it under His patronage and favour, we may call vice *unfortunate*, but we can never condemn it as *base*.

We must, consequently, go beyond the Divine command for the true foundation of the moral differences of things—but, as we cannot ascend beyond the Deity Himself, we must stop at the perfections of the Divine character. It is because God is *what* He is, that He chooses virtue and condemns vice; and it is because He is what He is *necessarily*, that the distinctions betwixt right and wrong are eternal and immutable. His will is determined by His nature, and His nature is as necessary as his being. His will, consequently, has a law in the essential holiness of His character; and that essential holiness is the ultimate ground, the *fons et origo* of all moral distinctions.

But while it is denied that the will of God *creates* the differences betwixt right and wrong, it is not maintained that His will does not adequately express the rule of duty. If Dr. Paley had asserted nothing more than that the Divine command was a perfect *measure* of human obligation, no exception could have been taken to his statement. But he obviously meant much more than this; he meant to affirm, in the most unequivocal manner, that the sole distinction betwixt virtue and vice was the arbitrary product of will. It is true that he subsequently insists upon their respective tendencies, but these cannot be regarded as the ultimate reasons of the Divine volitions. All beings are from God, and all the adaptations and adjustments which obtain among them, by virtue of which some are useful and others hurtful, are as much the offspring of His will, as their individual existence. Utility finds its standard in His determinations. It is because He has chosen to invest things with such and such properties, and to fix them in such and such relations to each other, that any place is found for a difference of tendencies. A different order and a different constitution would have completely reversed the present economy. Will, therefore, as mere arbitrary, absolute choice, is the sole cause why things are as they are—why some things are useful and others hurtful—some right and others wrong.

Still this error in the analysis of moral obligation does not materially affect the argument. Dr. Paley could have been conducted to his favourite dogma of expediency as well by maintaining that the will of God is the *measure* of duty, as by maintaining that it is the source or ultimate principle of all moral

distinctions. What his case needed was simply the proposition that we are bound to do all that God requires, and that nothing but what He requires can be imperative upon us. His will—no matter what determines it, or whether it is determined by anything out of itself—His will is our law. To this proposition no reasonable exception can be taken—and hence it may be cheerfully admitted, "that to inquire what is our duty, or what we are obliged to do in any instance, is, in effect, to inquire, what is the will of God in that instance?"

It is in the solution of this inquiry that we encounter the central principle of Dr. Paley's theory. If his reasoning here be conclusive, however we may object to his analysis of obligation, we are shut up to the adoption of his favourite maxim—that whatever is expedient is right. The only argument which he pretends to allege in vindication of this sweeping dogma, is drawn from the benevolence of God; and yet that argument—though I do not know that the blunder has ever been articulately exposed—is a logical fallacy, an illicit process of the minor term. What he had proved in his chapter on Divine benevolence is, that God wills the happiness of His creatures. What he has collected from his analysis of obligation is, that whatever God wills is right. Put these premises together, and they yield a syllogism in the third figure, from which Dr. Paley's conclusion can by no means be drawn.

Whatever God wills is expedient.

Whatever God wills is right.

Therefore, says Dr. Paley, whatever is expedient is right—an illicit process of the minor term. Therefore, is the true conclusion, *some* things that are expedient are right—the third figure always concluding particularly.

The secret of Dr. Paley's blunder is easily detected. He confounded the original proposition, which his proof of the Divine benevolence had yielded, with its simple converse, and was consequently led to treat the latter as exactly equipollent to the former. What he had proved was, that God wills the happiness of His creatures. This is all that can be collected from benevolence. It simply settles the question that whatever may be the number and variety of the things that constitute the objects of the Divine volition, they are all characterized by the quality—that they contribute, in some way, to the public good. They are all conceived in kindness and executed in love. God, in other words, never wills anything that is essentially hurtful or prejudicial to the highest interests of His creatures. Whatever He commands is conducive to their welfare: But to say that *whatever He wills* is conducive to the general happiness, is a very different thing from saying that *whatever conduces* to the general happiness He wills. It may be true that He wills *nothing* which is *not* expedient, and yet false that He wills *everything* which *is* expedient. The truth of the converse, in universal affirmative propositions, is seldom implied in the original dictum without limitation. Here was Dr. Paley's slip. Because God wills nothing that is not for our good, he took it for granted that He *must* will everything which is for our good. The *proper* converse of the proposition, that whatever conduces to the general happiness God wills, is the barren statement that *some* things which are expedient are willed by Him, or, in other words, that *some* things that are expedient are *right*. It is very remarkable that a portentous system of philosophy, which is distinguished by nothing more prominently than its open and flagrant contradictions to the common sense of the race, and

its glaring falsifications of the characteristic phenomena of our moral nature, should lay its foundations in a palpable violation of the laws of thought. It begins in a blunder and ends in a lie. The benevolence of God is only a guarantee as to the nature and tendencies of whatever He may choose to effect or to enjoin upon us, but it is not a standard by which to determine beforehand upon what *particular* things His will shall pitch. In the boundless range of conceivable and possible good, there may be things characterized by the quality of expediency, which yet, on other accounts, are excluded from the Divine scheme. To be the benevolent ruler of the world implies no more than that the economy of Providence, which has been actually instituted, and is daily carried on, *excludes* all laws which are inconsistent with the highest interests of the subject, and *includes* a system of fixed and definite means, adapted to promote them If God has a plan, the very conception of it involves the notion of rejection and choice. All the reasons, in one case or the other, can never be known to us. Some of the things rejected might have been turned to a good account. But how many soever of this class have been rejected, as not falling within the plan, the Divine benevolence renders it certain that the plan itself is good, and that all its arrangements, if properly observed and heeded, tend to promote our happiness. Given a Divine volition, the argument of benevolence vindicates its usefulness; given expediency, the argument does not show that it is willed. Hence it is much safer to try expediency by the Divine will than to try the Divine will by expediency. God commands it—therefore it is good, is, materially considered, a sounder syllogism than It is good—therefore God commands it.

The argument from benevolence, however, is the only one which *any* advocate of expediency has ever been able to adduce. The fallacy in question is not a solitary blunder of the Archdeacon of Carlisle. Among those who assume it as a fundamental principle that the happiness of the universe is the final cause of its existence—a principle, however, which never has been and never can be established—it has been uniformly taken for granted, that whatever is conducive to that happiness, must be an object of Divine volition. With them, to will its happiness is not simply to reject and prohibit what is inconsistent with it, and to institute a series of laws and means suited to promote it, but absolutely to aim at the production of everything that bears the impress of public good. How, upon this doctrine, the universe *can* be a whole, it is impossible to comprehend. If benevolence is obliged to achieve *every* thing by which the happiness of *any* creature can be promoted, it would lose itself in the infinite region of possible good. If it is to have no discretion, no right to discriminate, to choose or reject—if *every* candidate who can bring credentials of utility and convenience *must* be received into favour, the notion of a plan—a scheme—a government—must at once be abandoned. Upon what an ocean would this doctrine set us afloat? If benevolence is the *sole* measure and standard of the Divine will—the greatest happiness of the greatest number the only end of universal being—why have not more creatures been made? Why have not other orders been introduced? These additions to the stock of being would certainly enlarge the domain of happiness. Reflections of this sort should convince us, that whenever we undertake to speculate upon the constitution of nature, independently of the guidance of experience—when we undertake to pronounce dogmatically upon the whole end and aim of the Divine dispensation—we get beyond our depth. We may confound

a crotchet with a principle—mistake a cloud for a Divinity. It is palpable to common sense that all which we can legitimately make from the benevolence of God is a security against mischief and malice in His government. He will choose *only* the expedient; but *what* expedient things, must be left to His own wisdom. He comprehends His own plan; and only those things, however useful, which fall in with the harmony of the *whole*, will be selected and adopted. When, therefore, the question is asked, What does God will? we cannot answer it, from considerations of expediency. We cannot say, He wills this or that, because this or that is fitted to promote the happiness of His creatures. There may be reasons why the things in question should be rejected or prohibited, *notwithstanding* their utility. Benevolence does not supersede the other perfections of the Divine nature, and if it is limited and conditioned by wisdom, justice, truth, or other attributes of God, then it is clear that it never can be taken as a complete and adequate exponent of the Divine will. To *condition* its manifestations, in any manner or degree, is to limit the proposition, that *whatever* is expedient is willed.

If the distinction had been observed—a distinction obvious in itself, and resulting from the very laws of thought—betwixt what the benevolence of God really implies, and what the advocates of expediency have assumed it to imply,—betwixt the original proposition and its simple converse,—this ill-omened theory never could have been ventilated. It *assumes* that the benevolence of God is a bare, single, exclusive disposition to produce happiness—it *proves* that this is *one* of the dispositions which enter into and characterize the Divine Administration; it assumes that benevolence is simple and absolute, the only principle which reigns in the universe—it *proves* that God is good, and never can inflict gratuitous mischief upon His creatures; it assumes that God wills *nothing* but the happiness of His creatures—it proves that *whatever* God wills shall contribute to their good; it assumes, in short, that whatever is expedient is right—it proves that whatever is right is expedient.

That benevolence is the *absolute* principle of the Divine nature—as it cannot be proved inductively from the manifestations of goodness in the universe, so it cannot be demonstrated from any necessary laws of belief. Induction gives us the result, that God is good; but limits, modifies, and conditions the exercise of His goodness, by laws and arrangements that clearly indicate the existence of other attributes, and other attributes by no means subordinate to goodness. We see that happiness is not dispensed without regard to character and conduct. Nature speaks as loudly of justice as of love. Neither, again, is there any process by which we can reduce the manifestations of other attributes to the simple principle of love. We cannot see how *this*, as absolute, implies them—we cannot comprehend how they are developed from it. There is no law of thought which can reduce to the unity of a single appearance these various phenomena. Accordingly, we are not warranted in asserting that simple, absolute benevolence is the only character of the Author of Nature. To our observation, it is neither simple nor absolute, since it is limited and conditioned. The assumption, consequently, upon which the entire fabric of expediency depends, not only has not been proved, but from the nature of the case, *never can* be proved. If it were even true in itself, it belongs to a sphere of knowledge lying beyond the reach of our faculties; and to us, therefore, it must always be as if it were false.

But more than this—the scheme of expediency, in any and every aspect of it, involves a complete falsification of the moral phenomena of human nature.

It does not explain, but contradict them; it is not the philosophy of what actually passes, but of what might be conceived to pass within us—not the philosophy of man as he is, but of man as its advocates would have him to be. The point at issue, in this aspect of the case, is whether that which constitutes the rightness of an action—which makes us feel it to be obligatory and approve it as praiseworthy—be its tendency to promote public happiness, so that, independently of the perception of this tendency, we should experience none of those emotions with which we contemplate virtue and duty.

1. This, as a question of fact, must be settled by an appeal to consciousness; and we confidently aver that the true state of the case is precisely the reverse of that which is here assumed. It is not utility which suggests the sense of duty; it is the sense of duty which creates the conviction of utility. The connection betwixt virtue and happiness is only the statement, in another form, of that profound impression of moral government, which is stamped upon all men by the operations of conscience. It is the articulate enunciation of the sense of responsibility. The dictates of conscience are always felt to be *commands* of God. They address us in the language of *authority* and *law*. But a law without sanctions is a contradiction in terms. Conscience, consequently, must have its sanctions, and these sanctions, accordingly, are both implicitly suggested and explicitly revealed; implicitly suggested in that sense of security which results from the consciousness of having pleased the lawgiver, or that uneasiness and restless anxiety which result from the consciousness of contradicting his will; explicitly revealed in the sense of good or ill desert, which is an inseparable element of every moral judgment. This sense of good and ill desert is a declaration of God that He will reward the righteous and punish the wicked—it is an immediate manifestation to consciousness of the fact of moral government. Antecedently to any calculations of utility, to any enlarged views of the good of the race or to any inductions from the consequences of actions, without being able to comprehend why or how, we all feel an irresistible conviction that it shall, upon the whole, be well with the righteous and ill with the wicked, because we carry in our bosoms a revelation to this effect from the Author of our being. Virtue is pronounced to be expedient, because we are the subjects of a government of which virtue is the law. Our nature is a cheat—the conviction of merit and demerit a gross delusion, unless the consequences of obedience and disobedience are answerable to the expectations we are led to frame. Hence we associate, from the very dawn of reason, virtue and happiness, vice and misery. As soon as the feeling is developed that we are under law, that we are responsible creatures, the conviction is awakened that we shall be rewarded or punished according to our behaviour—that the consequences, in other words, of virtue *must* be good, and the consequences of vice disastrous. Our nature leads us, nay compels us, to predict favourably of an upright course, and to augur evil of a life of transgression. Our appeal is to human experience. To perceive that an action is right, what is it but to feel that it is our duty to do it? To be conscious that we have done what is right, what is it but to feel that we have pleased the law-giver, and are entitled to his favour? What means the sense of merit, if it is not the *promise* of God that the obedient *shall* be rewarded? and a promise of this sort, what is it but a declaration from our Maker that virtue is the highest expediency? We do not object, therefore, to the close and intimate connection which the utilitarian makes to subsist betwixt virtue and happiness. We could not, without ignoring or

absolutely denying all moral government, be blind to the fact that God has so constituted man and the universe, that he alone shall be finally and permanently happy, who makes righteousness his law, and faithfully discharges his duties. Conscience explicitly declares that the path of rectitude is the path of life. But what we object to is the order in which the utilitarian arranges these convictions. He makes the perceptions, or rather the feeling of duty, consequent upon the perception of expediency; whereas the belief of expediency is the natural offspring of the operations of conscience. It is a revelation of God through the structure of the soul.

From this account of the matter, it will be easy to obviate an argument upon which utilitarians are accustomed to rely, drawn from the circumstance, that, when pressed as to the reasons of a moral judgment in any given case, we are prone to enlarge upon the benefits of the action, or its tendencies to promote the public good. When we have exhibited its advantages, we feel that we have satisfied doubt, and confirmed our conclusion. Now, in all this there is nothing but the natural propensity to seek in experience for what a law of belief indicates beforehand that we must find. Is a given action right? Then it is entitled to reward. We consequently *expect* that the consequences of it will be good: and what more natural than the effort to verify this expectation by an appeal to events. But that our conviction is not dependent upon experience appears from this: that when experience returns an unfavourable answer, as it often does in this life, we do not doubt the veracity of our conscience. We still feel that virtue *must* and *will* be rewarded, though we may not be able to tell how or where.

2. Another consideration which confirms the foregoing view, is the early age at which moral distinctions are recognised, and praise or blame awarded to human actions. Upon the hypothesis of the utilitarian, the conception of general happiness must precede, in the order of nature, the conviction of right; and as this conception can only be collected from a large survey of human life, as it requires no little experience and sagacity to perfect it, moral discriminations could not be made until the reason had been expanded and matured. Yet we know that children, long before they are capable of comprehending what is meant by the good of the universe, pronounce confidently upon the excellence or meanness of actions, and the merit or demerit of the agents. They manifest the same symptoms of indignation or approval, and utter the same language of praise or censure, which obtain among their superiors in years. They manifest the same sense of obligation, exult in the same consciousness of right, and are tortured with the same agony of remorse. It is clear that they apprehend the right, long before they can appreciate the expedient.

3. If the perception of utility, or beneficial tendency, is that which, in every instance, produces moral approbation, no reason can be given why this species of emotion is restricted exclusively to the principles and acts of voluntary agents. These, surely, are not the only things which are suited to produce benefit or harm. Many animals are possessed of instincts and capabilities which render them eminently subservient to the interests of man: The dog guards his dwelling—the labour of the ox unfolds the fertility of his fields—the ass bears his burdens—and the horse aids him in his journeys. Inanimate objects, too—especially the contrivances of mechanical skill and ingenuity—may be of the highest importance to the progress and well-being of society. The printing press, the mariner's compass, the steam engine, the

cotton gin—it is enough to mention these to show that utility is not restricted to the voluntary acts of rational beings. Now, if moral approbation is nothing but the pleasure with which we contemplate the *useful*—if what we mean by merit and demerit is simply the conviction of convenience or inconvenience—it follows that we attribute to a horse or mule, a steamboat or a railway, the same praise which we attribute to the benevolent deeds of a *man*. They are as truly *virtuous*—they as really promote the general good of mankind. The printing press, on this hypothesis, is entitled to as much praise as Pericles or Washington—an earthquake or tornado should be held as equally guilty with a Borgia or a Catiline.

The absurdity of the conclusion is a sufficient proof of the falsehood of the premises. Virtue and vice are terms exclusively restricted to the actions or active principles of intelligent and voluntary agents; and the emotions with which we contemplate virtuous or vicious conduct, are essentially different from those which are excited by an unintelligent instrument of good or mischief. Hume saw and felt the force of this objection, but his attempt to rebut it is only an additional proof of its strength. He does not deny that inanimate objects may be useful, nor that their utility is a legitimate ground of approbation. What he affirms is, that the approbation attendant upon utility in the one case is accompanied or mixed with other affections, terminating exclusively on persons, while in the other case it is not. But the question is, whether utility, *as utility*, is in each case the parent of a similar emotion. That being admitted, the emotions or affections excited by accidental adjuncts are wholly irrelevant. His illustration from colour and proportions is extremely unfortunate for his purpose. It is evident that colour and proportions are instruments of pleasure, whether found in a statue or a man. But in the latter case, beside the pleasure which they themselves give, they awaken other feelings of which they are not the proper objects. But still we call colour and proportion by the *same name*, wherever they are found. Hume has confounded *concomitant* feelings with the emotions proper to utility as such. But that is to evade the point at issue. If utility in itself considered is the essence of virtue, we approve it, whether in man, beast or machine—though the sentiment of approbation proper to the utility may be largely modified by other properties of the objects in which it is perceived to exist.

The foregoing considerations are fatal to the theory of expediency in *every* form. There are others which apply more particularly to that form of it which Dr. Paley has taken into favour. That his own principles may be clearly understood, it is necessary to premise that the patrons of the general doctrine of expediency may be divided into two great classes, according as they make the public good to be an ultimate end, or only a means of promoting individual and private interest. These classes are distinguished from each other by essential and radical differences. The first, which may be called the school of disinterested benevolence, admits the existence of a moral sense, and ascribes to it our perceptions of the beauty and excellence of benevolence, and our conviction of the obligation of it, as the all-pervading rule of life. Man, according to this scheme, is so constituted as to rejoice in the happiness of all sentient beings, *on its own account*, independently of any considerations of personal advantage or reward. He has a moral nature which teaches him that to do good is the end of his being, and under the guidance and direction of this nature he condemns or approves actions, dispositions and habits

according to the degree in which they hinder or promote the happiness of all. Virtue is, accordingly, restricted to a disinterested regard for the welfare of the universe.

The other, which may be called the selfish school, while it maintains that beneficial tendency is the criterion of the rectitude of actions, maintains as strenuously that the ground of the obligation to promote the public good is a regard to individual interest and advantage. A man is to seek the happiness of all, because, in seeking that, he secures his own.

This school has no occasion for a moral sense. All that it postulates in order to account for the peculiar phenomena of our moral nature is a susceptibility of pleasure and pain, and those faculties by which we are rendered capable of experience. That is good which pleases—that is evil which offends—and he who can foresee what, upon the whole, shall give satisfaction, and what pain and misery, is furnished with all that is necessary for the discovery of moral rules. Moral reasoning is nothing but a calculation of personal consequences; the data of the calculation are the facts of experience. Given a being, therefore, who is capable of pleasure and pain, who desires the one and revolts from the other, who is able to compute the consequences of actions from the phenomena of experience—a being, in other words, who can feel and calculate, and you have all that is requisite to a moral agent. Virtue in this school is simply that which shall secure the greatest amount of satisfaction to the possessor—vice that which shall be attended with more inconvenience than pleasure; and as it so happens that doing good to mankind is found to be the most effectual method of doing good to ourselves, virtue, materially considered, consists in promoting the happiness of the race. It is benevolence sanctified by selfishness. Obligation, accordingly, is only a strong conviction of interest, arising from the fear of superior power. A right to command is nothing but ability to curse or bless. Hence right is the necessary companion of might, and duty and interest are one and the same. Self is the supreme end of existence to every sentient being.

That this school falsifies the phenomena of our moral nature in every essential point the slightest examination will abundantly show.

1. If the principles which it postulates are all that are necessary to a moral agent, brutes would be as truly moral agents as men. They are susceptible of pleasure and pain, of hope and fear. They can foresee, to some extent, the consequences of their actions. They can be trained and disciplined to particular qualities and habits. The government which man exercises over them is conducted upon the same principles with which, according to the selfish philosophers, the government of God is administered over man. It exactly answers to Dr. Paley's definition of a *moral* government—except that he restricts it to *reasonable* creatures, without any necessity from the nature of the case—"any dispensation whose object is to influence the conduct of reasonable creatures." A system of intimidation, coaxing and persuasion—a discipline exclusively relying upon hope and fear—this the horse can be subject to that fears the spur—the dog that cringes from a kick—any beast that can be trained by the whip. These animals obey their master from the same motive from which Dr. Paley would have a good man obey his God. Now, is there no peculiarity in our moral emotions but that which arises from hope and fear? Is there nothing that *man* feels, when he acknowledges the authority of law, which the brute does not also feel when he shrinks from the lash or is allured by caresses? Is there not something which the desire of

pleasure and the reluctation against pain, as mere physical conditions, are utterly inadequate to explain? We all feel that the brute differs from the man, and differs pre-eminently in this very circumstance, that though capable of being influenced by motives addressed to his hopes and fears, he is incapable of the notion of duty, of crime, or of moral obligation. He is a physical, but not a *moral* agent.

2 This theory, in the next place, contradicts the moral convictions of mankind, in making no distinction betwixt interest and duty, betwixt authority and might. Nothing *can* be obligatory, according to the articulate confession of Dr. Paley, but what we are to gain or lose by; and the only question I am to ask, in order to determine whether I am bound by the command of another, is whether he can hurt or bless me. His right depends upon his power, and my duty turns upon my weakness and dependence. If the devil, according to the case supposed in the Recognitions of Saint Clement, transformed into an angel of light, should promise to men more pleasing rewards than those propined to them by God, and should convince them of his power and willingness to bestow them, they would, upon Paley's principles, be under a moral obligation to serve the devil. If *any* being but their Creator could impart to them more desirable rewards than Himself, they would be bound to transfer their affections and allegiance from Him to the new god. The child whose parents are unable to distinguish him with wealth, and prosperity, and honours, is under a moral obligation to forsake the father that begat him, and the mother that bore him, and to transfer his filial duties to any rich fool that might be willing to adopt him. If interest is duty, and power is right, natural ties, whether of blood or affection, considerations of justice and humanity, relations, original or adventitious, are all to be discarded, and every moral problem becomes only a frigid calculation of loss and gain. No elements are to be permitted to enter into its solution, which shall disturb the coolness of the mathematical computation. All moral reasoning is reduced to arithmetic, and a man's duty is determined by the sum at the foot of the account.

Now, if there be any two things about which the consciousness of mankind is clear and distinct, it is that there is a marked and radical difference betwixt interest and duty, right and might. The distinction obtains in all languages, and pervades every species of epithets, by which praise or blame is awarded to human actions. The man who cannot distinguish in his own breast betwixt a sense of duty and a sense of interest, who regards all arguments addressed to the one as equally addressed to the other, who treats them as only different expressions of one and the same feeling, has either so enlarged his views that self-love operates in him in exact accordance with the laws of moral government—that is, his conviction of the ultimate success and triumph of virtue is so firmly rooted and established, that the temporary successes of vice produce no effect upon his mind, in which state it might be difficult to discern between the influence of interest and conscience, exactly coinciding as they do in their results—or he has corrupted and perverted sentiments which exist in every other heart, and without which the short-sighted views of interest that men are accustomed to take in this sublunary world would often eventuate in the most disastrous results. The common experience certainly is, that in appealing to interest and duty, I am appealing to *different* principles of action, of which one is superior in dignity, though it may be inferior in strength.

The distinction betwixt right and might, betwixt unjust usurpation and lawful authority, is manifestly something far deeper than the distinction betwixt

a lower and a higher interest. It is not the sword which justifies the magistrate—it is the magistrate which justifies the sword. The successful usurper, upon the principles of Dr. Paley, who is able to maintain his position, is to be obeyed as a just and lawful ruler. His power to injure or to bless brings the subjects under a moral obligation to submit to him—and as right and obligation are reciprocal, he must have a corresponding right to exact obedience. Unsuccessful resistance becomes, consequently, always treason or rebellion. The mere statement of these propositions is a sufficient eviction of their absurdity. All men feel that the *right* to *command* is one thing, the *power* to *hurt* another—that there can be no *obligation* to obey, although it may be the dictate of policy, where *force* is the only basis of authority. The language of all men marks the difference betwixt the usurper and the lawful ruler, the tyrant and the just magistrate; and any system which ignores or explains away this natural and necessary distinction, contradicts the moral phenomena of our nature.

3. The theory of Paley is liable to still further exception, as taking no account of the conviction of good and ill desert and the peculiar emotions which constitute and spring from the consciousness of guilt or accompany the consciousness of right. The slightest attention to the operations of his own mind must satisfy every one that the approbation of virtue and the disapprobation of vice include much more than a simple sensation of pleasure, analogous to that which arises from the congruity of an object to an appetite, affection or desire. It is more than the pleasure which springs from the perception of utility or of the fitness of means to accomplish an end. It is a *peculiar* emotion—an emotion which we are not likely to confound with any other phenomenon of our nature. It is a feeling that the agent, in a virtuous action, *deserves* to be rewarded, accompanied with the desire to see him rewarded, and the expectation that he will be rewarded. The agent in a vicious action, on the contrary, we feel is deserving of punishment, and we confidently expect that, sooner or later, he will receive his due. When we are conscious of well-doing in ourselves, we have a sense of security and peace, arising from the conviction that we are entitled to favour; and when conscious of wrong, we condemn ourselves as worthy of punishment, and tremble at the apprehension that it will and must be inflicted. The agony of remorse consists in the consciousness that we have done wrong—that therefore we ought to be punished, and that therefore we shall be punished. The sense of demerit, which involves the sense of the righteousness of punishment, is the pregnant source of all its horrors. It is this which distinguishes it from simple regret. Take away the conviction of merit and demerit, and there can be no such thing as rewards in contradistinction from good fortune—no such thing as punishment in contradistinction to adversity. The foundation of justice is demolished. The penal code is an arbitrary dictate of policy—crimes are converted into follies, and virtue into sagacity and cunning. A theory which annihilates the distinction between rewards and favours, between punishment and misfortune, is at war with the fundamental dictates of our nature. It sweeps away that very characteristic by which we are rendered capable of *government*, as distinct from *discipline*. It confounds remorse with simple regret, and the approbation of conscious rectitude with the pleasure which springs from the gratification of any other feeling or desire. It denies, in other words, that in any just and proper sense of the terms we can be denominated moral

agents. The very element in the phenomenon which makes a judgment to be moral is left out or overlooked.

These objections are fatal to the system. That can neither be an adequate nor a true philosophy which omits some, and distorts others, of the phenomena which it proposes to explain. He that stumbles in his account of obligation—the great central fact of our moral nature—divests his speculations of all pretensions to the dignity of science.

4. But it deserves further to be remarked, that the theory in question, especially as expounded by Dr. Paley, makes no manner of difference, as to their general nature, betwixt the obligation to virtue and a temptation to vice. There is nothing in either case but a *strong* inducement, derived from appearances of good. A violent motive, we are told, is the genus and the command of a superior, the specific difference of obligation. The violent motive, the genus, is found in temptation; the specific difference is wanting. Hence temptation is clearly a species co-ordinate with duty. The bad man is enticed by his lusts, and yields to those passions which promise him enjoyment—his end is pleasure. The good man is allured by computations which put this same pleasure at the foot of the account. They are consequently governed by the same general motive, and the only difference betwixt them is that the one has a sounder judgment than the other. They have equally obeyed the same law of pleasure, but have formed a different estimate of the pursuits and objects that shall yield the largest amount of gratification. Temptation, accordingly, may be called an obligation to vice, and duty a temptation to virtue.* Who does not feel that the difference is more than accidental betwixt these states of the mind; that the motives to virtue and the seductions of sin operate upon principles entirely distinct, and have nothing in common but the circumstance of their appeal to our active nature. They are essentially different states of mind, and the theory which co-ordinates them under the same genus prevaricates with consciousness in its clearest manifestations.

5. The last general objection which I shall notice to Dr. Paley's system, is its impracticability. His fundamental principle cannot be employed as the criterion of duty, from the obvious impossibility of estimating the collected consequences of any given action. The theory is that morality depends upon results; the circumstance which determines an action to be right is its being upon the whole productive of more happiness than misery. It must, consequently, be traced in its entire history, through time and eternity, before any moral judgment can be confidently affirmed in regard to it. What human faculties are competent for such calculations? What mind but that of God can declare the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done? The government of God, both natural and moral, is one vast complicated system; the relations of its parts are so multifarious and minute—the connections of events so numerous and hidden—that only the mind which planned the scheme can adequately compass it. He knows nothing of it, as Bishop Butler has remarked, "who is not sensible of his ignorance in it." To be able to estimate all the consequences of any given action is to be master of the entire system of the universe, not merely in the general principles which govern it, but in all the details of every single event. It is to have the knowledge of the Almighty. It is manifestly impossible,

* See Brown's Lectures, lect. 79

therefore, to apply the principle in practice. He that should wait, until his judgment could be assured in the method contemplated by the rule, would be like the rustic upon the banks of the river, expecting the stream to run dry, that he might pass over dry-shod.

Labitur et labetur in omne volubilis ævum.

But as the exigencies of human life require action, and not unfrequently prompt and decisive action, the calculations of consequences would behove to be made from limited and partial views. The effects of this procedure would be obviously to destroy any steady standard of virtue and vice. "For since," as Bishop Berkeley has remarked,* "the measure and rule of every good man's actions is supposed to be nothing else but his own private, disinterested opinion of what makes most for the public good at that juncture; and since this opinion must unavoidably in different men, from their particular views and circumstances, be very different, it is impossible to know whether any one instance of parricide or perjury, for example, be criminal. The man may have had his reasons for it; and that which, in me, would have been a heinous sin, may be in him a duty. Every man's particular rule is buried in his own breast, invisible to all but himself; who, therefore, can only tell whether he observes it or no. And since that rule is fitted to particular occasions, it must ever change as they do; and hence it is not only various in different men, but in one and the same man at different times. From all which it follows, there can be no harmony or agreement between the actions of good men, no apparent steadiness or consistency of one man with himself, no adhering to principles; the best actions may be condemned, and the most villainous meet with applause. In a word, there ensues the most horrible confusion of vice and virtue, sin and duty, that can possibly be imagined." The conclusion is inevitable, that this cannot be the principle upon which the moral government of the world is carried on.

Its impracticability is, indeed, so obvious that the attempt has never been made, in any moral system, to use it as an actual test of the righteousness or wickedness of actions. Dr. Paley no sooner announces, and, as he supposed, demonstrates it, than he abandons it, and, imperceptibly to himself, introduces a standard of morality of a very different nature. His distinction between general and particular consequences and his inculcation of the necessity of general rules are a virtual surrender of the principle, that the morality of an action depends exclusively upon the sum total of its consequences. What he calls general consequences are not the consequences of any given act, but the consequences of a multitude of acts agreeing in some prominent circumstances. A single action can have nothing but particular consequences; these are the only ones which flow from it—the only ones with which it is strictly and properly chargeable. If, for example, I wish to determine whether, in a particular case, I may lawfully lie; if the morality of the act is to depend upon the predominant character of the results, I must trace that *particular lie* through all the stages of its history, and admit nothing into the computation, that does not legitimately spring from it. I cannot take into the account the consequences of *other* lies; these consequences belong to *them* and determine *their* character. Hence the rigid application of the test precludes the possibility of general rules. Each case must stand or fall upon its own merits. To introduce general rules is to shift the ground of the morality of actions,

* Serm. on Pass. Obed.

and to make it depend, not upon their consequences, but upon their conformity or non-conformity with the rule. It is singular that Paley did not notice the distinction, as Berkeley had so clearly pointed it out in the discourse from which I have already extracted.* "The well-being of mankind must necessarily be carried on one of these two ways: either, first, without the injunction of any certain universal rules of morality, only by obliging every one, upon each particular occasion, to consult the public good, and always to do that which to him shall seem, in the present time and circumstances, most to conduce to it. Or, secondly, by enjoining the observation of some determinate, established laws, which, if universally practised, have, from the nature of things, an essential fitness to procure the well-being of mankind, though in their particular application they are sometimes, through untoward accidents and the perverse irregularity of human wills, the occasions of great sufferings and misfortunes, it may be, to very good men." Dr. Paley himself admits that there are instances in which the only mischief resulting from an action is the violation of a general rule, which is equivalent to saying, that if the action were measured by its own proper consequences it would be lawful—which, again, is equivalent to saying, that actions must be judged by some other standard than their own individual expediency.

Neither are these general rules inductions from particular consequences, though Dr. Paley has strangely enough represented them in that light. They are not classifications of actions grouped according to the results which have been perceived to flow from them, which is the only way of generalizing from consequences, but grouped according to some circumstance which characterizes the action as a phenomenon of will. The ground of comparison, in other words, is not in the effects, but in the cause. Take the case which Dr. Paley has supposed: "The present possessor of some great estate employs his influence and fortune to annoy, corrupt, or oppress all about him. His estate would devolve by his death to a successor of an opposite character. It is useful, therefore, to despatch such an one as soon as possible out of the way, as the neighbourhood will exchange thereby a pernicious tyrant for a wise and generous benefactor." But, says Dr. Paley, though the immediate consequences in this case may be good, the general consequences would be disastrous—that is, the consequences ensuing from the violation of a *general rule*. But what general rule? The rule, he answers, which prohibits the destruction of human life at private discretion. Now, it is manifest that such a rule could never be collected from any number of cases like the one supposed. The true induction from them would be, that whenever the like circumstances concurred, the action would always be lawful. In the same circumstances, the same antecedents will always be followed by the same consequents. The question is not, whether it is lawful to kill a man upon imaginary pretexts, but whether, when his death will be obviously a public benefit, it is right to destroy him; and the general rule, as determined by consequences, must be in the affirmative. But when you lay down the law that human life shall not be sacrificed to private discretion, you are prohibiting actions, not according to their *consequences*, but according to another circumstance, the source or authority whence they proceed. No induction of the consequences of particular actions could ever yield this rule with anything like the universality which attaches to it.

* See also Whewell, Lect. Hist. Mor. Phil. Lect. X.

But is not the general rule itself recommended by its utility? There can be no doubt of the importance of general rules and of the comparative facility of estimating the consequences connected with their violation or observance. Their evident fitness to promote the interests of society suggests itself spontaneously to the mind, as soon as the nature of social relations is competently understood. But that it was not their utility which first led to the recognition of their authority, is manifest from what has been already said. If a man were introduced into the world with no other means of determining the moral character of actions but from the nature of their consequences, he would proceed to arrange under one class those whose consequences were obviously good, and under another those whose consequences were opposite. He might go on to discriminate among them, making subordinate classes of each kind; but no circumstance in which any actions of both kinds were found to agree could ever be made the principle of classification. As in the case supposed, if it should be found that *some* instances, in which human life was taken without the sanction of public authority, were productive of good, this principle could never be made the distinctive feature of a class. No such rule could ever emerge, as that life must never be taken by private individuals. The same process of reasoning might be carried out in reference to all general rules. They cannot, therefore, be the offspring of experience, as an inductive comparison of consequences. Paley's theory of the morality of actions could yield no other general rules but such as are denominated general facts. It could do nothing but group, and arrange under different heads, the various actions which were found productive of the same effects. It could create genera and species, but it could not originate laws, by which the character of the action was determined. An action must belong to the class, because it *has* such a character. Hence, to say that its own consequences were good, but that it does not belong to the class of good actions, would be a contradiction in terms, equivalent to saying that the individual has not the properties of the species.

Berkeley saw the impossibility of reaching general rules in this way, and hence discarded the whole system, which measures morality by the individual consequences of actions. His rules are inferences of reason from the very structure and constitution of society. It is their fitness to promote its ends, their evident congruity with the relations it implies, that recommends them to our minds. Society being given and its elements understood, these rules follow, as necessary means of preserving and perfecting it. They are not the educts of experience, but necessary truths, not the results of observation, but the dictates of reason. They *must* be, if society is to be maintained. They belong to the nature of demonstrative and *a priori* truths, rather than of empirical deductions.

Ingenious and plausible as this hypothesis appears to be, it may well be questioned whether any man ever arrived at the laws of morality from the previous consideration of the structure of society. It is one thing to perceive the fitness of means, when they have once been clearly pointed out; it is quite another thing to discover it in the first instance. Any man may understand the mechanism of a watch; few could have invented it. Society is a complicated thing, and if men were to have no moral rules until they were able to understand its structure, and to comprehend its manifold relations—if they were to wait until their knowledge was sufficiently enlarged and their reasoning powers sufficiently developed to enable them to draw just con-

clusions upon so nice and delicate a subject—many would die without having reached the period of moral agency. The early age at which moral judgments are pronounced by children, when they could not have reflected upon the fitness of means to an end, is conclusive proof that moral rules do not come to us, in the first instance, as the results of reasoning. They are comprehended long before society is analysed. It is probable, too, that if they had to be reasoned out, there would be far greater diversity of opinion in regard to them than actually obtains. We should have as many theories of morals as of politics.

But still, after they have been announced, it is not difficult to trace their beneficial effects, and no doubt this obviousness *after discovery* has been confounded with obviousness *before* discovery, and led to the mistake in question. What is so plain when suggested, we think, could not miss of occurring of itself to our own thoughts. We forget how long it was before the law of gravity was settled, or the circulation of the blood was discovered.

In Dr. Paley's admission of general consequences, and the importance of general rules, we see a departure from the scientific rigour of his fundamental principle, which we cannot but construe into the tacit acknowledgment, that man's moral cognitions have another source than experience. It is an unwilling homage to the scheme which he professedly repudiates. His heart was better than his head. He gives us laws which he could never deduce from his principle, and imagines that he has deduced them only because he felt them to be true.

The incompatibility betwixt a system of general rules and one founded upon individual consequences is sometimes painfully manifested by Dr. Paley, in his vacillations between the two standards. At one time he makes the rule supreme, as in the case of the assassin; at another, the consequences, as in the exceptions to the general law of veracity. Now, one or the other must be absolutely supreme, or if they reign by turns, we should have some means of determining which, at any time, is sovereign.

Upon the whole, how much soever we respect the memory of Dr. Paley as a man, we are constrained to say that his book has no just pretensions to the title of Moral Philosophy, except in the sense that the science of contraries is one. There is no cautious elimination of first principles, no accurate analysis of the data of consciousness, and no rigorous deductions from primary truths. His fundamental doctrine is a sophism, and the superstructure is wood, hay and stubble. Indeed, the building rests on a double foundation, and is, therefore, a house divided against itself, which, according to the highest authority, cannot stand. One of the most amazing phenomena in the history of literature is the eminence which has been given to this treatise. That it has held its ground so steadily and long is a humiliating proof of the low ebb to which moral speculations have sunk. It has neither sentiment nor logic, poetry nor science; it has nothing on earth to recommend it but the vigor and transparent clearness of the style; occasionally coarse and vulgar in its judgments—as where all pleasures are put upon a footing as to dignity and worth—generally degrading in its tendencies—always distorting the moral phenomena of our nature—dogmatic and confident, and yet at the same time superficial and shallow in the extreme—it is hard to understand how it could ever have gained, and having gained, how it could continue to maintain its ascendancy in the public mind. It is a problem, hardly less curious, how so good a man as Dr. Paley, and so vigorous a thinker, could have written so bad a book.

We come, in the next place, to consider the details of the work, and in noticing them we shall restrict ourselves to those which are liable to exceptions upon other grounds beside an unfortunate consistency with the fundamental principle of the system. This principle, of course, vitiates his speculations in all his attempts to explain the ground of the obligation in particular duties. A radical and pervading vice, it is unnecessary to call attention to it, in the special instances of its occurrence, after what has already been said of the general doctrine of expediency.

1. On opening the book, one is astounded with the want of discrimination which makes "Moral Philosophy, Morality, Ethics, Casuistry and Natural Law, mean all the same thing." These terms, though each of them may be occasionally employed to designate the science, are by no means synonymous. They have distinctive meanings of their own. Morality is applied to actions, and expresses their conformity with the standard of right. Ethicks generally denote a collection of moral precepts, digested into order, without the processes by which they have been evolved. It is the practical, in contradistinction from the speculative part of moral philosophy. It answers the question, *what* is to be done, but not *why*. Cogan, however, in his Treatise of the Passions, uses ethicks as the distinctive appellation of the science, and morality in the sense which has just been attributed to ethicks. It must also be confessed that it is becoming quite common to employ ethicks in the sense of Cogan, from the prominence, perhaps, which, in most moral treatises, is given to the elimination of rules. As moral speculations terminate in practice, it is not strange that they should be distinguished by a title which indicates the fact. The design of casuistry is evidently to determine duty in cases of apparently conflicting obligations. It discusses and resolves what are called cases of conscience. In the Romish Church it constitutes, in consequence of the practice of auricular confession, and the power and influence awarded to spiritual guides, a most important branch of sacerdotal learning; and perhaps nothing has contributed so much to foster corruption and to sanctify evil as the countless distinctions which have been invented to reconcile sin to the conscience. There are no doubt cases of real perplexity, but it will generally be found that an honest heart and a simple understanding are the best casuists. "But this I shall advertise," says Taylor,* "that the preachers may retrench an infinite number of cases of conscience, if they will more earnestly preach and exhort to simplicity and love; for the want of these is the great multiplier of cases." "I have myself had," says Bishop Heber,† "sufficient experience of what are generally called scruples, to be convinced that the greater proportion of those which are submitted to a spiritual guide are nothing more than artifices, by which men seek to justify themselves in what they know to be wrong; and I am convinced that the most efficacious manner of easing a doubtful conscience is, for the most part, to recall the professed penitent from distinctions to generals—from the peculiarities of his private concerns to the simple words of the commandment. If we are too curious we only muddy the stream; but the clearest truth is, in morals, always on the surface." As the duties of the confessional imposed upon the priest the regulation of the conscience in all doubtful cases, and its instruction in cases of ignorance, the business of casuistry took a wide scope, and embraced the whole domain of practical morality. It was cultivated

* Doctor. Dub. Introd. † Life of Taylor.

co-ordinately with natural jurisprudence. The distinction between them is thus happily stated by Smith :* "Those who write upon the principles of jurisprudence consider only what the person to whom the obligation is due ought to think himself entitled to exact by force—what every impartial spectator would approve of him for exacting—or what a judge or arbiter, to whom he had submitted his case, and who had undertaken to do him justice, ought to oblige the other person to suffer or perform. The casuists, on the other hand, do not so much examine what it is that might be properly exacted by force, as what it is that the person who owes the obligation ought to think himself bound to perform from the most sacred and scrupulous regard to the general rules of justice, and from the most conscientious dread, either of wronging his neighbour, or of violating the integrity of his own character. It is the end of jurisprudence to prescribe rules for the decisions of judges and arbiters. It is the end of casuistry to prescribe rules for the conduct of a good man. By observing all the rules of jurisprudence, supposing them ever so perfect, we should deserve nothing but to be free from external punishment. By observing those of casuistry, supposing them such as they ought to be, we should be entitled to considerable praise by the exact and scrupulous delicacy of our behaviour."

Natural law, in its widest sense, (*lex naturæ,*) is applied to those rules of duty which spring from the nature and constitution of man. There are those who maintain that the distinctions of right and wrong are the arbitrary creatures of positive institutions—"that things honourable, and things just, admit of such vast difference and uncertainty, that they seem to exist by statute only, and not in the nature of things." In opposition to this theory, it is maintained that the moral differences of things are eternal and indestructible, and that the knowledge of them, in their great primordial principles, is an essential part of the original furniture of the mind. Man is a law to himself; from his very make and structure, he is a moral and responsible being, and those rules, which, in the progress and developement of his moral faculties, he is led to apprehend as data of conscience, together with the conclusions which legitimately flow from them, are denominated laws of nature. They belong to inherent, essential morality, in contradistinction to what is positive and instituted. The complement of these rules is called right reason, practical reason, and by Jeremy Taylor, legislative reason. Hence that of Cicero: "*Est quidem vera lex recta ratio, naturæ congruens, diffusa in omnes, constans, sempiterna, quæ vocet ad officium jubendo, vetando a fraude deterreat, quæ tamen neque probos frustra jubet aut vetat, nec improbos jubendo aut vetando movet. Huic legi nec obrogari fas est, neque derogari ex hac aliquid licet, neque tota abrogari potest; nec vero aut per senatum aut per populum solvi hac lege possumus; neque est quærendus explanator aut interpres alius ejus; nec erit alia lex Romæ, alia Athenis, alia nunc, alia posthac; sed et omnes gentes et omni tempore una lex et sempiterna et immutabilis continebit, nusque erit communis quasi magister et imperator omnium deus; ille legis hujus inventor, disceptator, lator, cui qui non parebit, ipse se fugiet sic naturam hominis aspernatus hoc ipso luet maximas poenas, etiam si caetera supplicia, quæ putantur, effugerit.*" Noble as this passage is, a much greater than *Cicero* has declared that man is a law unto himself, and that those who are destitute of

* Moral Sent., part 7, § 4.

an external communication from heaven, have yet an internal teacher to instruct them in the will of God. The dictates of conscience are denominated *laws*, from the authority with which they are felt to speak; they are manifested in consciousness as commands, and not as speculative perceptions; they are laws of *nature*, because they are founded in the nature of things, and are enounced through the *nature* of the mind.

In a narrower sense, natural law (*jus naturæ*) denotes the body of rights which belong to man as man, which spring from his constitution as a social and responsible being, and which consequently attach to all men in the same relations and circumstances. In this sense it coincides with natural jurisprudence, as distinguished from the municipal regulations of States and nations.

In a still narrower sense, natural law is restricted to those principles or rules which should determine the duties of men in times of revolution, or under oppressive and tyrannical governments, or regulate the intercourse of independent States and nations. In none of these senses does natural law coincide precisely with moral philosophy. In the first sense, it may be said that the *conclusions* of moral philosophy are natural laws; they are the results of its investigations, the end of its inquiries. In the second sense, the view of human nature is too limited for a complete philosophy of the moral constitution. "Right and duty," as Dr. Reid has remarked,* "are things different, and have even a kind of opposition; yet they are so related that one cannot even be conceived without the other; and he that understands the one must understand the other." Hence it happens, that although the inquiries of natural jurisprudence begin at a different point from those of the moral philosopher, they eventually traverse the same ground, and meet in the same practical conclusions. Still, natural jurisprudence is only one branch of moral investigations; and it has only been by an unwarrantable extension of its terms, that it has been made to cover almost the entire domain of duties to our fellow men.

Dr. Paley's blunder in the nomenclature of his science would hardly be deserving of attention, if it did not indicate an entire misconception of the nature and scope of philosophy. This misconception is rendered still more glaring by his articulate statement, that the use of such a department of knowledge as moral philosophy depends upon its competency to furnish a perfect rule of life. This, indeed, is not the least of its advantages, that it authenticates the laws which, in the progress of intelligence, we have been led to adopt, and enables us to discriminate betwixt legitimate maxims and the offspring of prejudice. It supplies a valuable touchstone in cases of difficulty and perplexity. But, though moral philosophy reacts upon our rules, and authenticates or annuls them, moral rules must evidently precede philosophy. It is their existence and authority which give rise to it. Its office is to show whence they come, how they are formed, upon what grounds of certainty they rest. It is, in short, the science of our *knowledge* of moral distinctions. It is the creature of reflection upon all those spontaneous processes of the soul which are occupied with good and evil, with right and wrong. Man finds himself with certain moral convictions, with rules which he feels to be authoritative; and when he begins to *reflect* upon these phenomena, and to seek for their laws, he begins the work of the moral philosopher. There

* Act Powers, chap. iii.

may be ethicks without philosophy—a classification of all the duties of human life; there may be natural jurisprudence, or a systematic exhibition of the essential rights of humanity; there may be religion, or a profound knowledge and reverence of the will and perfections of God. It is not until the question is asked, *how* we know these things, and thought returns upon itself to investigate the laws and conditions of consciousness, that philosophy takes its rise The mere classification of objective phenomena is not philosophy, though an important organ of philosophy. The aim of philosophy is to verify human knowledge, or to show how it comes to be knowledge. In this, the true view of it, Dr. Paley, it needs not to be said, not only makes no pretensions to it, but had no conception of it. Human consciousness is a territory which he never enters; the moral faculties he has absolutely ignored; and what he has given us is rather a special application of arithmetic, from data suggested by experience, than the evolution and analysis of indestructible elements of the human soul. There is not a single problem of the science which he has grappled with in a philosophic spirit, and there cannot be a more egregious misnomer than to apply the title Philosophy to a scheme which aims no higher than to show how, with no other faculties but those of apprehension, and the susceptibility to pleasure and pain, an animal might be drilled into a particular line of conduct. Dr. Paley set out with a determination to seek for *rules*, and his treatise is only a special plea, upon what seemed to him a plausible ground, for those which he saw to be necessary. Many of his rules are right enough, and no one would have thought of questioning them, if the defence of them had not been so weak.

2. The chapter on the Law of Honour is calculated to mislead, not because it contains any thing positively false—it is, on the contrary, a faithful account of a factitious rule of life, introduced by free-thinking into the higher circles of English society—but because it may convey the implication, that honour itself is a factitious principle of action. It notices an abuse, without vindicating the just claims of what had been perverted and misapplied. That Dr. Paley has not exaggerated the abuse, requires no proof to those who are conversant with the history of the times. The licentious speculations of the Infidel philosophers of the eighteenth century—which were greedily embraced by the frivolous, profligate and vain, and passed into a sort of badge of distinction—as if the admirers of them were the only men of intelligence and spirit, undertook to compensate morality and religion for the loss of God, conscience and moral government, by introducing a sentiment of *honour*, which, apart from any interested motives—the fear of punishment, the hope of reward—the approbation of the wise and good or the sense of duty, could maintain the cause of virtue in the world. This honour appears to have been an exclusive admiration of the beauty of virtue. But it is easy to see that when this *sense* of beauty became the only criterion of right and wrong, all would soon come to be felt as beautiful which was felt to be desirable. Virtue would be reduced to the narrow proportions to which Dr Paley's Law of Honour assigned it. Substantially the same account is given by Bishop Berkeley in the Minute Philosopher.

The very abuse, however, shows that there was something real—the counterfeit proves the genuine. There must have been a foundation of stone, or the superstructure of wood, hay and stubble could not have stood for a moment. Hutcheson and Dr. Reid made *honour* synonymous with conscience,

and a sense of honour with a sense of duty. They were misled by the Latin term *honestum*, to which they supposed that our honour exactly corresponds.

General usage, however, restricts the term to two significations, one of which may be called its objective, the other its subjective sense. In the first sense, it is the esteem or praise which is awarded to a man by others on account of his actions considered as praiseworthy. Any external expressions of this inward feeling are called honours. In the other sense, it is that principle of our nature which leads us to act in such a way as to *deserve* the commendation of our fellow-men. It prompts us to perform virtuous actions, not only because they are right and pronounced to be obligatory by the conscience, but because they contribute to our dignity and are felt to be intrinsically laudable. They are seen to become us—that condecency in virtue with the excellence of human nature is what is meant by its beauty. It is lovely in itself, and adorns all its possessors. This beauty elicits admiration, and secures among the wise and good esteem and commendation to all who are graced with it. Honour, then, as a principle of action, is only another name for self-respect, or for that pride of character which preserves from what is base, or mean or shameful in conduct. It is subsidiary to conscience That must prescribe the standard of virtue, and this comes in as an additional sanction to secure conformity with it. Honour is distinguished from vanity in this, that honour aims at being *praiseworthy* and vanity simply at *being* praised. The one is consequently an inseparable ally of conscience, the other the shadow of public opinion.

Opposed to honour, in both its objective and subjective senses, is shame, which is either the contempt of others manifested in some external expressions, or the fear, on our part, of doing that which shall justly expose us to disgrace. It proceeds from the feeling that there is in vice a deformity or filthiness corresponding to the beauty of virtue. Apart from the horrours of conscience or the naked workings of remorse, there is in every guilty breast a profound conviction of meanness and degradation. The transgressor loses his sense of self-respect. He is like a man who, unconsciously having come naked or with filthy apparel into polite and refined society, awakes suddenly to a just sense of his condition.

3. Dr. Paley's representation of the inadequacy of the Scriptures as a rule of practice, should not be allowed to pass without notice. It is true, they presuppose a moral nature in us, but they are not wanting in the facilities which they furnish for guiding that nature into all duty. It is not necessary to the perfection of a rule that all the instances and occasions of its application should be minutely described. If none could be perfect that failed in this condition, moral philosophy itself would be as incompetent as the Scriptures. That cannot specify all the cases in which men may be called to act; and if the Scriptures are to be condemned for not doing this, why should it receive a milder treatment. All that we want, practically, is sound general rules; prudence and common sense must apply them. The Scriptures give us such rules, and he who faithfully obeys their teachings will find himself perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work. But the Scriptures are not a philosophy. They do not show how the commands of God are deeply founded in the principles of consciousness and reason. The reflective process they have left to human speculation, and here philosophy comes in.

4. The most exceptionable part of Dr. Paley's book is that in which he

treats of conscience. If he had been successful in his attempt to construct a moral system independently of the aid of a moral faculty in man, his success would have rendered unphilosophical the assumption of any such faculty. The law of parsimony forbids the unnecessary multiplication of causes, and where phenomena can be explained without postulating a new original principle, such a principle is not to be granted. But the failure of Dr. Paley's effort is anything but encouraging to those who would dispense with conscience. And as his general system fails to obviate the necessity of such a principle, so his special and articulate arguments fail to invalidate the proof of its existence.

In order to apprehend fully the weakness and inconsistency of Dr. Paley's discussion of this subject, it is necessary to bear in mind the real condition of the controversy. There are obviously two general questions in relation to conscience one having reference to its existence, or the reality of moral phenomena, and the other to its origin. The first question is, whether or not there is a class of judgments and emotions, specifically different from all others which we denominate moral? Is there a distinction made by the human mind betwixt right and wrong, a duty and a crime? Is there such a thing as a sense of duty and a conviction of guilt? That such moral phenomena *exist* cannot be doubted. It is a matter of universal experience—and hence no philosopher has ever thought of calling them into question. Now, to the cause or causes of these phenomena we may give the name of conscience, without presuming to determine the nature of the cause, or the mode of its operation. In this sense, the question whether or not conscience exists, must be answered by all philosophers in the affirmative. Then the question arises, what is its nature and origin? Whence are our moral cognitions and sentiments derived? It is in the answer to this question that philosophers split into sects All the possible answers may be reduced to three. 1. The opinion of those who maintain that our moral judgments are purely adventitious —that conscience is the creature of prejudice, authority, custom and education—that there is no uniform law by which it is acquired, and that it will consequently be one thing at Rome, another thing at Athens. These men admit that conscience is natural, in the sense that all men will form a conscience—but they deny that there will be uniformity in the conscience thus formed. The character of its judgments and sentiments is altogether contingent, and it itself is a factitious principle or complement of principles. 2. The opinion of those who maintain that it is natural, but not original. These men represent it as a necessary product of nature, but not as a primary gift of nature. It is an acquired faculty or combination of faculties, but it is acquired in obedience to laws of the human constitution, which not only necessitate its acquisition, but determine the elements of which it shall be composed. It is consequently the same in all men. Their nature being what it is, and operating as it does, conscience must be generated, and generated alike, in all who have this nature. It is therefore natural, in the same sense that the acquired judgments of sight and hearing are natural. It springs from nature, though it is not given as a part of nature. 3. The opinion of those who maintain that conscience is not only natural, but *original*—that it is a simple element of our being—that no analysis can resolve it into constituent principles—that its cognitions are primitive and necessary, and its sentiments peculiar and marked.

1. This being the state of the question, the first thing that strikes us in

Dr. Paley's articulate discussion of it is, that the conclusion which he seeks to establish is inconsistent with the scope and tenor of his general system. The very conception of a philosophy of morals implies that there is a foundation laid in nature for the distinctions betwixt right and wrong. If these distinctions were determined by no law, if they were absolutely arbitrary and capricious, the inquest of a principle which should furnish a perfect and adequate rule of life would be as idle and chimerical as the dreams of the alchemists. But if morals can be reduced to a system, then our moral judgments must depend upon steady and uniform principles. They must spring from our nature; and though they may not be original, they are not wholly adventitious. But in the chapter before us Dr. Paley not only denies that our moral judgments are original; he denies that they are natural; he denies that they are acquired by any constant or uniform law. He makes them as variable and fluctuating as the circumstances, education and caprices of men. This is equivalent to saying that there can be no such science as Moral Philosophy. The general conclusion of his book is that conscience is the necessary result, in beings constituted as we are, of the perception of what is useful in character and conduct, conjoined with a sensibility to pleasure and pain. It is an acquired faculty, or combination of faculties, but the process by which it is acquired is natural and inevitable in the progress and education of the mind. The conclusion of the present chapter is, that it depends altogether upon accident what actions a man shall approve or condemn, and what rule he adopts for the regulation of his conduct. Dr. Paley has been betrayed into this inconsistency, by inattention to the distinction betwixt what is natural and original. The point which he aimed to combat was the originality of conscience—that it is a principle which we bring with us into the world—like the capacity of perceiving truth, or the sensibility to pleasure and pain. He need not have gone any farther. To have been consistent with himself, he ought to have adopted the opinion which Sir Jas. McIntosh subsequently elaborated, concerning the method by which conscience, as a derivative and secondary faculty, or rather habit, is acquired. But, in his zeal to refute the originality, he aims a blow at the naturalness of conscience What is natural, under the circumstances favourable to its developement, must be as universal and uniform as what is original; and hence, in maintaining the capriciousness of moral distinctions, Dr. Paley demolishes his own book as triumphantly as he refutes the hypothesis of an innate power. To say that conscience is a complement of prejudices and arbitrary judgments, is to say that moral philosophy is impossible. To say that it is natural, whether original or acquired, is to say that there may be such a science.

2. In the next place, Dr. Paley is mistaken in *the criterion* by which he distinguishes the original from the adventitious. That criterion, according to him, is not simply *universality*, but *maturity*. It is not enough that the thing in question be found in all men who have had the opportunity of developing it, but that it should be actually developed in every man, without respect to his circumstances, the general expansion of his powers, or the degree of his experience and education. Now, our original faculties are not all unfolded at once, and none arrive at maturity without time and experience. There is an order in their developement; some precede others, as the condition of their operations. When, therefore, we inquire whether the manifestations of a power are universal, we restrict our researches to those who are in the condition in which they ought to be found, if they exist at all. The child cannot comprehend a

complicated argument; but does it follow that the faculty of reasoning is not original and universal? And so the savage supposed by Dr. Paley, or the wild boy caught in the words of Hanover, having had no opportunities of exercising his moral faculties, might be incapable, at first, of manifesting their existence. They are in him in the same state in which they would be in an infant. If we wish to know whether moral judgments are universal, we must look among those from whom Dr. Paley precludes us; we must look among those who have had the opportunity, by social intercourse, of unfolding their moral nature; and if we find, among such men, that moral distinctions universally obtain, we are sure, at least, that they are natural. We should no more look for a maturity of moral knowledge among infants, and those who, in regard to education, are no better than infants, than we should look among them for the maturity of the speculative understanding.

Dr. Paley seems to think that education is something contradictory to nature, and that whatever has been effected by education is, on that account, factitious and unnatural. On the contrary, a sound education is but the *improvement* of nature; it is nature in its progress to perfection. It is among the educated, in the proper sense of the term, that we must look for the justest exhibitions of what is original and natural. It is in man's nature as *matured*, that we may best study the faculties and capacities of man. A perverse education may do violence to nature; but these distortions will be local and accidental, and should not authorize the summary conclusion that education is the reconstitution of the man.

The test, therefore, by which Dr. Paley would determine the question of the originality of conscience, is simply absurd. He might just as reasonably propose his case to an infant hanging upon its mother's breast, as to one whose moral faculties, from the very nature of the case, never could have been exercised. "Did it ever enter into the mind of the wildest theorist," says Dugald Stewart, "to imagine that the sense of seeing would enable a man, brought up from the moment of his birth in utter darkness, to form a conception of light and colours? But would it not be equally rash to conclude, from the extravagance of such a supposition, that the sense of seeing is not an original part of the human frame?" The true test of the question is, whether the manifestations of conscience are universal among all who have had the opportunity of exercising it, and whether these manifestations can be resolved into any other principles of our nature. The universality of manifestation is a proof of naturalness, the simplicity of originality. To these two questions Dr. Paley should have confined himself. Do all men who have a sufficient degree of intelligence make a distinction betwixt right and wrong? Can you explain these judgments without an ultimate principle?

3. Having made the *maturity* of a power the criterion of its originality, Dr. Paley's next blunder is not to be wondered at. He has not favoured us with a distinct statement of what he understood to be the doctrine of an original conscience, but it may be collected from the general tenor of his argument, that he apprehended it to include two things: 1. A habit of rules, applicable to every possible variety of cases, lying unconsciously concealed in the recesses of the soul, ready to be manifested in consciousness whenever an occasion should demand; and 2, an instinct by which the rule to be applied to any given case was instantaneously and infallibly suggested. An original conscience, with him, could mean nothing less than a perfect knowledge of ethicks in its laws and their applications. It was equivalent to an infallible directory

of duty. With this notion in his mind, we are able to explain why he has grouped together, as different statements of the same thing, systems of philosophy which have nothing in common but their advocacy of the primitive character of our moral cognitions. It was to him an unimportant question whether the faculty to which these cognitions pertained were held to be reason with Clarke and Cudworth, or a distinct and separate principle with Hutcheson—whether its rules existed in the mind in the form of knowledges, developed (innate maxims) or undeveloped—or whether they were determined by sentiment or feeling, operating either as a blind instinct, or a refined sensibility to the presence of its appropriate qualities (moral taste;) all these were unimportant points, compared with the general doctrine of an original ability of some sort, to distinguish betwixt right and wrong. This ability, if mature and adequate, as it must be, if original, must be tantamount to a perfect knowledge of duty on all the occasions of life. Hence, all these theories, in his judgment, coincided in this result. They amounted to the same thing.

But no such doctrine of conscience ever has been seriously maintained by any man deserving the name of a philosopher. The primitive cognitions of morality are like all other primitive cognitions. They exist, in the first instance, as necessities or laws of conscience, and are evolved into distinct propositions by a process of reflection. Experience furnishes the occasions on which they are developed, and when developed they become the standard by which we judge of all moral truth. They stand in the same relation to the moral faculty in which the laws of thought stand to the faculty of speculative truth. Hence, they do not supersede, but suppose reflection. The germs and elements of morality, they require culture as much as any other principles of our nature. What are called the laws of thought are all given in consciousness, and constitute the ultimate standard of truth; but they require reflection to elicit them into distinct and formal propositions, and to guide their application to the complicated problems suggested by experience. So there is a two-fold office of the understanding in the case of our primitive moral cognitions—one to eliminate them in consciousness, to reduce to explicit enunciations what is implicitly given in a spontaneous operation—the other to apply the rules thus eliminated to the various exigencies of real life. Much error arises from the misapplication of laws which are just and proper in themselves. It is the function of the understanding to analyze the cases which are brought before it, and to determine which of the primary principles should be applied to them. Conscience gives us the elements—thought and reflection, the combination and uses of these elements. Conscience gives us *implicitly*—the understanding *explicitly*—the fundamental laws of morality.

This view of conscience, as containing, implicitly and undeveloped, the primary rules of right, as furnishing the *criterion*, but not the knowledge of what things are right, completely obviates the objections of Dr. Paley to the existence of such a faculty, founded on the supposition that it must act instinctively, instantaneously and infallibly. On the contrary, it begins, like all our other powers, as a feeble germ; it is strengthened by repeated and proper exercise, and brought to maturity by judicious culture and education —this education imperatively demanding the aid of reason and reflection.

4. The only argument which Dr. Paley alleges against the originality of conscience is founded on the diversity which is said to obtain in the moral judgments of mankind. This argument is, of course, a complete disproof of

any *such* conscience as he supposed to be asserted. If the moral faculty implies an instantaneous, unreflecting, instinctive discrimination of the right and just, in every possible case, any instances of the absence or want of such a power in man, would be conclusive against it. But the argument has no force against the true doctrine of conscience, unless it can be shown that there is a difference among men as to the primary principles of right. Those laws which are implicitly given, in every spontaneous operation of conscience, if they are contradictory among men, there is an end of the dispute. But nothing can be concluded against them from any amount of discrepancy in their actual application. Men may reason badly upon them, and yet admit them with an absolute faith—just as all men necessarily acknowledge the laws of thought—and yet, in a multitude of cases, misapply them, and fall into error. Speculative error is as much an argument against the primitive cognitions of the understanding as moral error against the primitive judgments of conscience, to be accounted for in the same way; and in both it will be found that there is at bottom a tacit recognition of first principles. The very mistakes of men are confessions of the truth. We have no hesitation in asserting that the primary laws of morality are essentially the same in every human mind, and that, except in cases of grievous, manifest and monstrous perversion, no instance can be found, among those whose minds are sufficiently matured, of a direct contradiction to them. They answer the condition, *quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus.*

The discrepancies upon which so much stress has been laid are all to be ascribed, not to the denial, but to an ill-judged application of these laws. The conscience was right, but the understanding was wrong. The heathen who murders his aged parents, professes to be acting on the same law of filial reverence and piety which prompts the Christian to nurse their declining days. The heathen father who exposed his tender babe, was taking it away, in a spirit of mistaken tenderness and kindness, from the evils to come. The Spartan condemned theft, but encouraged dexterity and skill. There are some instances in which atrocious vices were practised, whose history and origin we are not able to explain. But it does not follow that they who practised them denied the fundamental rules of right. It may be that they did not really approve them—that they condemned in their consciences what they practised in their lives—or that they had some ingenious sophisms, by which they extricated these vices from the jurisdiction of the rule. The Jesuits have not called directly into question any primary truth.—but they have contrived a system of casuistry, which, upon given occasions, eviscerates them of all authority and power.

The truth is, when we consider the wickedness of man, and the ingenuity of a corrupt heart in devising excuses, extenuations and shifts, the wonder is, not that there is so much, but so little diversity in the practical judgments of men. It is an unanswerable proof that there are laws enthroned supremely in the conscience, which make themselves heard amid all the tumult, confusion and uproar of passion, interest, superstition and power. These laws are the anchors of the moral system of the world.

Whatever diversity obtains in the judgments of men, may, perhaps, be reduced to four causes: 1. Where the relations which are presupposed in a moral judgment are not developed among a people, they cannot be expected to exhibit, or even to understand that judgment. There are savage tribes which cannot enter into our condemnation of theft, because the notion of pro-

perty is not definitely unfolded among them. Let this relation be as perfect with them as with us, and the moral judgment would undoubtedly be the same. 2. The weakness and debility of the intellectual faculties which are to eliminate and apply the general principles of conscience are the most prolific source of moral confusion and error. There is an incompetency in some men to comprehend the cases which are submitted to them; they cannot distinguish and discriminate, and hence they are exposed to perpetual blunders. 3. The influence of passion, interest, selfishness, to pervert the moral reasoning, covers a multitude of cases. Men contrive evasions to escape from the jurisdiction of principles whose general authority they acknowledge. They multiply exceptions to the rule. The sophistry of a corrupt heart suborns the understanding to silence the conscience. 4. The difference in the moral import of the same action, as performed in different ages or among different people, must also be taken into consideration. An action may be right to-day which is wrong to-morrow, because in the two cases its significancy is entirely different. It expresses a different principle, like a word that has changed its meaning; not that the rules of morality are mutable—but relations are mutable, and with these shifting relations the same material action may change its moral import. What would be incest with us was lawful and necessary in the family of the first man. Usury was once universally condemned by Jew and Gentile, because it was then synonymous with oppression of the poor; it is now as universally approved, because, in the changes of society, it is the life and soul of commerce.

These four considerations seem to relieve the subject of all embarrassment, by accounting for whatever discrepancy prevails in the moral judgments of mankind, without prejudice to the universality of our primitive cognitions.

5. It remains only to consider the explanation which Dr. Paley has given of the genesis of our moral sentiments. He refers them to the law of association, making conscience a secondary principle or habit, like avarice or the love of money for itself. The sentiments of approbation or disapprobation, which are immediately excited by the contemplation of virtuous or of vicious actions, were, in the first instance, awakened by the utility or hurtfulness of the actions; and this pleasure and pain, arising primarily from its quality, becomes firmly associated with the action itself—and hence the very mention of the action is sufficient to reproduce it. The approbation of virtue and the disapprobation of vice are, consequently, the pleasure and pain of utility or hurtfulness, transferred from the qualities to the action in which the qualities are found. But to this hypothesis there is one insuperable objection. Association can transfer sentiments, but cannot create them. Now, the approbation of virtue and the disapprobation of vice are feelings different in kind—not the same feelings directed to a different object, but feelings specifically distinct from the pleasure and pain of convenience or inconvenience. They are a class of feelings by themselves. The question is, how are they to be accounted for? Association may transfer them to associated objects, supposing them to be in existence, but association cannot *originate* them. If they were the *same*, with the approbation of what is useful or the condemnation of what is hurtful, Dr. Paley's theory might be admitted; but being different, it is altogether unsatisfactory. Sir Jas. McIntosh, who agrees with Paley in the general doctrine of utility, as the criterion of right, while he contends that our moral judgments are secondary and acquired, admits the originality of

our moral emotions. He saw that they were peculiar and unique, and could only be explained by an original susceptibility.

These are the special points, apart from the general proportions of the system, to which we have thought it necessary to call attention in Dr. Paley's book. These, however, are not the only things which are exceptionable. His notions of the origin of property are narrow and superficial, drawn from the objective rather than the subjective, from the crude appearances of things rather than the analysis of human nature. His resolution of the obligation of veracity into the obligation of promises, is a singular instance of confusion of ideas—as if the obligation of a promise did not presuppose that of veracity. But we have said enough to put the merits and defects of the system in a fair light. We have endeavoured to neutralize its power of doing harm—and if we have been in any measure successful, it is all that we desired.

ANALYSIS OF BUTLER'S ANALOGY.

PART I.

by

Rev. F. H. Thornwell

ANALYSIS OF BUTLER'S ANALOGY, PART I.

PART I.—CHAPTER I.

WITHOUT regard to the metaphysical objections raised by some to the possibility of a future life, growing out of difficulties connected with the question of Personal Identity, Bishop Butler proposes in the first chapter, to consider what the analogy of nature and the several changes through which we have already passed, and are yet likely to pass, suggest, as to the effect which death may or may not have upon us. The ultimate conclusion which he seeks to establish is, that there is a probability in favour of the great fundamental doctrine of religion that we are destined to live beyond the grave. He confines the discussion of the agencies or causes that it may be apprehended shall destroy us, exclusively to death, because if this should not destroy us, it is not pretended that any other power or event is likely to have this effect. The controversy, accordingly between those who assert and those who deny the reality of a future life, turns upon the question, whether we shall survive this great change, or whether our living powers shall then be doomed to destruction. It is obvious that, if it can be shown that there is a probability in favour of a future life, unless there is reason to believe that death shall destroy us, the failure to prove that death shall destroy us, leaves that probability in undiminished force. The burden of proof is upon those who assert that the dissolution of the body shall be accompanied with the extinction of the man, not simply by virtue of the maxim *affirmantis est probare,* but because the presumption is against them. The advocates of a future life can be required to do nothing more than state the probability in its favour, and then successively demolish every hypothesis which attempts to remove it. The balance of probability is with them until some adequate cause is assigned for the extinction of our being. They need not prove that this cause, whatever it may be, and none has ever been alleged but death, is incapable of producing the effect, it is enough to show that there is no reason to believe that it *is* capable. Let them make good a presumption on the side of immortality unless there is reason to believe that death shall destroy us; and then the credibility of a future life will be sufficiently made out by evincing the impossibility of proving that death will be fatal to our being. This is the course which Bishop Butler has adopted. The chapter we are considering naturally divides itself into two parts. The first presents the grounds on which a future life is affirmed to be probable unless it can be shown that death shall destroy us. The second evinces the impossibility of proving that death is likely to have any such effect, and may be subdivided into two parts, the first evincing this impossibility from general considerations, and the second discussing the various hypotheses on which this effect has been ascribed to death.

I. The probability of a future life, unless there is reason to believe that death shall destroy us, depends on two considerations: 1. The first is that it is a general law of nature, applicable both to men and inferior animals, that the same creatures, the same individuals, should exist in degrees of life and perception, with capacities of action, of enjoyment and suffering, in one period of their being, greatly different from those which belong to them in another. The doctrine of a future life involves nothing more than an exemplification of this law. If it is appointed to creatures to exist in different states, with different degrees of life and different capacities of action, the existence of man, after death, how different soever his condition then may be from what it is now, it is but the carrying out of this appointment of nature; it is only another application of a known law of his being, and is therefore probable, unless there be something in death which shall arrest the usual course of sentient existence. That there is such a law, may be collected from a variety of facts which all seem to involve it. Instances of it, in reference to inferior animals, may be seen in the difference of their states at birth and in maturity, in the changes of worms into flies, and the vast enlargement of their locomotive powers resulting from the change, in birds and insects bursting the shell and entering upon a new world and new spheres of action, and in all the various and wonderful transformations through which animals are appointed to pass. The law is exemplified in reference to man in the vast difference betwixt the condition of the child before and after birth, betwixt the helpless, imperfect state of infancy and the comparative independence and vigour of manhood. The fœtus and the infant are almost as different in their degrees of life and perception, in their capacities of action, enjoyment and suffering, from the man of mature age, as it is possible to conceive that any two states can be. Facts like these establish the law, and the law being admitted, a presumption arises in favour of a future life, which can be set aside only by showing cause why the law should be arrested at death. It is to be presumed to operate until there is evidence, not conjecture, but evidence to the contrary. Reason must be shown why death, more than birth, growth, decay and the numberless changes of the body should be fatal to the continued existence of the man; and if such reason cannot be shown, death must be placed in its relation to our being upon the same footing with these other events, and our existence after it be received, as at least credible; that existence being according to the analogy of nature, according to a natural order or appointment of the very same kind with what we have already experienced. 2. The second consideration which creates a presumption in favour of a future life is the fact, that there is in every case a probability that all things will continue as we experience they are, in all respects, except those in which we have reason to think they will be altered. The very word *continuance* expresses the idea that the future shall resemble the past. Our only reason for believing that the course of things will be found hereafter to correspond with what we have heretofore experienced it to be, must be resolved into that fundamental law of belief, that intuitive conviction of the uniformity of nature without which, all reasoning upon contingent truths would be mere conjecture. Present existence is always a presumption of continued existence except in cases in which experience has furnished a reason to the contrary. It is impossible by any process of ratiocination to prove that any substance, with the

exception of the Deity, now existing, shall continue to exist a single moment longer—yet we believe and believe firmly, in the continued being of all substances, whose destruction cannot be made evident, upon the simple ground that they exist *now*. Upon the same principle our present existence as moral and intelligent agents, is a presumption of our continued existence as such, unless it can be shown that death shall destroy our living powers. We have the same *kind* of presumption or probability in favor of our existence after death, though not the same in degree, as we have that any substances now found upon the earth shall be found there to-morrow.

From these two considerations—that it is in conformity with a general law of sentient existence, and with a fundamental principle of human belief, the doctrine of a future life is evidently probable unless there is reason to believe that death will destroy us.

Is there then any such reason? If there be, it must arise either from the reason of the thing, or from the analogy of nature.

By the reason of the thing Bishop Butler means the a priori argument from cause to effect. By the analogy of nature the argument from experience, in conformity with which we confidently predict that the future will resemble the past. There are but two methods, he would be understood to assert, by which it can be shown that death shall destroy the powers of our souls: the method of demonstration, which detects, in the operation of death as a *cause*, a necessary tendency to the extinction of our being; or the method of observation and experience, which consists in proving that, in all past instances, these two events, death and the destruction of our living powers, have been conjoined as antecedent and consequent. We must, in other words, prove either that death *must* destroy us, or that it *has* destroyed all who have died before us. The question before us is concerning a future matter of fact. How shall we know the truth by the unassisted exercise of our natural powers? We can only judge of it from the operation of causes known to be at work, or from its correspondence to the established order of events. We can only reason from the necessary tendency of things, or from the experience of the past.

Neither method is available in the present case.

We are not in possession of the data which are necessary to a successful argument from cause to effect. We cannot show that there is anything in the nature of death contradictory to the continued existence of our living powers, without knowing what death really is, and upon what the existence of our powers depend. But we know neither—some of the effects of death are obvious and palpable—but what it is in its own nature we are utterly incapable of determining. As to the other point, we are so far from knowing upon what the existence of our living powers depend, that we do not even know upon what their exercise depend. We are hence incompetent to say whether or not there be any thing in death that must prove fatal to the continuance of our souls. No more can we reason from the analogy of nature, or the experience of the past. We are unable to trace the living powers beyond death, that event removes them out of view, destroys the sensible proof of their existence, but leaves us utterly in the dark as to what has become of them. It cannot, therefore, be proved that death shall destroy us. There is no ground for the slightest presumption that it *must* or *will* prove fatal to our being. And the probabilities which have already been mentioned in favour of a future life remain in unabated force.

II. Here the argument might stop, but to make assurance doubly sure Bishop Butler proceeds to consider those imaginary presumptions, that death will be the destruction of our being, which spring from vague and shadowy impressions of the nature and operations of this great shock to our system.

1. All presumptions of this sort proceed upon the hypothesis, that the soul is compounded, and, therefore, discerptible. We know of no other destruction produced by natural causes, but the resolution of a compound into its parts. Annihilation is the prerogative of God alone, as He alone can create, and it is just as absurd to suppose that any subordinate cause can reduce to nothing that which is, as it is to suppose that a subordinate agent can evoke from nothing, that which is not. When the question is, whether death shall destroy us, death is regarded as a natural cause, and, of course, the only destruction which it can effect, is that which lies within the sphere of natural operation. It can only destroy by dissolving, and to say that the soul can be dissolved or divided is to say that it is compounded, or composed of parts.

This, however, is a gratuitous assumption. Consciousness is evidently a single and indivisible power, and it would seem, from its relations to the soul, that the soul must be equally simple. It is to mind what motion is to matter. If the motion of a particle of matter be absolutely one and indivisible, then the matter which is moved must be equally indivisible, for if the whole matter be in motion and yet the matter is divided, the motion must be divided too; so if consciousness, which is the essential activity of the soul, a compendious expression for all its powers and faculties, be single and indiscerptible, the soul must be single and indivisible. Our consciousness of our own existence is certainly indivisible, and hence it would seem that the subject in which it resides is equally so. Perhaps we are led insensibly to regard ourselves as compound beings from the intimate associations which our souls maintain with the body. We are accustomed to look upon our bodies as entering into our personality—as strictly a part of ourselves. But if the *man*, the *person*, that mysterious being, which every one means when he says—myself—is simple, as consciousness evinces it to be, then it is a prejudice to look upon our bodies as parts of ourselves. They are *foreign* matter. They *belong* to the *man*, but they are not the man. They are ours—but not ourselves. There is no more difficulty in conceiving how we can appropriate and use *them*, though not us, than how we can receive impressions from any other foreign matter. We might indeed be conceived to exist without bodies, or we might have inhabited very different ones from those which we now possess. The body being foreign matter, its destruction no more implies *our* destruction, than the destruction of any other matter from which we have received impressions.

2. Although the absolute simplicity and one-ness of the soul cannot be established by experimental observations, yet there are facts which place it beyond the possibility of reasonable doubt, that our bodies are no part of ourselves. Facts of this kind strengthen the testimony of consciousness, as they are precisely what we should expect to occur, if the man were simple and indiscerptible. They readily *fall* in with this supposition, but they are harsh and difficult of explanation upon any other hypothesis. If our souls were divisible, they would constitute some part of our material

organization; but if indivisible, whether material or not, we should expect to find them distinct from the body. Now this is what we do find. We can lose large portions of our bodies, whole limbs and members and most important organs of sense, and yet we feel that what we call ourselves still exists and exists in unaffected integrity. Our material frames undergo astonishing changes from assimilation and growth, from sickness and disease, from the constant flux and attrition of the system. All the particles which at one time compose them may be gradually lost and alienated, may, indeed, repeatedly change their owners, but the man himself remains the same. It is clear, therefore, that our bodies are not ourselves.

The indivisibility or simplicity of the soul has been inferred from two considerations, the testimony of consciousness and the facts of experience which evince our bodies not to be ourselves.

From the indiscertibility of the soul it follows, that, even upon the supposition of materialism, it cannot be proved that death shall destroy us. It is true, that if the soul be material, it cannot be said to be absolutely indivisible. Matter is conceivably capable of indefinite division. But there is a great difference betwixt saying that a thing *may* be divided, and that a thing actually *is* divided. We know that there are atoms which never *have* been divided, and which no natural power, with which we are conversant, is able to dissolve. The soul, if material, may be one of these atoms: it is certainly incumbent upon those who assert its materiality to prove that it is *not*, before they venture to conclude that death shall destroy it.

From the facts of experience, which show our organized bodies to be no parts of ourselves, it follows that we have no ground to conclude that *any systems* of matter, however hidden and intimately related to us, can be ourselves. The argument which would identify us with any *internal* systems of matter would identify us also with our gross, organized bodies. It can be drawn only from closeness of relation, an argument which, though it may be weaker in degree, is the same in kind, in the case of the external body. We have already survived several dissolutions of the body, and there is no reason to suppose that we may not survive that other which awaits us at death. Those, it is true, which we have already survived were gradual and imperceptible; but this is violent and sudden. But if the body or any part of the body be ourselves, its dissolution, no matter how effected, whether suddenly or gradually, must be our own dissolution.

But it may be objected, that what has been lost in the gradual flux and attrition of the system, is no part of the original body, but only extraneous and additional matter. That we are identified with the original body and not with this additional matter, and that, as death destroys the original body, it must also destroy us. To this it may be answered, that in the loss of entire limbs, we either lose parts of the original body, or it cannot be proved that death will destroy them. If it be something which escapes wholly and completely in the amputation of entire members and the loss of most important organs, it is something which may also escape the shock of death. But the truth is, we cannot admit the notion of an original body, separate and distinct from what the argument assumes to be foreign and additional matter. We find that we have as much command over this additional matter as over the original body. The union betwixt the soul and this additional matter is as strict and intimate as between the soul and

the original body. We can make no difference; we cannot say what is added, and what is permanent. Our relation seems to be of the same kind to every part of our frames. All we can say is that there is a sympathy betwixt the *man* and his body, in consequence of which they act and react on each other. There is consequently, no line of argument by which any matter can be shown to be ourselves, and its destruction, the destruction of ourselves. All such arguments must be founded upon our *interest* in such matter, and the foregoing remarks prove conclusively, that intimacy of interest is not identity of substance.

We shall reach the same conclusion by a more distinct consideration of the body as made up of organs and instruments of perception and motion. It is certain that none of our senses are themselves precipient and none of our limbs are themselves possessed of the power of motion. It is not the eye that sees, the ear that hears, the leg that walks, but the man that sees by means of the eye, hears with the ear and walks with his legs. The eye sustains the same kind of relation to the seeing agent as a telescope or microscope, the leg to the walking man as a crutch or a staff. In the cases of our senses and limbs we may lose both, and yet not the power of perception or of motion. A man may lose his eyes, and yet the power of vision remain; he has that which would *enable* him to see, if he had the proper instruments. This is strikingly exemplified in dreams, in which we perform all the functions of sense, without the material organs. A man may lose a leg, but the power of motion remains, he can use a substitute of wood or a staff. A man's vision becomes impaired, he can improve it by glasses. It is clear then that our organs of sense and our limbs are *instruments* which we ourselves make use of, but they are not ourselves. Their dissolution consequently is not our destruction. And if that which is so intimately related to us, can be destroyed without our destruction, there is evidently no ground to think, that the dissolution of any other matter or any other organs and instruments will be fatal to our own being. We cannot prove that we sustain any other kind of relation to any other system of matter.

It is objected to this train of observation, that it proves too much, that it is applicable to the case of brutes as to the case of men. This objection of course proceeds on the assumption, that the natural immortality of brutes is an absurdity, a thing known to be false and contradictory to reason. But those who press this objection are, in the first place, guilty of an *ignoratio elenchi;* they represent the natural immortality of brutes as including the notion that they shall become rational and intelligent agents, and capable of the everlasting happiness and moral attainments of human beings. This, however, is by no means implied. All that the argument proves is, that their immaterial principle, their living powers, whatever they are, shall survive the dissolution of their bodies; they shall be immortal as *brutes* and not as men. Still, if their immortality included in the notion of it this progressive improvement, that would not be and could not be proved to be an absurdity. There was once, prior to experience, as great presumption against human creatures, as there is against the brute creatures, arriving at that degree of understanding which we have in mature age. It seems, indeed, to be the appointment of nature, that creatures endued with capacities of virtue and religion, should be in a condition of being in which they are altogether without the use of them for a consider-

able length of their duration, as in infancy and childhood. But in the next place it is positively denied that any such progressive improvement is implied in the natural immortality of brutes. Such beings as brutes are may be required in the future state as they are here, and their continued existence therefore cannot be assumed as an absurdity. The whole objection, therefore, is invidious and weak.

III. It has now been shown that there is no reason to believe that death will be the destruction of our souls, though it will certainly destroy the exercise of our present powers of perception and motion, which depend upon the body. There is no reason to believe, however, that it will destroy our powers of reflection, that it will arrest the activity of thought, or stop the current of emotion and feeling. Our powers of reflection are consciously independent of the organs of the body. It is true that sense is the means by which the activity of mind is first evoked; "the first occasions on which our various faculties are exercised, and the elements of all our knowledge acquired may be traced ultimately to our intercourse with sensible objects." But when the mind has once been aroused and made to develope its own powers, it can continue to operate and act, independently of any aid from the organs of sense. It can reflect upon the materials it has acquired from without or it finds within, it can think, reason, remember and combine, it can live and feel, determine and will. In all these operations which constitute our state of reflection in contradistinction from a state of sensation—in which we receive impressions from without through the organs of sense—in all these reflective operations we are not conscious of any dependence upon the body. That therefore may be destroyed and these powers remain in active and unabated exercise.

In addition to the argument from consciousness, the same thing may be gathered from facts of daily observation. We see instances constantly occurring in which mortal diseases have not the slightest effect upon our powers of reflection, the persons afflicted with them often exhibiting the moment before death the highest vigour and intensity of thought. They discover apprehension, memory, reason, all entire; with the utmost force of affection, sense of a character of shame and honour; and the highest mental enjoyments and sufferings even to the last gasp; and these surely prove even greater vigour of life than bodily strength does. Now the argument is this. If death destroyed these powers, as it destroys the body, then the successive steps of death, as it approached, would be indicated by gradual failure, as they are indicated by increasing weakness in the body. If death completed destroys, death begun and advancing must impair, which we see not to be the case.

This reasoning may be set in a stronger light by the following considerations: If it could be shown that our powers of reflection and our bodily frames mutually affected each other, we have already seen that this intimacy of relation would not justify the inference, that the destruction of the one was the destruction of the other. A *fortiori* we could draw no such inference, when they do not affect each other at all.

Again, there are several things which would seem to favour the belief that they were fatal to our intellectual being, as for instance, drowsiness, terminating in sound sleep. Now if causes which seem to have a tendency to produce such an effect, are found by experience not to do so, much less can those be supposed to produce it which have no such seeming tendency at all, such as the mental diseases instanced above.

But the argument from the independence of reflection on the body, not only shows that death does not destroy, but that it does not *suspend*. We shall continue to exist, at least, there is no reason to believe that we shall not, in the like state of reflection which we now do. Death may in some sort and in some respects answer to our birth, which is not a suspension of the faculties we had before it, or a total change of the state of life in which we existed when in the womb, but a continuation of both with such or such great alterations. We may be introduced by it into a higher sphere, for the enjoyment of which the possession of bodies might be a disqualification. Reason cannot disclose to us in what state death leaves us; but it cannot be proved that death will even suspend the activity of thought, or if it could that it will destroy the power of thought. The suspension and destruction of a power are vastly different, as we see in the case of swoons.

The decay of vegetables, though a fit subject for the illustrations of poetry, is not pertinent to the matter in hand; it is not the destruction of living beings. Vegetables have no powers of perception and action, and the sole question is in relation to the destruction of these powers. And being presumed true, it is as natural as the present. It argues great weakness and ignorance to suppose that nothing is natural, but that which is familiar or a matter of daily experience. The limits of our observation are not the limits of God's appointments. That is truly natural which is stated, fixed or settled, which forms a part of the economy of Providence as conducted by the intelligent author of all things. It is but a small portion of nature that we know, but what lies beyond us is as much of nature as what we see.

It deserves to be noted that though the disproof of a future life is the disproof of religion, the disproof of religion is not, on the hand, a disproof of a future life. A future state of existence considered simply as a fact, is just as compatible with the hypothesis of atheism, as the present state of existence. If we can live here without a God, we can live hereafter; if we can live one moment, we can live two and so on forever. But without a future state there can be no religion, that is the words of eternal life, and he who cordially receives the doctrine of his immortality will not be indifferent to the other great truths of religion.

The conclusion of the whole argument is this: As no probability of living beings ever ceasing to be so, can be concluded from the reason of the thing, so none can be collected from the analogy of nature. But as we are conscious that we are endued with capacities of perception and of action, what we are to go upon is, that we shall continue so, till we foresee some accident, or event which will endanger those capacities, or be likely to destroy us. No such accident or event has ever been alleged but death, and as that is not very likely to have any such effect, a future life must be presumed true.

PART I.—CHAPTER II.

THE question of a future life is fraught with profound interest in consequence of our capacity of happiness and misery. But if our destiny here-

after were totally independent of our character and conduct here, reasonable men would give themselves as little solicitude as possible about a matter completely beyond their power. It would not be their duty to lay the subject to heart. But if, on the other hand, our future interest is suspended upon the course we pursue in this life, then the consideration of a future state becomes immensely important. Now this is the doctrine of religion. We shall hereafter be happy or miserable according as we have conducted ourselves here—happiness being the reward, and misery the punishment of our present behaviour. Against this whole notion of rewards and punishments an objection is raised, that the thing is essentially incredible and incompatible with the character of God. The design of the present chapter is to obviate this objection, by showing that the whole course of nature is a present instance of an administration on the part of God which involves the notion of rewards and punishments. In other words, the enemies of religion maintain that there is no such thing, strictly and properly speaking, as a Divine government—that the idea that God shall hereafter render eternal life to those who, by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, honour and immortality, and eternal death to those who are disobedient and rebellious is to be rejected as utterly incredible. They look upon the author of our being as possessed only of the property of simple benevolence, and consequently regard it as inconsistent with His character to suppose that he can suspend the happiness of His creatures upon the contingency of their own behaviour. He *must* make them happy without respect to their character and conduct. Now in opposition to this, Bishop Butler shows that the true notion or conception of the author of nature is that of a master or governor, prior to the consideration of his moral attributes. He actually exercises dominion or government over us at present, by rewarding or punishing us for our actions, in as strict and proper a sense of these words, and even in the same sense, as children, servants and subjects are rewarded and punished by those who govern them. So far therefore from there being any thing incredible in the notion of government, it is forced upon us by the whole course of nature—and the doctrine of religion cannot be set aside upon this ground without gainsaying the facts of daily experience. The proposition to be proved, then, is that in the present life we are under the government of God—that we are rewarded and punished—that our happiness and misery are, to some extent, dependent upon ourselves.

This proposition is made out by comparing what we experience to be the course of nature with a just definition of government. If it should appear that all the elements which enter into such a definition are found in the present state, the conclusion is not so much a deduction of reason as a matter of experience.

What then is the formal notion of government? It consists, according to our author, in annexing pleasure to some actions and pain to others, in our power to do or forbear, and giving notice beforehand to those whom it concerns. In other words, wherever rules are made known by a competent authority, in the power of subjects to obey or disobey, and supported by adequate sanctions, there is a government.

The existence of such rules, in the present case, Bishop Butler collects from the final cause of the connection which obtains between pleasure and

pain and the course of human conduct. There can be no doubt that the general purpose in attaching pleasure to some actions and pain to others, in our power to do or forbear, was to indicate the Divine will as to the manner in which men should act. The tendency of these pleasures and pains is to operate as the sanctions of a law—they are felt to be rewards and punishments—and every one is prompted to regulate his conduct so as to secure the one and avoid the other. We have no way of judging of design, but by fitnesses and adaptations. We infer that the eye was intended to see with, because it is exactly adapted to the purpose—and upon the same principle, because the annexing of pleasure to some voluntary actions and pain to others, is suited to operate as a sanction, we infer that this is the purpose of the arrangement. There is consequently no evading this argument without denying all final causes. Whenever voluntary acts are uniformly attended with pleasure as their consequence, such acts are *commanded*—wherever they are uniformly attended with pain as their consequence, such acts are *prohibited*. There may indeed be cases in which pleasure or pain accompanies a voluntary act without being its consequence; there is some gratification in *every* act, considered as the satisfaction of an impulse or desire. But this species of pleasure determines nothing as to the propriety of this or that mode of indulgence.

Our eyes were certainly intended for us to see with—but no one will contend that we are bound to look at every thing that is visible—at objects, for example, that are hurtful to the organ, or which it is a shame to scrutinize.

Pleasure and pain as connected with such and such conduct is accordingly the index to the Divine will—they *make known the law*.

But how are we apprized of the fact that such a connection in any given case obtains? How do we know that if we act in one manner we shall secure a tolerable degree of satisfaction, and if in another we shall render ourselves miserable? In a good government it is required that the law should be promulgated. This knowledge is furnished by experience addressing itself to our constitutional belief of the uniformity of nature—from the past we can predict the future. Like antecedents, in the same circumstances, will always be followed by like consequents. We are, therefore, so constituted that we can readily foresee the consequences of our conduct—and this capacity of foreseeing is a Divine warning—it is the method by which God gives us to understand how He requires that we should regulate our conduct.

We have then a law prescribed, and the subjects made acquainted with it—two elements of government. The next question is, whether the subjects are able to obey it: Does it relate to matters within their power—or are pleasure and pain distributed without any reference to their voluntary acts? Bishop Butler replies, that in the present state, all which we enjoy and a great part of what we suffer, is *put in our own power*.

Pleasure and pain are in many instances the consequences of our own voluntary acts, and consequences which we were abundantly able to foresee. By prudence and care, we can, for the most part, pass our days in tolerable ease and quiet; or, on the contrary, we may, by rashness, ungoverned passion, wilfulness or even negligence, make ourselves as miserable as ever we please. And many so please to make themselves extremely

miserable, that is, to do what they know beforehand will render them so. They follow those ways the fruit of which they know, by instruction, example and experience, will be disgrace and poverty, and sickness and untimely death. This every one observes to be the general course of things, though it is not maintained that *all* our sufferings are owing to ourselves. For the general thing here insisted on is not that we see a great deal of misery in the world—but a great deal which men bring upon themselves, which they might have foreseen and avoided.

We have now three elements of government—the rule—its promulgation—its adaptation to the power of the subjects.

The next thing to be considered is the sanction. The pleasure and pain through which we were ascertained of the law, it has already been shown was designed to operate in this way. They are strictly and properly rewards and punishments. We should guard against the error of supposing that it is essential to a reward or punishment to be immediately dispensed by the supreme power or some of his subordinate agents. The mode of imparting it does not affect the nature of the thing. Good conferred on account of our conduct is reward—evil inflicted is punishment. It is the *relation* of pleasure or pain to *actions*, and not the mode of dispensing it, which determines reward or punishment. Whether the pleasure or pain which follows upon our behaviour be owing to the author of nature acting upon us every moment we feel it, or His having at once contrived and executed His own part in the plan of the world makes no alteration as to the matter before us. For if civil magistrates could make the sanctions of their laws take place, without interposing at all, after they had passed them; without a trial and the formalities of an execution; if they were able to make the laws execute themselves, or every offender to execute them upon himself, we should be just in the same sense under their government as we are now; but in a much higher degree and more perfect manner.

Pleasure and pain, then, in uniform connection with certain courses of conduct are to be regarded distinctively as rewards and punishments—and whatever ridicule may be attached to the notion that lesser pains are to be dignified as instances of Divine punishments, the thing cannot be denied without setting aside all final causes. The pain felt upon too near an approach to fire is as really an instance of punishment on the part of God, as if He had declared from Heaven with an audible voice, that He would visit us in this way for such imprudence.

From this general survey of our situation in this world it seems that we are presented with all the elements of government. It is, of course, taken for granted that there is an author of nature. Bishop Butler's treatise is not directed against atheists, but against those who admit the Being of God, though they deny religion. The course of nature is the appointment of the God of nature—its laws require an agent, and to assert of them that they are uniform and fixed is only to describe the manner, but not to deny the reality of His agency.

But as Divine punishment is what men chiefly object against, and are most unwilling to allow, Bishop Butler particularly insists upon some circumstances in the natural course of punishments at present, which are analogous to what religion teaches concerning the punishments of the future state. The analogy is so full and complete as to answer all objections against the latter from the character of God—His incapability of being offended or provoked,

His essential benevolence and the supremacy of His will—from the ignorance, frailty and weakness of man, from the insignificance of his conduct in the eyes of such a being as the Deity, and from speculative views of necessity or fate. So striking indeed, is the analogy, that the phraseology in which the Scriptures sometimes represent the consequences of sin in a future state, is equally applicable to what often takes place in the present dispensation of things. Neither are these coincidences casual or incidental; they are frequent and uniform—so uniform as to show that they proceed from laws—very general laws by which God governs the world in the course of His providence. They not only answer all objections against the credibility of future punishments, but give rise to a serious presumption of the truth of the doctrine of religion upon this subject. They rebuke that hardiness and fearlessness with regard to what may hereafter be under the government of God, which nothing but a complete demonstration on the part of atheism can justify, nay even such a demonstration could not justify it. If pleasure and pain may be naturally connected with human conduct in the present life, upon the supposition of atheism, there is no reason why the same thing might not take place hereafter. The connection may exist as a fact, though the ground of that connection, which religion places in the character and will of God, be removed. Atheism can do no more than deny the cause of it which atheism assigns, but the fact may obtain and be explicable upon other grounds. Atheism, supposed to be consistent with the connection here, is obviously consistent with the connection hereafter; there is consequently no ground for presumption and security even on the most skeptical principles.

The analogies in question are such as these:

1. Natural punishments often follow actions that are accompanied with present gratification and procure many present advantages—as sickness and untimely death result from intemperance, though accompanied with the highest mirth and jollity.

2. These punishments are often much greater than the advantages or pleasures for the sake of which they are incurred.

3. They are often delayed a great while, sometimes even till long after the actions occasioning them are forgotten; so that delay of punishment in the present life is not impunity.

4. After such delay they often come suddenly, and with violence.

5. Certainty of such punishment is never afforded men, and during the actions which entail it, they have seldom a distinct, full expectation of its following. They trangress in the secret, latent hope that they may escape, but things notwithstanding, take their destined course, and the misery inevitably follows at the appointed time, in very many of these cases. Thus youth may claim the privilege of rashness and folly on the plea of its thoughtlessness, and expect impunity in its extravagance and profligacy—but the terrible consequences of its excesses inevitably follow and are grievously felt through the whole of subsequent life. Habits contracted then may be, and often are, utter ruin.

6. The course of nature in numberless cases, affords us opportunities of procuring advantages which, if neglected can never be recalled. The tide must be taken at the flood. There is a critical point upon the improvement of which all depends. The husbandman must sow in spring if he would reap in harvest. Men's errors may be retrievable up to a certain point, be-

yond that there is no place for repentance, though it be sought bitterly and with tears.

7. Neglect is often as fatal as active misbehaviour.

8. Natural punishments are often final—as in capital executions inflicted by the State—they are an eternal separation from the world.

Such is the course of nature as made known by experience. How exact a counterpart are the teachings of religion—so little reason is there for affirming that the notion of punishment is incredible.

PART I.—CHAPTER III.

A FUTURE state being supposed, the fundamental doctrine of natural religion, and that into which all its other principles may be ultimately resolved, is the doctrine of moral government. It is this which constitutes its stone of stumbling and its rock of offence. The most strenuous efforts of infidelity have accordingly been directed to the extinction of a sense of personal responsibility, and the opposition which has been made to a future life has arisen, not from any natural repugnance to continued existence in itself, but from the terrors with which conscience and religion have invested it, as the theatre of righteous retributions. Now moral government consists, not simply in rewarding and punishing men for their actions; this the most tyrannical person may do; but in rewarding the righteous and punishing the wicked, in rendering to men, according to their actions, considered as good or evil. It implies that there is essentially merit in virtue, and ill-desert in vice; and the perfection of this species of government consists in dispensing rewards and punishments in precise proportion to the good or ill-deserts of men. It is conducted upon the principle of distributive justice. That this principle shall be fully carried out in the future state, that men shall there receive according to the deeds done in the body, whether they be good or whether they be evil, is what religion teaches us to expect. To this it is objected, that the character of the Author of Nature is that of simple, absolute benevolence, and that consequently He is necessarily determined to produce the greatest possible happiness of His creatures without regard to their behaviour, otherwise than such regard might contribute to increase it. The notion of government in general and of moral government in particular, is scouted as inconsistent with the perfections of the Deity and His relations to His creatures. So far as government in general is concerned, this objection has already been refuted in the last chapter; it was there shown that God is really and truly a governor, who rewards and punishes men for their actions. So far as moral government in particular is concerned, it is the design of the present chapter to refute it, by showing that the natural government of God is, to a certain extent, moral. The beginnings and principle of a righteous administration are distinctly discernible in the present state. If this can be shown to be the case in the present conduct and constitution of the world, the objection to the doctrine of religion obviously falls to the ground. If a righteous government can consistently with the character of

God be carried on to *some* degree, it may surely be carried on to the *highest* degree. The difficulty lies, not in the *perfection* in which religion teaches that it shall be administered hereafter, but in the *principle* itself. One degree of it as truly establishes that principle as another. It is not contended that the moral government which obtains in this life is by any means perfect; all that is insisted on is, that the *principle* of rewarding virtue and punishing vice is distinctly recognized in the constitution and course of nature, and so that all objections to the doctrine of religion, founded on the supposed incredibility of that principle, are nothing worth. The point, then, to be proved is, that in the present life God actually, to some extent, rewards virtue and punishes vice.

The simplest and most obvious method of doing so would be to appeal directly to experience, and to show that, in point of fact, virtue is the highest expediency. If in general, less uneasiness and more satisfaction are the natural consequences of a virtuous than of a vicious course of life, in the present state, this is an instance of moral government established in nature, an instance which ought to be regarded as conclusive. But although it is far from being doubtful, that virtue, even in the present world, is happier, in the long run, than vice, yet as it is extremely difficult to weigh and balance pleasures and uneasiness, each amongst themselves and also against each other, so as to make any thing like an exact estimate of the preponderance of happiness on the side of virtue; as amidst the infinite disorders of the world, there may be exceptions to the happiness of virtue, and to the shame and infamy of vice, and as the traces of a moral government may be detected even upon the supposition that virtue is not the policy of earth, Bishop Butler dismisses this method of proof and appeals to other considerations.

I. His first argument is what may be called the antecedent credibility of the case. In the last chapter it has been shown that a *government does exist.* It is a matter of fact that God *does* reward and punish according to *some* rule. Now the question is, what is the most *likely* supposition as to the nature of the rule? Which would we find harder to reconcile with our natural sense and apprehensions of things, the dictates of our own consciences and our conceptions of the Divine perfections, a government which distinguished betwixt virtue and vice, or one which did not? Let it be granted that there *is* a government, what *kind* of conduct would we antecedently *expect,* that it should reward and punish? Most obviously the most natural supposition, the one encumbered with fewest difficulties, is that of moral government. The whole argument may be embraced in the following sorites: That government is likely to be the true one which is encumbered with fewest difficulties; that is encumbered with fewest difficulties which best accords with our natural sense and apprehension of things; that best accords with our natural sense and apprehension of things which is moral. Therefore a moral government is likely to be the true one.

II. The second argument is founded on the distinction which is evidently made between prudence and imprudence. Tranquillity, satisfaction and external advantages are the natural consequences of a prudent; inconveniences and sufferings of an imprudent course of conduct. Now the argument is, that a dispensation which rewards prudence and punishes imprudence is, in some degree, moral. This proposition rests upon two considerations: 1. The possibility of such a thing as *prudence,* which is an abridged

ment, by accidental hinderances, are to be regarded as a tacit promise from the author of nature, that scope shall hereafter be given for their expansion and maturity. The contingency of the hinderances is an intimation that, at some future period, they shall be *removed*, and the permanent, inseparable nature of the tendencies, that they shall be continued, and have room and verge enough for their complete and unhampered operation. In this view these tendencies become a proof of the doctrine of religion; they are a sort of Divine promise, in the very constitution of things, that virtue shall finally triumph in happiness and honour, and vice be subdued and degraded.

In both of these aspects the argument is conclusive, provided it is so that the tendencies in question are inherent in virtue and vice, respectively as such, that is, are a part of their very nature, and that the hinderances which prevent them from effect, are only contingent and accidental. Both these points, the essential nature of the tendencies and the accidental nature of the hinderances, are made out in the following manner:

I. As to the tendencies, there can be no doubt in the case of individuals. If men could be perfectly virtuous, the amount of their happiness would be greatly increased. Remove all the miseries which imprudence, bad passions, unlawful indulgences bring upon them, and not much would be left to deplore; and if they could be *known* to be perfectly virtuous, their influence and power, the degree of honour, confidence and respect which they would receive from others, would be immensely increased. This point being so plain, Bishop Butler simply mentions it and lays the stress of the discussion upon another point not quite so obvious—the tendency of virtue in *society* to increase its power and to prevail over all opposing influences. The true strength of society, its prosperity and its power, is its virtue; make that universal, and its dominion would be unlimited and its happiness unruffled.

The tendency of power under the direction of virtue to increased dominion, is illustrated by the tendency of power under the direction of reason to prevail over brute force. Though many animals are superior to man in physical strength, and the aggregate of animal strength is probably greater than that of the human race, yet reason renders us superior and makes us the lords of this lower world. Every one feels that it is not an accidental supremacy, but one which springs naturally and obviously from the possession of reason, what it has an inherent and necessary tendency to obtain. But still, that it may be successful, there are conditions which must be observed, there are accidental hinderances which would impede its operation, that must be previously removed. There must be some proportion betwixt the power under the direction of reason and the opposing brute force; there must be scope and opportunity for its exercise; there must be concert and union among the possessors of reason. We can conceive a state of things, in which brute force, in point of fact, shall prevail over reason. If the rational inhabitants of any given world were wholly at variance and disunited, while the irrational ones were firmly united among themselves by instinct, this might greatly contribute to the prevalence of brute force, but then this would be an unnatural and inverted state of things.

Now virtue in society has a like tendency to prevail over all opposite power. It renders the public good an object and end to every member of

the body, by putting every one upon consideration and diligence, recollection and self government, both in order to see what is the effectual method, and also in order to perform their proper part for obtaining and possessing it —by uniting a society within itself, by means of veracity and justice. It removes all those sources of distraction and weakness which are found in selfishness, ambition, partizan zeal and the low passions of the demagogue and politician. There can be no doubt therefore, of the natural tendencies of virtue, but, as in the case of reason and brute force, concurrences were necessary to the success of reason, so in the case of virtue analogous conditions must obtain. There must be some proposition betwixt the power under the direction of virtue and opposing power, there must be sufficient length of time, there must be a fair field of trial, a stage large and extensive enough, proper occasions and opportunities for the virtuous to join together, to exert themselves against lawless force and to reap the fruit of their united labours. It is from the want of these concurrent circumstances that virtue does not prevail to a greater degree over vice in the present world. It is not that virtue in itself is weak, but it is not in a condition to put forth its strength. Good men do not know each other—there cannot, consequently, be union and concert. Life is too short to afford a sufficient stage for the exhibition of the energies of virtue, and various untoward accidents combine to keep it down. 2. But that these hinderances are all contingent and accidental, which is the second point in the proposition—is obvious from the fact that we can easily conceive of their removal. They are not founded in the nature of things. We have but to enlarge our minds to something like the conception of the scale of the universe, and we can easily imagine scenes in eternity lasting enough, and in every other way adapted to afford virtue a sufficient sphere of action, and a sufficient sphere for the natural consequences of it to follow in fact. To him who believes in the natural immortality of the soul and the progressive improvement of our faculties, there is nothing incredible in the supposition, that good men hereafter may not only unite among themselves, but be found in concert with all other orders of virtuous beings—virtue being naturally a bond of union among all who profess it and are known to each other. This concert of the good must be at once, a protection to every individual, and a source of immense consolidated influence throughout the universe. The picture which Bishop Butler draws of its power is one of the finest passages in the book, and no one can peruse it without the fullest conviction that virtue is power. It is true that it is only a *supposition* which is made. But if the supposition be not incredible, it answers the purpose of evincing that the hinderances which now keep virtue from its full effects are only accidental—it shows conclusively that they *may* be removed, and consequently that they are not necessary.

The same thing is farther illustrated by the example of a single kingdom in which virtue universally prevails. Remove from it one by one all the causes which now obstruct the operation of virtue, and give it time and scope for its development, and every one must see that such a kingdom would eventually fulfil the predictions of the millennial glory of the church. This imaginary case clearly shows that the tendencies of virtue are permanent and necessary, while the obstructions to its success are temporary and contingent. The general proposition is consequently proved, and the conclusion would seem to be inevitable, that there is a begun moral government *now*, and that there shall be a perfect one hereafter.

Should it be objected however, that notwithstanding these considerations, things may go on hereafter in the same mixed way in which they do now, it may be answered that the principal scope of the argument from analogy is not to prove the truth of religion, but to answer objections to its claims. In the present chapter the perfect moral government which religion teaches us to expect has been vindicated, in its principle, from the cavils of skepticism, by showing that the same principle is actually embodied in the present course and constitution of nature. The objection thus falling to the ground, the doctrine of religion must stand or fall to the ground by its own proper proofs. Thus much must be conceded to the argument that a perfect moral government is not antecedently incredible, even by those who are reluctant to concede any more. But in the present instance analogy goes farther—it leads us to expect what religion requires us to believe, it is a proof additional to the direct evidences in the case.

The face of this presumption will be best felt by a brief recapitulation of the points that have been established—1. It has been shown that God is not indifferent to virtue and vice ; He has given no distinct and unambiguous declarations that He is on the side of virtue and opposed to vice; not a single syllable can be gathered from nature of the least degree of Divine partiality to vice. So that nature proclaims and in no doubtful tones that in the long run, it is likely to be well with the righteous and ill with the wicked. 2. The government of religion differs only in *degree*, and not in kind from that which we experience here. It is the completion of what is here begun. 3. The operations of conscience forecast a more perfect state of things—they make the guilty apprehensive of dangers yet to come, and inspire the righteous with delightful hopes of richer and more enduring rewards. This is matter of fact which every one must know, who attends to what passes within him. Here then in the very structure of conscience is an argument not merely sufficient to answer objections, but directly to strengthen and confirm the doctrine of religion. 4. To all this must be added, that we see in virtue a real foundation for the state of things which religion leads us to anticipate. It has necessary tendencies which point to such a result, and as the hinderances which now hold them in check are temporary and accidental, we cannot but believe that these tendencies will hereafter find a field in which they shall be permitted to expand and ripen to maturity. Why plant them in virtue if they are to be everlastingly nugatory ? Why clothe it with powers which are never to be employed ?

From these considerations it is obvious that the argument of the present chapter is positive as well as negative—it answers objections but it does something more—it gives rise to a real presumption that the moral scheme of government established in nature, shall be absolutely completed hereafter. It would be enough, in and of itself, to enforce the obligations of religion.

PART I.—CHAPTER IV.

THE general doctrine of religion that we are under the moral government of God, to be rewarded or punished hereafter, according to the deeds

done in the body, obviously implies that there is a possibility of transgression. The notion of sanctions without a possibility of this sort would be absurd. So far then as probation implies nothing more than this hypothetical possibility of transgression, it is an essential element of government. But the doctrine of religion goes farther and teaches not merely that we *can* sin, but that we are very *likely* to sin, that we are surrounded with temptations to what is wrong, so numerous and strong, that to secure our everlasting interests is a work of great labour and self-denial, and one in which we are in great danger of failing. Our future happiness does not come to us as a matter of course, it is made dependent upon our conduct, and in that conduct, we are exposed to fearful hazards of going wrong. Now the question is, whether this state of things be credible. The point of the objection is, the *danger* to which our happiness is exposed. It is contended that a benevolent God would not put His creatures in a situation, in which their everlasting interests were likely to be shipwrecked, by the circumstances in which they were placed. Bishop Butler removes this objection, by showing that we are in a like state of probation in regard to our temporal interests. The notion of natural government as much implies the hypothetical possibility of transgression, as that as of moral, and to this extent natural probation is an inseparable element of natural government. But there is obviously much more than a possibility of failure which attaches to our temporal lot. Men *do* fail constantly and fatally. It is a matter of daily observation, that many are greatly wanting to themselves, and miss of that natural happiness which they might have obtained in the present life. No man, in fact, comes up to the full requisitions of perfect prudence; no man can say that he has never brought any inconvenience upon himself by any degree of misconduct; while multitudes plunge themselves into extreme distress and misery, by courses, which they knew or might have known at the time, would be fatal, and which they could have avoided. The multiplied instances of failure show that there is *danger* of failure, and that our temporal interests are as truly put to hazard as our eternal good. We speak familiarly and without reference to religion, of the hazards which young people run upon setting out in the world, hazards from other causes than merely their ignorance and unavoidable accidents. Nature therefore is in keeping upon this point, with religion, and shows that there is nothing incredible in the statement, that God should permit our happiness to be endangered and utterly forfeited through miscarriages on our part.

When we go farther and inquire into the sources or causes of our temporal danger, we find that they are precisely of the same nature with those of religion. They all resolve themselves into the power of *temptation*. A man is tempted when he is enticed, or in any other way impelled to pursue a course of conduct inconsistent with reason. These motives to wrong conduct may be suggested from *without*, as when persons are betrayed into error upon surprise, or have their passions and appetites strongly influenced by the presence of the objects that are suited to gratify them. Or they may be suggested from *within*, from habits and appetites periodically craving indulgence, or from the pictures of imagination exciting our lusts and prompting us to seek opportunities and occasions of indulgence. But no matter whether the motives to irregular conduct spring in the first instance from without or from within, the external implies the internal, and

expression for providence or forethought, implies that the world is governed by fixed laws, and that there is in us a natural disposition to anticipate the future from the past. The expectations excited by this natural disposition may be regarded as promises made to us by the author of nature, that the same causes, in the same circumstances, shall always produce the same effects, and the uniformity which actually obtains in nature, as the fulfilment of these promises. In our original constitution therefore God promises, and in the conduct of the world, is faithful to His word. This *faithfulness* to the expectations He has excited is a moral perfection, and shows Him to be to this extent, a moral ruler. 2. Prudence and imprudence are of the general nature of virtue and vice. This is proved in a dissertation at the end of the volume, in which a regard to our own happiness is shown to be a duty resting on the same grounds and as disinterested, in any proper sense, as a regard to the happiness of others. Prudence is, therefore, one department of virtue, and imprudence of vice, and hence to reward prudence is to reward virtue, and to punish imprudence is to punish vice—in part.

III. The third argument is that, in civil society, vice is often punished and necessarily punished, on account of its mischievous tendencies. When the usual penalties are not actually inflicted, they are still dreaded, and this natural fear and apprehension of them are a declaration of nature against it. Its mischievous tendencies are a brand placed upon it by the author of nature to secure its punishment from men, and whatever society does for its own vindication and prosperity, is done in conformity with the appointment of God—may, indeed, be regarded as done by Himself, though done through the instrumentality of men. The argument is that civil society is the ordinance of God. Whatever is necessary to its preservation and its good is equally His ordinance. The punishment of vice being thus necessary, is His own act; so also virtue is the strength of society, and this beneficial tendency is a mark placed upon it to secure—what in many cases takes place—the reward of virtue from men. Here then is moral government—virtue rewarded and vice punished—in consequence of an arrangement, making the one beneficial and the other mischievous—which, to a good degree, secures the result.

It is vain to object that in point of fact, good actions are often punished and bad ones rewarded. When good actions are punished it is not the appointment of God, He has not made this *necessary*, and therefore it is not natural. In the next place good actions are never punished in their true character, never punished considered as beneficial to society. Virtue is dressed in the attire of vice, misrepresented and disguised, when the anomaly takes place. And in the same way vicious actions are never rewarded in their true character of hurtfulness and mischief.

IV. The fourth argument consists in the enumeration of instances in which virtue, *as such*, is actually rewarded, and vice, *as such*, punished in the natural course of things. Instances of this sort are not proofs but examples of moral government—moral in the strictest sense, though not in that perfection of degree, which religion teaches us to expect. When it is said that virtue, *as such*, is rewarded, and vice *as such*, is punished, the meaning is that in such cases, the pleasure or pain was due to the moral quality of the action, to its virtuousness or viciousness. There is certainly a distinction betwixt actions considered in themselves, as the expressions of our im-

pulses and desires, and that quality ascribed to them, which we call virtuous or vicious. The gratification of every natural passion is attended with delight—but this pleasure of gratification is one thing, and that which results from reflecting on the action as right, or from its moral excellence, is another. Now what is asserted in the present argument is, that there are instances, in which the moral quality of actions, abstracted from all reference to their being gratifications of natural desires, is the cause of pleasure or of pain. It is their virtuousness which produces good, and their viciousness which produces evil. And this is moral government. 1. The first specification, under this head, is the immediate effects of virtue and of vice upon the temper. Vice, *as such*, is naturally attended with some sort of uneasiness, and not uncommonly with great disturbance and apprehension. Remorse is a feeling of pain arising from an action of a man's own, reflected upon by himself as *wrong*—it is the moral obliquity and that alone which produces the uneasiness. There is disquietude resulting from a sense of loss or harm, but it differs from remorse in this, that it is accompanied with no conviction of ill-desert and no apprehension of future punishment. But in remorse a man feels that he is guilty, that he has done wrong, that he deserves punishment and trembles at the prospect of a higher tribunal to which conscience summons him. Virtue, on the other hand, is attended with security and peace of mind—the man feels that he has done right, is pleased with himself as having deserved well and looks to the future with calmness and with hope. Thus the operations of conscience are themselves instances of a righteous retribution, conducted in our own souls. God carries on a moral government within us; we are a law, a judge and an executioner to ourselves. The fear of future punishment and the peaceful hopes of future happiness which the natural operations of conscience excite may, indeed, be illusory, but they are real pleasure or pain in the sensation, and are consequently so much happiness and misery to be set to the account of virtue and vice respectively. They should not therefore, be discarded from the argument. 2. Passsing from the individual's own mind to his relations in society, it is found that virtue in consequence of the good opinion which men have of it, is often productive of much convenience and advantage—and vice, in consequence of their ill opinion, of corresponding inconvenience and loss. It need hardly be said that all honest and good men are disposed to befriend honest and good men as such, and to discountenance the vicious on account of their vices, but it deserves to be particularly remarked that the generality of the world, though they have little regard to the morality of their own actions, and may be supposed to have less to that of others, when they themselves are not concerned, are yet, somehow or other, disposed to favour men of known integrity and virtue. They know that such men can be trusted and they feel that they are worthy of the honours bestowed upon them. The moral convictions of men very often determine the distribution of public offices and rewards; and sometimes death itself, often inconveniences and infamy are the public consequences of vice, as vice. The concurrence of moral indignation against the iniquity of tyranny, with a sense of its grievous oppressions, has been sometimes instrumental in achieving important revolutions, and gratitnde finds its main incentive in the moral excellence, the benevolence and virtuous kindness of a benefactor.

3. To this may be added two circumstances, though apparently trivial

in themselves, which are real instances of moral government in the present constitution and conduct of the world. 1. Domestic government, which is natural, is, in the strictest sense, moral. 2. The sense which men have of the moral ill-desert of crimes, is what inclines them to support the government in punishing them as mischievous. Take away this moral conviction, and penal statutes would be a dead letter; hence no penal code can ever be in advance of the moral progress of a community. The statute-book can make nothing crimes, which the conscience has not previously made sins. An action is punishable, only as it is wrong; it may be and is punished, only as it is mischievous, and until the conscience has decided that an action is punishable, it is in vain for the Legislature to make laws against it. Hence civil society must lay the foundation of its penal code in the moral convictions of men. When conscience supports the law, then and then only can it be adequately enforced. Thus from the good opinion which men have of virtue, and their bad opinion of vice, it seems that no little advantage results to the one and inconvenience to the other, in the social relations of the race. The course of the world does, in some measure, turn upon the decisions of conscience. That God has given us a moral nature may most justly be urged as a proof of our being under His moral government; but that He has placed us in a condition which gives this nature, as one may speak, scope to operate, and in which it does unavoidably operate, that is, influence mankind to act, so as thus to favour and reward virtue, and discountenance and punish vice; this is not the same, but a further additional proof of His moral government; for it is an instance of it. The first is a proof, that He will finally favour and support virtue effectually; the second is an example of His favouring and supporting it at present, in some degree.

That virtue, as such, is often rewarded, and vice, as such, punished, and that the rule is never inverted is to be ascribed to the moral constitution which God has given us, in connection with the influence which the opinion of our fellows exerts upon our happiness or misery. We are so formed as to approve of virtue, immediately and for itself. There is nothing in the human mind contradictory to it, no natural approbation of falsehood, injustice or cruelty. Instances of the approval of vice, in and for itself, if such ever occur, which is extremely doubtful, are evidently monstrous. The law of man's nature, that to which his internal structure evidently points as its end, is virtue, and hence conscience naturally and instantaneously approves it, wherever it is perceived; the most abandoned pay it the homage of their respect. They *approve* the right, though they persevere the wrong. But the effects of this moral constitution do not stop at ourselves. We are made for society, and therefore the praise or censure of others has almost as much effect upon our happiness or misery as the commendation or rebuke of our own consciences. Our nature responds to the sentiments and feelings of those around us; and as they have the same moral constitution with ourselves, they must commend us for our virtues and condemn us for our vices, so that it cannot but happen, that virtue as such shall often be rewarded, and vice punished by society. Its moral convictions will prompt and determine the judgment, and that judgment will tell from the natural sensibility of men to reputation.

It is by no means contended, however, that the praises and censures of society are dispensed with exclusive reference to virtue and vice. There

are instances, no doubt, in which vicious actions are rewarded, notwithstanding their viciousness, and virtuous ones censured, notwithstanding their virtuousness. God, for purposes of discipline and for other ends, perhaps, which we are incompetent to discover, governs the world by laws from which such promiscuous distribution inevitably follows. Moral government is here incipient and not complete. But though virtuous actions are sometimes condemned, they are never condemned *because* they are virtuous, that is not made the ground of censure. The conscience must be hoodwinked, and their virtuousness concealed from the understanding, before an unfavourable judgment can be formally pronounced. And though vicious actions are sometimes rewarded, they are not rewarded, *because* they are vicious. The same delusion is practised here as in the case of virtue. Hence, in the midst of all the confusion and disorder of the passions, the voice of nature is clear, it is distinctly in favour of virtue and against vice. Where we *know* virtue to exist, we are so framed as to approve and reward it; where we know vice to exist, to condemn and punish it.

The operations of conscience, in the circumstances in which we are placed, cannot but give rise to the hope of the future triumph of the virtuous and good. It is a prospective principle, its punishments and rewards are alike felt to be anticipations of somewhat higher and better that is yet to come. The argument for moral government, therefore, founded on the actual instances of it, which are constantly taking place through the agency of our own moral nature, goes farther than the mere answer of objections to the doctrine of religion, it creates a positive presumption in favour of its truth; that perfect dispensation which religion teaches us to expect is precisely the dispensation to which our consciences spontaneously point. Analogy, therefore, is here positive as well as negative. The next argument is still more intensely positive, it raises the presumption to a real probability.

V. This argument is founded on the necessary tendencies of virtue and and vice to produce that perfect dispensation of things which religion teaches us to expect. We can detect in virtue the seeds of that harvest which constitutes the future glory of the righteous, and in vice, the elements of that misery which constitute the blackness of darkness forever. Virtue has a natural tendency to procure more happiness, influence and power to its possessor than it actually does procure in the present life, and vice a tendency to entail more weakness, infamy and misery upon its possessors than it actually does entail. Virtue is fitted to reign, vice is fitted only for wretchedness and disgrace. These natural and essential tendencies are here prevented from effect by accidental causes, causes which are evidently contingent, which are not founded in the nature of things, but which we can readily conceive to be removed. Such is the general statement, and it is made to bear upon two points. 1. The fact of the *existence* of such tendencies, whether they shall ever become effect or not, is alleged as a proof of the Divine regard for virtue and the Divine condemnation of vice, it is a mark of God's favour in the one case and of His disapprobation in the other. Hence it shows that there is a moral government actually begun and carried on in this life, a distinction, in other words, betwixt the virtuous and the vicious. 2. In the next place, essential and inherent tendencies, which are prevented from their full develope-

the habits. Certain it is, that memory and habit seem to be subject to the same law.

Habits are two-fold—active and passive. Passive habits are the tendencies, dependent upon custom, of ideas or states of mind to introduce others with which they have no natural connection. The instant suggestion of the sense upon the inspection or hearing of a word—the instant suggestion of the correction furnished by touch, of the impressions of magnitude and distance made by the eye, are instances of this species of habit. The force of the habit is in the strength of the casual association, and the strength of the association depends upon its frequency and repetition. Any casual associations may ripen into passive habits by being often repeated.

There are also active habits, and these may relate either to the body or the mind. In both cases they are the results of repeated acts. Habits of the body are produced by external acts, and habits of the mind by the exertion of inward practical principles. External action is of no avail in the formation of these habits, except as it proceeds from these principles. They must be exercised in order that they may be ripened into habit. Virtuous purposes and virtuous resolutions are internal acts, real exercise of the virtuous principle, and therefore contribute to virtuous habits. This is also the case with sincere endeavors to force upon others and ourselves a practical sense of our duties and responsibilities. The universal law is that exercise strengthens every species of habit, whether active or passive. It is upon this principle that habit gives us a new facility in any kind of action.

But in order to understand how it produces its other effect, settled alterations in our temper and character, an effect equally entering into and constitutive of our capacity of discipline, we must consider the influence ef exercise upon our passive impressions. These are simply our emotions, so called because they are excited by the presence or contemplation of their proper objects, without the concurrence of the will. We are passive under the causes which produce them—their object being present, in reality or imagination, they are awakened, whether we will it or not. Now these emotions constitute our immediate motives to action—they set us agoing. The effect of exercise upon them, however, is to diminish their intensity. The more frequently they are excited, the less sensibly they are felt. They are the primum mobile in the formation of habits—but in the very process of forming the habit they lose their own vivacity and power. "From these two observations together—that practical habits are formed and strengthened by repeated acts, and that passive impressions grow weaker by being repeated upon us, it must follow, that active habits may be gradually forming and strengthening, by a course of acting upon such and such motives and excitements, while these motives and excitements themselves, are by proportionable degrees, growing less sensible ; that is, are continually less and less sensibly felt, even as the active habits strengthen. And experience confirms this, for active principles at the very time they are less lively in perception than they were, are some how wrought more thoroughly into the temper and character, and become more effectual in influencing our practice."

From the contrary influence of exercise upon our emotions and actions may be seen the effect in giving a new character. It gives readiness and facility in action, strengthens the practical principle absolutely in itself. At the same time it deadens sensibility, it suppresses these impulses and emotions which

are contradictory to itself, and thus makes the man a different being from what he was before. The great purpose of our emotions is to be subservient to the formation of habits by prompting us to action, and if we permit them to be repeatedly exercised without acting upon their impulses, we shall finally be wanting in any principles of action. Habits are the proper supply to their decay.

Such then is our capacity of discipline. Our minds are made to be enlarged and to be furnished with knowledge, experience and habits, and habits give rise to a new and determinate character. We can thus become fit for states for which we were once wholly unqualified. In explaining the law of habit there are two practical remarks which Bishop Butler makes, of the utmost importance. The first is, that drawing pictures of the beauty of virtue in such a way as to excite our admiration without prompting us to action, really hinders instead of contributing to our moral improvement. The emotions are made to lose their vivacity and no active principle is acquired to supply their place. A man may harden his heart by ideal pictures of imaginary distress. A sickly sentimentalism is not virtue.

The other remark is, that passive impressions made upon us by experience, admonition, example, have a tendency to form active habits only by inducing us to pursue them into action. Habits do not result directly from the emotions, but from the acts which are consequent upon them, and where there are no acts there can be no habits. We are not improved by right feelings, but by these right feelings terminating in right practice. It is the *doer*, not the hearer nor admirer of the law, that is righteous.

III. Having shown the grounds of the necessity, and the possibility of discipline, Bishop Butler proceeds to a distinct consideration of that discipline to which, in one period of the present life, we are subjected, in reference to the interests of another. He thus shows that the *principle* of education is a principle embodied in natural government, that our earthly is precisely analogous to the moral discipline to which religion teaches us we are subject. The two points under which he embraces this discussion are first, the necessity of discipline in order to fit us for the duties and responsibilities of mature life; and second, the fitness of our circumstances in the earlier periods of life, for imparting it.

I. The necessity of discipline. Without the capacities of improvement which we have seen that man possesses, he would be utterly incapable of that which is the end of his existence, considered only in his temporal capacity. Nature never qualifies us *wholly*, that is, without care and attention on our part, much less at once, for this mature state of life.

1. Maturity of understanding and bodily strength are not original endowments, but gradual acquisitions. We are *born* children, but *grow* to be men. That enlargement of the mind, and that developement of the body, without which we would be utterly unfit for the business of the world, are the result of the continued exercise of our powers, physical and intellectual, from the dawn of our being. Hence we see that God does not even make us *men* in the first instance, but creates us with capacities which are susceptible of growth, and puts it upon us to climb up to maturity. He *trains* us to manhood. 2. But in the second place, maturity of mind and body is not all that is necessary to fit us for life. There is a *knowledge* and there *habits*, that is, the mind and the body, in addition to their expansion, must be furnished with *acquisitions*, the result of exercise and

experience, before they can be suited to this temporal state. Want of every thing which is learned during infancy and childhood would render a man as incapable of society, as want of language would; it would in fact render him incapable of taking care of his life for a single hour without miraculous assistance.

1. In the first place, the emotions which his circumstances are calculated to excite would completely unfit him for any thing else. He would be distracted with astonishment and apprehension and curiosity and suspense. He would be in a state of perpetual wonder. It is *familiarity* which subdues these feelings, and enables us to be cool, unmoved and self-possessed among the striking objects around us. They must cease to be *strange*, before we can properly act among them. Hence *experience* is necessary to generate that temper of mind, that equanimity of soul, which our temporal duties require. 2. In the next place, his senses would be of little use to him antecedently to experience, men must *learn* to *see* and *hear*, that is, to judge of the nature, distance and qualities of objects by these senses. The information which they naturally give us, is confined to sensations of colour and sound. Left to them alone we could never be conducted to the knowledge of an eternal world, much less could we determine the hardness or softness or distances of objects. Men would, consequently, be in perpetual danger of their lives. They might rush against trees or strike themselves against stones, or walk down precipices, and that without any apprehension or alarm. The knowledge which we derive from these senses, are judgments which are gradually formed in childhood and imperceptibly ripened into habits. They are results of experience and education. Here we may see the wisdom of God in reference to a period which, in itself, is the most despicable of our whole existence—the period of infancy. Its very helplessness is an argument of the Divine goodness. It has not yet learned to live, but as it hangs upon its mother's breast, and is protected by its mothers care, in the numberless contractions of its muscles, and the involuntary exercise of its organs, it is acquiring a science, which, if born in the maturity of its strength, it could not without a miracle, be preserved long enough to master. It remains a nursling until it has learned to make use of its senses, has ascertained the existence and properties of the natural world, has rendered sight the interpreter of touch and made sound and odour, indications of direction and distance; it is kept helpless until it can safely be trusted to itself, not permitted to walk until it is prepared to walk with impunity. In this respect, therefore, men come into the world, unformed, unfinished creatures. They want the knowledge of material phenomena which experience alone can give, and which it gives so slowly, so gradually, so imperceptibly, that we are apt to confound acquired judgments with original information. Men actually learn how to live in the world. 3. In the third place, there are habits of moderation and self-government, of restraint, of courtesy, of deference to the opinions and feelings of others, without which society would be impossible. These habits are all acquired. Antecedent to experience and discipline, men would be the creatures of their impulses, headstrong, self-willed and impetuous. 4. In the fourth place, every man must have his particular employment, and the knowledge of its exigencies is not intuitive but acquired.

These considerations show that, even in a temporal point of view, man

is to be educated for his duties. Without discipline he is utterly unqualified for his mature state of life—he is an infant and must be a man. If he were born or created a man, he must be familiarized to the world, must know its existence and properties, must be able to profit from the natural information of his senses, must be fitted by habits for society and by special knowledge for his special and definite occupations.

II. Needing discipline as he does to fit him for maturity, man is placed in a situation, in infancy, childhood and youth, exactly adapted to impart it. 1. Children are daily acquiring that *familiarity* with things which represses and subdues the disposition to *wonder*. 2. They acquire the use of their senses and learn to pronounce those judgments, and to form those passive habits concerning material phenomena, without which they could never live in the world. 3. They are trained in the family, at school, in their intercourse with each other to these habits of subordination, restraint, courtesy and decency, without which civil government would be impracticable. 4. Experience, in divers ways, furnishes them with rules of conduct which are so imperceptibly acquired as to be mistaken for instincts, and which are yet absolutely necessary for the safety and comfort of the individual. Suspicion, caution against treachery, judgments of character are all habits acquired from experience. They are rules collected from numerous, early and forgotten inductions. Thus it is clear that he could never be a *man*, without a miracle, who had not previously been a *child*. "The beginning of our days is adapted to be, and is a state of education in the theory and practice of mature life."

In this education for maturity, the example and instruction of others may be of material assistance—but it should never be forgotten that *much* depends upon ourselves. Our own efforts and exertions can never be superseded. It is true that much of our natural education may be regarded as inevitable—we cannot help acquiring it. The use of our senses and the habits of judging concerning material phenomena *all* acquire, these seem to be a matter of course. But those habits which fit us for society and government, and that knowledge and skill which fit us for particular employments, demand diligence, attention, care and long experience. These do not come of course. To some, in any good measure, they never come at all. They must be *sought* if they would be found.

"The former part of life, then, is to be considered as an important opportunity which nature puts into our hands, and which, when lost, is not to be recovered. And our being placed in a state of discipline throughout this life, for another world, is a providential disposition of things, exactly of the same kind as our being placed in a state of discipline during childhood, for mature age. Our condition in both respects is uniform and of a piece, and comprehended under one and the same general law of nature." This consideration is sufficient to remove all objections against the credibility of the doctrine of religion, even if we were unable to discover in what way the present life could be an opportunity of preparation for the next. Although we might not be competent to say, in what respects we were wanting in our qualifications for happiness hereafter, or how the present state was fitted to supply these wants, yet it is not incredible, from the general analogy of providence, that, in some respects or other, we are wanting, and are here put in a condition to remedy deficiencies. Children do not comprehend the discipline through which they pass. They think neither of

the internal the external. The outward object could produce no effect if there were nothing in the nature for it to act on, the internal could not ripen into act, if there were no opportunities, occasions and objects suited to it without. The concurrence of the two completes the danger.

Or to put the matter in another light. The power of temptation is owing to the blindness of our impulses; all our passions and desires are elicited by their proper objects, without any regard to the lawfulness or unlawfulness of the indulgence. If our passions were excited only when their gratification would be just and legitimate, there could be no such thing as temptation; but our simple impulses are all blind, they are excited by whatever is suited to gratify them and impel us to action, when thus excited, whether reason coincides with them or not. Hence the danger. They are frequently elicited when their gratification would be inconsistent with prudence; being thus excited they operate upon the will, and the force of passion prompts to excesses incompatible with our temporal good and condemned by the voice of reason. Hence the necessity of watching these impulses, of training ourselves to suspend action until desire has been tried at the bar of reason.

Now the dangers of our religious probation are precisely of the same sort. They spring from our impulses, blindly excited and prompting us to act, before the conscience has determined the right of the case. If therefore natural temptations be incredible, those of religion cannot be incredible. The analogy of our natural and moral probation is so complete, that the conduct of men, in reference to each, is found to be the same. Some know their danger, but are too feeble and irresolute to resist it; some are utterly fool-hardy and insensible, and others resign themselves professedly and shamefully to the dominion of lust. The danger in the two cases is increased by the same circumstances—by wrong education, bad example, false principles and mistaken notions. Particularly is negligence, in such case, productive of new difficulties, and is as fatal in its consequences as positive misdoing.

As, then, we are clearly on probation in relation to our temporal good, and a probation, in all points, analogous to that which religion teaches in reference to our eternal interests, no objection can be made to the latter, on the ground that our happiness cannot be made contingent. If our temporal interest were, in every instance, secured, without any solicitude on our part, there might be a presumption from this circumstance against the doctrine of religion; but as this is not the case, no such presumption exists. We have a present interest under the government of God, which we experience here on earth. And this interest, as it is not forced upon us, so neither is it offered to our acceptance, but to our acquisition, in such sort that we are in danger of missing it, by means of temptations to neglect or act contrary to it, and without attention and self-denial must and do miss it. It is then perfectly credible that this may be our case with respect to that chief and final good which religion proposes to us.

Bishop Butler, in the course of this chapter, transcends the proper limits of the argument from analogy, and undertakes to vindicate the ways of God to man. Strictly speaking, his task was accomplished when he showed that, considered as a matter of fact, moral probation was not incredible; but when he goes further to defend its justice and its equity, he gets into a sphere beyond the direct operation of analogy. His argu-

ment is, that nothing more is exacted of us, than we are able to do, and though it costs us much pains and labour and self-denial to do it, yet as we *can* do it, and the reward is worthy of the toils, we have no reason to complain.

PART I.—CHAPTER V.

Having considered the religious doctrine of probation as involving the contingency of future happiness, and great hazard and uncertainty in securing it, Bishop Butler proceeds to another thing contained in it—the explanation, which it gives, of the *design* of God, in permitting us to be placed in a state of so much peril, affliction and difficulty. He does not present it as an adequate solution of the origin of evil. This question in its whole extent, is not within the compass of Natural Religion. Some of the difficulties connected with it may be mitigated by taking into the account the voluntary character of sin, and the beneficial tendencies of many of the ills which flesh is heir to. But when we look to the tremendous consequences which religion teaches, shall attend our present miscarriages hereafter, and the numberless instances in which, even in this life, wickedness is prolific of nothing but itself, we feel it to be little less than mockery, to plead the freedom of the will, and the overruling Providence of God in turning physical evil to our advantage, as a complete and satisfactory explanation of the hardships of our present situation. The subject in its whole extent, is evidently beyond our capacities, and to speculate upon it is to "darken counsel by words without knowledge." But though we cannot comprehend all the reasons of our present condition, we can comprehend the final cause of it in reference to ourselves. Though we cannot answer the question, how we came to be placed in such a state? Yet being placed in it, we can answer the question, what is our business or duty in it? The answer of religion is, and it is the second thing comprehended in the general doctrine of probation—that the known end, why we are placed in a state of so much affliction, hazard and difficulty, is our improvement in virtue and piety, as the requisite qualifications for a future state of security and happiness. The present life is, in other words, a school of education for the next. We are here to acquire the character and habits which shall fit us for our final and everlasting destiny.

Now to this doctrine it is objected, that it represents God as putting us upon the laborious acquisition of what He might give us directly and at once. It better becomes Him, it is said, to furnish His creatures, without any care or solicitude on their part, with whatever qualifications may be needed for any state in which He means to place them. The whole principle of discipline or preparatory education, is denounced as incredible. The design of the present chapter is to vindicate this principle of religion against all such objections to it, as a matter of fact, by showing that it equally obtains in the present constitution and course of nature. The beginning of life is an education for maturity. The analogy is obvious betwixt the gradual training and preparation of the child for the duties of the man, and the

training of the man for the endless destiny which awaits him hereafter. The one is in our temporal capacity, precisely what the other is in our religious capacity. If now, it is matter of observation and experience, that God never directly fits men for the employments of this life, but puts them in a state in which, by proper care and culture, they can *fit themselves*, then discipline is certainly the method of His Natural Government, and no objections can lie against religion on the ground that it embodies this principle.

This then, is the scope of the chapter, to show that the same principle, which religion teaches in reference to our eternal interests, experience teaches in reference to our temporal. God *educates* for *this* world, and therefore He *may* educate for *that which is to come.* The objection to religion is answered by an analogy in nature.

The method of the chapter is first to lay down two preliminary principles, which are absolutely essential to any just conception of discipline—without which, indeed, the very notion of discipline becomes unintelligible and absurd, and then consider distinctly, first our temporal and next our religious discipline, for the purpose of evincing the perfect correspondence between them, in so far as the principle is concerned. In considering our religious discipline it will be seen that, in addition to the credibility imparted to it by the analogy of temporal education, there arises a positive probability in its favour from the very nature of the case. An adaptation of means to an end will be exhibited which cannot but lead to the belief of design. We shall see that we need, and are placed precisely in the circumstances suited to give us discipline in virtue—and if fitness is a test of final causes, the conclusion is obvious that the present state was intended to be a state for improvement in virtue. So that while objections are completely and triumphantly answered, the process by which it is done, supplies an argument of positive value in favour of the doctrine of religion. It is this argument to which Bishop Butler refers when he speaks of the credibility which arises from "the nature of the thing." It is not analogy, however, which gives this positive argument—that simply answers objections—but the argument arises from the intrinsic probabilities of the case.

I. The first preliminary observation indicates the ground of the *necessity* of discipline, that the well-being of all sentient creatures depends upon the adaptation of their inward constitution to their outward circumstances. One thing is set over against another—our nature must correspond to our condition. "Without this correspondence there would be no possibility of any such thing as human life and human happiness; which life and happiness are, therefore, a *result* from our nature and condition jointly, meaning by human life, not *living*, in the literal sense, but the whole complex notion commonly understood by these words." Non est vivere, sed valere vita—Life is well-being, comfort, happiness and this depends upon the congruity betwixt our make and our state. If such congruity were not necessary, if happiness were absolutely independent of our circumstances, then there could be no such thing as becoming *qualified* for particular states, and the whole notion of discipline would be utterly absurd. But let it be conceded, as conceded it must be, that every state requires some determinate character and capacities, then it follows that in all cases, in which they are not actually possessed, they must be acquired—men must *become fit* for every new condition. The necessity of this fitness is the necessity of discipline.

II. As the first observation indicates the ground of the *necessity*, the second

demonstrates the *possibility* of discipline. "The constitution of human creatures, and indeed of all creatures, which come under our notice, is such as that they are capable of naturally becoming qualified for states of life for which they were once wholly unqualified." These two observations lie at the foundation of the whole doctrine of discipline. We could not conceive of such a thing, unless qualifications not already possessed were needed and attainable. The great instrument by which discipline is achieved is exercise. There are three effects of it upon which the capacity of becoming qualified for new and different states depends—the first is, the enlargement of our faculties; the second is the acquisition of experience and knowledge, and the third is formation of habits. These are the leading sources of change in the human constitution. In imagination, we may indeed conceive of creatures, as incapable of having any of their faculties naturally enlarged, or as being unable naturally to acquire any new qualiffcations, but the faculties of every species known to us are made for enlargement, for acquirements of experience and habits." 1. In regard to enlargement—one of the most mysterious features connected with the human mind is its capacity of growth—a capacity by which a great change is evidently effected without any thing new being added to its substance. Perfectly simple and indiscerptible in its own nature, and incapable of enlargement by accretion, it yet begins from the simplest operations of sense, to exert an activity, which waxes stronger and stronger in every successive period of its existence, and to the development of which we know no natural limits. What a difference between Newton, the child, and Newton, the author of the Principia! All the expressions by which we represent this change—such as development, expansion, growth, are borrowed from material analogies, and are utterly inadequate to express the nature of this phenomenon. But without this capacity it is obvious that we must always remain infants. Whatever may be its nature, it is an indispensable element of that discipline which imparts to us qualifications not originally possessed. Our minds must *grow*, or they will be everlastingly fit for nothing. The instrument of their growth is exercise, they expand and strengthen by exertion. 2. But the mere enlargement of the mind is not sufficient for the purposes of discipline. There must be knowledge and experience; both as much the result of exercise, as its expansion or growth. We find, accordingly, that we are qualified for knowledge by being furnished with apprehensive faculties to receive, and retentive faculties to keep the ideas, which experience is constantly presenting to us. We have laws of belief which make the experience of the past an index of the future, and are thus capable of becoming cognizant of the succession of events. Our apprehensive and retentive faculties, though in themselves considered, they are not properly habits, are absolutly essential to the formation of them. 3 As the law of habit is the most important principle in its bearing upon education and upon character, in the whole constitution of man, it is that upon which Bishop Butler most fully insists in explaining our capacities of discipline. Habit presupposes the power of action and the influence of the emotions as its exciting cause. It is the result of the repetition of acts, and its results are a new facility in any kind of action, and settled alterations in our temper and character. As the improvement of our intellectual faculties depends upon the same principle with habit, these improvements may be regarded as of the same nature. Aristotle, accordingly, reckons science and art among

their need, nor of the fitness of their circumstances to impart it, and it is only from experience that we ourselves find out the importance and bearing of many of the functions which nature prompts them to perform.

IV. But when we take into consideration the fact that the Government of God is moral, we are prepared to enter upon the same distinct consideration of our religious discipline, which we have already made of our temporal. We are prepared to show in regard to it, as we have shown in regard to the other, that there are qualifications which we need, and that the present life is exactly suited to enable us to acquire them. The Government of God being moral, the character of virtue and piety must be indispensable to future happiness. This is the postulate from which all the subsequent discussion proceeds. It branches into two divisions—the first shows our need of moral improvement—the second, the fitness of our present circumstances for acquiring it.

Before proceeding to the discussion of these points Bishop Butler devotes a few remarks to what we have called his fundamental postulate—that the character of virtue and piety is indispensable to future happiness. To say that a government is moral is to say that it rewards virtue and punishes vice. Under such a government, virtue must, accordingly, be the *condition* of happiness, but whether it shall also be the *qualification* for the peculiar exercises of the future state may not be so obvious. If that state should be a *social* one, it will be as necessary to society there as it is here, and we have no reason to believe that it will not be social. On the contrary analogy favours that supposition. It may even be, as religion represents it, under the more immediate or sensible government of God. Still as a *community*, it cannot be conceived without the supposition that the members of it are bound together by the ties of truth, justice and benevolence. A social must be a moral state—virtue is the strength of society as such. We may not be able to say by what employments these qualities shall be called out, or what precise occasions there shall be for their exercise. But, in some form, they will be needed, if the future life is a community. But whatever may be the *nature* of the future life, whether solitary or social, whatever may be its employments, the general tone which results from the cultivation of virtue here must be needed, or it is made a mere arbitrary condition of happiness. Moral government is a thing of will and sovereign appointment, and not a result of propriety and happiness. If moral government is founded in the nature of things virtue must be a qualification for happiness, as well as a condition.

I. This point being assumed, we proceed to show our *need* of a discipline in virtue. This lies much deeper than men, at first blush, are apt to imagine. It is not simply because we are corrupt and depraved, it is not simply the need of reformation and amendment, but antecedent to all actual trangression, or to any obliquity or distortion of nature produced by indulgences in vice, there is a *defect* in the constitution of men, and perhaps, of all finite creatures, which lies at the foundation of their need of a virtuous discipline, and for which a virtuous discipline is the only natural remedy. There is in their very nature a *liability* to sin, against which habits of virtue or the moral principle matured into a habit, is the proper and appointed security.

This liability to sin arises from the blindness of our simple impulses—that is, from the fact that they are excited by the presence or contempla-

tion of their proper objects, without any reference to the question whether they can be lawfully or unlawfully indulged. Virtue requires that they should always be in subjection to conscience. It belongs to it to determine, as to the occasion on which they may be gratified, as to the times, degrees and manner, in which the objects of them may be pursued. But then their excitement does not depend upon conscience, but upon the natural aptitude of their appropriate objects. The question of the lawfulness or unlawfulness of indulgence does not affect this natural aptitude. The necessaries, conveniences and pleasures of life, remain naturally desirable, though they cannot be obtained innocently, though they cannot possibly be obtained at all. Forbidden fruit may be as tempting to the appetite as that which is permitted. Now as these simple impulses may be excited on occasions, and in reference to objects which are unlawful, these objects must have a *tendency* to operate on the will, they produce desires, and these desires must have some influence towards producing conduct. Here then is the danger. Our simple impulses operating blindly, may ensnare the will and terminate in action, without the consent or previous approbation of the moral principle. Now as the danger arises from the blindness of our impulses, the security against it must consist in a habit of never acting, that is, never gratifying them without reflection—in a habit, in other words, of consulting conscience, before desire is ever permitted to ripen into act. This practical supremacy of conscience amounts to the same thing as if our impulses were never permitted to be excited, except when their indulgence is lawful—it is like making them intelligent. This habit of reflecting before we act, of consulting conscience in reference to every impulse, may, like every other habit, be formed by the repetition of single acts. If we impress upon ourselves the necessity of doing so, recollect the practical impressions which example and experience have made upon us, and always endeavor to pause —think and attend to the equity and right of the case in all matters, whether small or great—if we constantly set a watch upon our humours and inclinations, the supremacy of conscience will grow into a habit from these virtuous exercises. It will become a part of our nature to consult conscience and not impulse. Hence *"the principle of virtue improved into a habit will plainly be, in proportion to the strength of it, a security against the danger which finite creatures are in from the very nature of propension or particular affections."* As their danger is that they may act before they think, their security is, the habit of thinking before they act.

From these things it may be seen how creatures, originally upright, come to fall, and how those who preserve their integrity incalculably augment their security. To account for the introduction of sin by the nature of liberty is to resolve the actual occurrence of a phenomena into its possibility —it is to say that a thing *has* happened because it *might* have happened. But the law of our simple impulses sufficiently explains the natural history of transgression. The case is this: Integrity of make or uprightness of constitution supposes particular appetites and desires capable of being excited by their proper objects—without which there could be no action at all. It supposes, further, a faculty of moral discernment, taking cognizance of the distinctions betwixt right and wrong, and feeling the obligation and authority of right. It supposes, further, that all these several principles are nicely adjusted—adjusted in exact proportion to the exigencies of the state of the creatures endowed with them. Beings so constituted would be upright—

there would be no principle of irregularity or evil in them. But then, as their impulses depended, for their being *excited*, not upon the moral understanding, but upon the *qualities* of their proper objects, these objects being present, these impulses would obviously be excited, though they could not be gratified at all, or gratified without crime. If, however, they could be gratified without the approbation of conscience, then their existence in the mind, as appetites or desires, would produce *some* tendency, however small, towards the unlawful indulgence. This practical tendency might be strengthened by repetition. The least voluntary indulgence, though but in thought, would increase it, until, under favorable circumstances, it might mature into act. This danger is inherent in every constitution which admits of blind impulses. It cannot be avoided in the original structure of the soul, without making conscience the *motive* principle, as well as the law and guide of actions. A constitution of that sort might dispense with merit, as virtue would be a necessity and not a choice. It is enough to vindicate the ways of God that the blindness of our impulses exposes us to no danger, which we are not well able to avoid. A short path is marked out for us, in which a certain degree of attention will keep us steady, but if we will not give this attention, but suffer ourselves to be diverted by a thousand other objects, we can expect nothing else but to be misled.

Now one single full overt act of transgression does not stop in its effects at the tendency it engenders to a habit of that species of acts, it also *deranges* the whole moral constitution, it unsettles and disorders the proportions in which the integrity of its make consists. The moral principle loses its supremacy, impulse becomes the law of action ! in obedience to impulse, particular habits of vice will be contracted, which, in connection with the general derangement of the moral constitution, will complete the character of depravity. But take the case, that the danger arising from the blindness of impulse is uniformly guarded against, that the moral principle is uniformly consulted before any passion, however strong, is permitted to be indulged, the security arising from this course, would steadily increase, until the danger would ultimately vanish into utter insignificance. Each instance of the exercised supremacy of conscience, from the law of habit, would strengthen its power, the opposition made by particular passions would lose its intensity. Our affections, in fact, would be brought so completely under its control, that the result would be the same as if they were dependent upon it for being excited. The danger of such creatures, so improved, is to be regarded as purely hypothetical. Hence we see that there is a necessity for the discipline of virtuous habits in all finite creatures, endowed with affections capable of being excited independently of the sanction of the moral principle. There is a natural deficiency in them, of which virtuous habits are the appointed supply. They are *liable* to fall, until the supremacy of conscience has been engrained into their nature, and this is the result of discipline.

But if this be true in regard to creatures coming upright from the hands of God, how much more strongly does it hold in reference to those who are conceived in sin and brought forth in iniquity ? Upright creatures need simply to be improved, fallen ones to be renewed. In the latter case a double work must go on, a work of pulling down and building up, of death and life, corruption must be ejected, sin must be mortified, vicious habits eradicated, the moral nature repaired, its proportions re-adjusted,

and the whole work of improvement which attaches to the upright carried on; such is the need of discipline, first as *creatures*, and next as *sinners*.

II. The next point to be considered is the *fitness* of the present world to be a state of discipline to such as will set themselves to amend and improve. This fitness is manifested in two circumstances: 1. The *intensity* and continuousness of effort which the exercise of the virtuous principle, amid the snares and temptations which beset us, involves, and 2. The *tendency* of these snares and temptations to engender a state of mind favourable to the exercise of the virtuous principle.

1. There can be no doubt that, in our circumstances in this world, amid dangers and allurements to evil on every hand, there is involved an *intensity* of *effort* in every exercise of the virtuous principle, which would not obtain in an easier or safer condition. There must be ceaseless *vigilance*, and vigilance is nothing but a continuous attention to the supremacy of conscience—it is an uninterrupted acting of virtue. We are among enemies, and must needs keep constantly awake. Then this vigilance implies self-denial and resolute energy of purpose, which are also forms of virtuous actions. Now the tendency of an act to generate a habit is in a proportion to its *intensity* and repetitions, and hence the exercise of the virtuous principle, in a state like the present, has a peculiar tendency to create a habit. There is more effort—more of the essence of activity, than would be found in any other condition, and consequently every act must *tell* more powerfully on the character. Then again the *constancy* of virtuous action implied in ceaseless vigilance and steady resolution is equivalent to an indefinite multitude of single acts, and must therefore contribute indefinitely to the strength and maturity of the habit. The temptation and dangers, therefore, of the present life, make it precisely the state in which, within the shortest time, the moral principle can be ripened into habit, if one will only be resolutely on his guard. Two men, constituted in all respects exactly alike may be imagined as called into being. One is placed for a certain period in circumstances exempt from danger and temptation—constantly follows the dictates of conscience—the other is placed for the same period in circumstances like those of the present world and as constantly follows the dictates of conscience. At the end of the specified period there would be no comparison in the strength, stability and maturity of their moral characters. The one is a man of *tried* virtue, the other is not. Virtue with one is really *habit*, with the other it is still nothing but nature. The acts of the one have had immeasurably more intensity than the acts of the other. Self-denial may not be absolutely essential to discipline, but it certainly accelerates it. What is done with difficulty makes a stronger impression than what is done with ease.

No doubt man may be overtasked—too much may be put upon him. He may be conceived as placed in circumstances calling for such intensity of moral effort as to react upon the mind, and prostrate and enfeeble it—as there may be studies which impair the intellect by the disproportioned efforts required to master them. But this is evidently not our present case. If now the virtuous principle improved into a habit is the end of discipline, as we have seen that it is, and if the tendency of acts to form a habit is in proportion to their intensity and repetition, then the exercise of virtue in a world like this will improve it into habit more rapidly and firmly than could be done in any other state. It is peculiarly suited therefore to be a state of discipline, provided men will set themselves to amend and reform.

2. But is it also suited to impress upon them the necessity of reformation and amendment? Is it suited to engender that state of mind which shall lead to vigilance and steady resolution? If so, the argument is complete, and it is, in every view, fitted to be a state of discipline. That this is the case is almost too evident to need elucidation. The practical impression, which a serious consideration of the dangers and temptations which surround men is suited to make, is a *sense* of the pre-eminent *importance* of attention and watchfulness. Men who will reflect upon the state of things in the world, their liability to deceive and be deceived, the infinite disorders which prevail, the miseries and sorrows consequent upon carelessness, imprudence and vice, must *feel* the weight of responsibility which rests upon them, and the necessity of a settled moderation and reasonableness of temper, of that sobriety of mind, which lies between the extremes of thoughtless levity and unrestrained impetuosity of passion. Experience and observation conspire to give a practical sense of things—of our dangers, our interests and our duties—very different from mere speculative knowledge. They make us *feel*, as well as acknowledge, the paramount necessity and obligation of vigilance and steady resolution.

Having shown that the present state is peculiarly fitted to supply our need of moral and religious discipline, Bishop Butler proceeds to notice some special objections.

1. The first is, that it is so far from proving in event, a discipline of virtue to the generality of men, that on the contrary, they seem to make of it a discipline of vice. To this objection it is replied, that the whole end and the whole occasion of mankind being placed in such a state are not pretended to be accounted for. There are purposes connected with this matter, of which we are utterly ignorant, and these purposes are no doubt accomplished in those who refuse to employ it in the way of moral discipline. But what is asserted is, that it is our duty, the will of God in reference to our conduct, that we should use it for our moral improvement. This is *one* design of the state, and we infer it from that which, in all other instances, is the proof of design, the fitness of things. We infer that the eye was made to see with and the ear to hear with, because they are *suited* to these ends; and upon the same principle, we infer that the present was intended to be a state of moral discipline. The failure of multitudes is no more argument against final causes in this instance, than the waste of millions of seeds is a proof that their general purpose is not to propagate the plant. 2. In the next place it is objected against this whole notion of discipline, that so far as a course of behaviour, materially virtuous proceeds from hope and fear, so far it is only a discipline in self-love; such virtue is mean and mercenary. The answer is 1. That provided the practical principles which are exercised, are really virtuous, it matters not under what influences they were first developed. If they are the principles of regard for God's authority, for justice, veracity and benevolence, these are right principles and the repeated exercise of them must eventually form habits of these very virtues. Under the influence of hope and fear there may be *apparent* exercises of virtuous principles, which are not real ones. A man, from vanity or the desire of applause, may give alms to the poor, from fear of exposure or disgrace may pay his debts, but here the practical principles proceeded upon, are not those of charity and honesty, but ostentation and pride. The habits, therefore, formed by such

acts will be habits, not of virtue, but of ostentation and pride. The habit created by acts is always determined by the practical principle from which they proceed. No matter what sets that principle to work, the repeated exercise of it must form a habit of it. Hope and fear may put in motion the right principles of regard to the Divine will, of justice, truth and charity, but being put in motion, the habits formed are those of these virtues. 2. In the second place, hope and fear are not mean and mercenary motives, unless excited by low and unworthy objects. When we fear what we ought to despise or hope for what is inconsistent with the perfection of our nature, such hopes and fears are degrading. But when we fear what *ought* to be feared, and desire what *ought* to be sought, such hopes and fears are becoming and laudable. 3. In the third place it may be objected that, as there will be no sorrow nor affliction in the future lot of the righteous, there is no need here of any discipline in the school of suffering. As there will be no demand for patience hereafter, there should be no occasion for the formation of such a habit here. Bishop Butler shows that a perfect moral character combines the active virtues of obedience, with the passive virtues of submission or complete resignation to the will of God. This is the temper or character which exactly answers to his sovereignty or rightful authority over us. His will is to be law. Now the school in which this spirit of resignation is most thoroughly and rapidly acquired is the school of affliction. It is in some degree formed by every species of self-denial, but its ablest and most successful teacher is the rod. That this temper will be needed hereafter, though there may be no suffering, is obvious from the nature of imagination. Our desires can be excited by the ideal, as truly as by the real presence of their proper objects. Let our circumstances, accordingly, be as happy hereafter as we please, yet if imagination can picture any thing which we do not possess, that picture will have a *tendency* to produce discontent. Now the remedy to this irregular influence of imagination is the spirit of absolute submission to God's will, taught in the school of patience. Hence a perfect character is formed only by the double discipline of the active and passive virtues. The one makes us *obey*, the other *submit* to God, and obedience and submission are the characteristic excellencies of creatures.

Having now distinctly considered both states of discipline, that of one part of life as a preparation for another, and that of the present state as an education for eternity, Bishop Butler is prepared to assert the perfect correspondence between them. They are precisely the *same* in principle, no objections can lie against the one, as a matter of fact, which do not lie equally against the other. It is vain to object to the doctrine of religion, that all the trouble and the danger unavoidably accompanying such discipline might have been saved us, by our being made at once the creatures and characters that we were to be. For we experience that what we were to be was to be the effect of what we would do, and that the general conduct of nature is not to save us trouble, or danger, but to make us capable of going through it, and to put it upon us to do so.

PART I.—CHAPTER VI.

The design of the present chapter is to refute the a priori argument against the possibility of religion drawn from the doctrine of necessity. Bishop Butler enters into no discussion of the merits of the doctrine itself, but assumes it to be true, reasons with the fatalist upon his own principles, and convicts him either of absurdity or inconsistency, by involving him in a dilemma from which there is no escape but in one of these forms. The same process of argument by which the opinion of universal necessity is made destructive of religion, will also make it destructive of the course and constitution of nature, or the facts of daily experience. The same reasoning which proves that we cannot be responsible as *moral*, proves also that we cannot be responsible as *natural* agents. The legitimate conclusion is against *all and any* responsibility. Now the fatalist, to be consistent, must either maintain that the facts of nature, which are *given*, which are matters of constant observation and experience, are false—which is absurd —or he must admit that necessity, being reconcileable with them, as it must be, if true, is likewise reconcileable with religion. He has made it contradict religion upon grounds which make it equally contradictory to nature. If, in the last case, the argument is a fallacy, it can be good for nothing in the other. If it is valid in the first case, it must be equally valid in the latter. Here then is the dilemma—either experience is a lie, that is, the facts of nature are false, or necessity, if reconcileable with them, is consistent with religion. But as no one will be found absurd enough to take the first horn of the dilemma, and deny what universal observation and experience attest to be true; as the fatalist, unless he renounces common sense, *must* maintain that necessity is compatible with the course of things which is passing around us, issue is joined upon the other point.—Whether necessity being reconcileable with nature is reconcileable with religion. Confining himself to this aspect of the question, Bishop Butler undertakes to show that there are no arguments to be drawn by the fatalist from his own principles against religion, which he does not virtually admit to be deceitful by denying their application to the course of nature. There are no *other* contradictions of necessity to religion, but those which the fatalist affirms to be only *apparent* and not real, in the case of nature. The same grounds upon which he asserts that in the one case they are not contradictions at all, are equally pertinent to the removal of contradictions in the other. We may take his own answer—only substituting religion for nature. In the eye of speculative reason, necessity is to nature precisely what it is to religion. Now if he says it is consistent with nature, we may affirm, for a like reason, it is also consistent with religion.

The method of the Chapter is first to indicate the general *sense* in which the term *necessity* must be taken in the argument, and then to show that the *methods* of reconciling it with nature are equally and as conclusively applicable to religion.

I. As to the general sense, in which the term may be taken, that is two fold. There is certainly a necessity which precludes the operation of a cause, which is antecedent to all design, and exists independently of it.—This necessity, from the poverty of language, has been represented as the foundation, the reason, the account of the existence of God. It is evi-

dently only another name for self-existence, and hence is applicable only to that which is infinite, eternal and unchangeable. It is not the *assertion*, but the *denial* of a cause. It is what the school-men denominated the necessity of nature. It is *independent* as opposed to *dependent* existence. It is that the non-existence of which is inconceivable, which cannot be annihilated even in thought. Hence nothing that *begins* to be, nothing that is mutable, nothing that is contingent, can ever, in this sense, be necessary. The fatalist, therefore, cannot ascribe the phenomena of the universe to this species of necessity without making all things independent, underived, eternal and unchangeable.

There is another sense in which necessity, so far from being inconsistent with *causation*, only asserts its universality and certainty. It maintains a strict and invioble connection between causes and effects—the one being given the other must follow. It is what the school-men denominated the necessity of *consequence*. The event happening they maintained to be in its own nature contingent, it was what might or might not take place, in *itself* considered—but considered in relation to its cause, it was inevitable—it could not but be. Now this is the sense in which necessity must be taken in the present argument. All the phenomena of the universe, however contingent in themselves, must be regarded as a series of events, whose existence is rendered infallibly certain by the connection which obtains among them of causes and effects. To say that they are necessary is just to say that they are truly *caused*, and so caused that they could not be otherwise than as they are.

Bishop Butler's design in insisting upon this distinction is to save the principle which, throughout the treatise, he has taken for granted, that there is an author and governor of the world. If universal necessity should be admitted in the first sense, it would supersede the doctrine of a great first cause, and of a controlling providence. It would make all things independent, self-existent and eternal. To correct this misapprehension it is enough to indicate the nature of this species of necessity—it will manifest itself at once as inapplicable to the derived, dependent, precarious existences which are around us.

In the other sense necessity *demands a cause* for the world, and a cause suited to the effects that are produced. It requires an intelligent author of nature, since nature indicates appearances of design. The only difference between the advocate of liberty and this species of necessity is, that while both admit a cause, the one contends for the contingency, the other for the infallible certainty of the effect. Both admit an agent—but one says he might have acted differently—the other affirms that under the same circumstances, he could not have done so. Neither precludes intelligence, design, or choice, but one fixes the *mode* of their operation, the other leaves it arbitrary.

Now the question arises whether, in this sense, necessity is incompatible with religion, upon the supposition that it is not incompatible with the natural government of the world? The difficulty lies here—necessity affirms that, under the circumstances, in which men were placed, their actions *could* not have been different from what they were. How then shall they be held responsible? The same principles, says Bishop Butler to the fatalist, upon which *you* reconcile responsibility with the infallible certainty of events in the natural government of God, will serve to reconcile it with the infallibly certainte of events in the moral government of God.

II. This leads him to consider the *methods* by which responsibility and necessity may be reconciled in the natural course of things. It may be done in two ways. We may either take the ground that necessity is not a *practical* principle, and therefore not applicable to life and conduct, or may assume simply that they *must* be reconcileable, without specifying *how*, since both are *true*. That is, we may either undertake to show *where* the fallacy lies in reasoning from fatalism to conduct, or be content to demonstrate that there is a fallacy somewhere. Both methods are applicable with equal success to religion. 1. The first method shows, that necessity is not a practical principle, and that in reasoning from it to life and conduct, the fallacy lies in assuming it to be a practical principle. By a practical principle is meant one which is intended to be a rule and guide of life. The sentiments of praise and blame, our natural perceptions of propriety and impropriety are practical, because designed to regulate our actions. But in the case of necessity, the conclusions which, with whatever rigour, are speculatively drawn from it, are always found to be contradicted in practice. The denial of responsibility, of praise or blame-worthiness, of the need of caution and prudence, seems to follow from it by inevitable inference; but he who should *act* upon those conclusions, take them as his guide, rather than the principles they seem to contradict, would soon find himself grievously misled. Bishop Butler illustrates this by the case of a child educated in the principles of fatalism. His temper, character and expectations would be such as would obviously render him insupportable to society. He would soon find upon his introduction to society, either that necessity was false, or that he had somehow or other, reasoned badly upon it. Its *conclusions*, however legitimate they might seem, could never be made the law of life. To attempt to apply them in this way is infallibly to go wrong. "And, therefore, though it were admitted, that this opinion of necessity were speculatively true, yet, with regard to practice, it is as if it were false, so far as our experience reaches; that is, to the whole of our present life." But what then? Has *reason* deceived us? Our conclusions seemed to be fairly contained in our premises, and why can we not trust them? The case, if necessity be indeed true, is one of those puzzles in which, while we know that a fallacy exists *somewhere*, no ingenuity is able to detect it. It is like the process, logically, conclusively, yet really absurd, by which we draw contradictory conclusions from the idea of infinity, or the ancient paradox about the impossibility of motion, or the equally perplexing paradox about the deer and the tortoise. In all these cases, the reasoning seems to be unexceptionable, yet the conclusion is absurd. We, therefore, *know* it is wrong, though we cannot tell *where* the error lies. So is it with these inferences from necessity. And to follow them, rather than the practical principles which adapt us to our state, is not to follow *reason*, but paradox. The dictate of sound reason is to take the guide which nature has given us, to follow practical principles, where practical principles exist.

Now religion is a practical subject, and therefore necessity, not being a practical principle, is no more applicable to it than to the business of life. The reasoning which sets aside prudence and care and caution, praise and blame, in reference to our temporal interests is just as conclusive as that which sets aside the authority of conscience and the tribunal of God. It is the *same* argument applied in the *same way*, though to a different thing.

If therefore there is a fallacy in the one case, there may be a like fallacy in the other. If, in the one case, it is a mere logical puzzle, an evident paradox, so it may be in the other. It is clear, therefore, that any practical application of the doctrine of necessity to the subject of religion, in such a way as to dispense with religious obligations, can no more be justified than a like application to the interests of this world, in such a way as to dispense with care and prudence. To say that necessity is not a practical principle, is to say that we can apply it to neither natural nor moral government. 2. The second method of reconciling responsibility with necessity in reference to our earthly interests, is only the application of the principle, that all truth must be consistent. Necessity is true *ex hypothesi*. The facts of nature are true, for they are given in observation and experience. Both truths consequently co-exist, and cannot, therefore, be contradictory of each other. Now Bishop Butler applies the same method to religion. Assuming necessity to be true *ex hypothesi*, he proceeds to show that religion rests upon an evidence which is not, in the slightest degree, affected by any speculative views of fatalism and that this evidence, like that of nature, resolves itself into matter of fact. It is a thing which may be made as undeniably evident, and evident upon the same general grounds of experience, as the natural government of God, and therefore *must* be consistent with necessity, if necessity be true.

1. The foundation of moral government is laid in the moral character of God. Now that the existence of a determinate will and character is reconcileable with necessity, is obvious from the fact, that the necessary agents called men, have such a character, and from the further fact, that necessity determines nothing as to the *nature* of the cause, but only the mode of its operation. If there can be *one* kind of character, consistently with necessity, there may be another, and hence we may ascribe to God the character of justice, truth and benevolence, as consistently as any other. To say that necessity obliterates *moral* distinctions is not to say that it destroys *moral qualities*. The qualities of truth, justice, benevolence may remain, as natural entities, though you destroy that peculiar distinction between them and their opposites which is expressed by the terms, merit and demerit. We may still retain the term *moral* to describe these peculiar qualities, since in themselves considered, they must continue unaffected. All that necessity can do at the utmost, is to remove the ground of the distinction between virtue and vice, from essential rectitude to natural properties. Justice still exists, though it has lost its rightness, it exists as a natural good, like beauty or pleasure. Vice exists, though it has lost its wickedness, and exists as a natural evil, like deformity or pain. You may destroy the peculiar convictions of right and wrong, but necessity does not affect the *nature* of these *qualities*, as mere phenomena, to which we are accustomed to apply these epithets, any more than it takes from honey its sweetness, or from wormwood its bitterness. The qualities then remaining, there is nothing in necessity to prevent us from attributing to the great first cause, those which we denominate moral. The greatest perplexity is felt in reference to the attribute of justice. That is so inseparably linked with the notion of merit and demerit, that the distinction of the one seems to be the distinction of the other. Where there is no demerit, we feel that there can be no just punishment. But the fatalist forgets, that the same necessity which sweeps away demerit from

crime, sweeps away injustice from the punishment. It changes the nature of the connection between them, and instead of making suffering the righteous retribution of iniquity, it makes it simply a natural and inevitable consequence. Pain is connected with sin, not penally, but naturally, as bitterness is connected with wormwood. There is no demerit in the sinner, there is no injustice in the pain; but the one being given, the other follows, as a man burns by plunging into the fire. There may therefore be a necessary disposition in the author of nature, to visit such and such conduct with such and such consequences, without reference to merit and demerit, but as a matter of course, and to this disposition we may give the name of justice. The same course of things may obtain, which upon the supposition of freedom, would without scruple be denominated moral government. Hence it is evident, that universal necessity, if it be reconciled with any thing, is reconcileable with the existence of those qualities in the author of nature, which lie at the foundation of religion, and which cause a difference to be made in the treatment of men according to their character and conduct. The grounds upon which the Divine character is determined to make this difference, do not affect the reality of the difference itself. 2. Now unless necessity is incompatible with the *exhibition* of such a difference in the conduct of Providence, it is no more inconsistent with the *proof* of moral government, than with the existence of those qualities, in the author of nature, upon which it depends. Whether a distinction is made between the virtuous and vicious, is a question of *fact*. Necessity cannot change the fact, though it may be allowed to modify the explanation of it. The *fact* is all that is now contended for. This fact, that God makes a difference in His treatment of the virtuous and wicked, no matter from what cause, whether necessity or holiness, is manifest from those considerations which have already been adduced in proof of a moral government actually begun in the present state. It is a matter of fact, that God governs the world by the method of rewards and punishments, that our happiness or misery is largely the consequence of our own conduct. There is a connection between what we *do* and what we *suffer* or *enjoy*. This no man, with his eyes open to what is passing around him, can deny.

In addition to the proof from observation and experience, there is a further confirmation of religion, partly on internal and partly on external grounds. 1. The internal proof is drawn from the nature and operations of conscience. The analysis which Bishop Butler here gives of conscience is so fine, that it deserves to be repeated in the very language he has employed.

From this analysis of conscience, it seems that it contains a distinct declaration that it shall finally be well with the righteous and ill with the wicked. Through it God proclaims to us upon what principles the destiny of men shall be fixed. He declares as really as if he spake from the skies that happiness and misery are the consequences of conduct. Now the fact that we have such a faculty as conscience, is not affected by any speculative views of necessity, nor the further fact that conscience implicitly contains a revelation from God as to the rule and method of His government. These things prove religion, or our nature is a lie—and this proof derives additional strength from the natural tendencies of virtue and vice, already insisted on, and from the actual course of the world, which so largely turns

upon the approbation of the one and the disapprobation of the other. 2. The external proof of natural religion—a proof wholly unaffected by necessity—is embraced by Bishop Butler in three propositions. 1. The first is, that somewhat of this system, with more or fewer additions and alterations, has been professed in all ages and countries, in relation to which we have any certain information. 2. The second is, that it was received in *its integrity* in the first ages; and 3. The third is, that there is a historical and traditional evidence that it was first taught by revelation.

Now these propositions establish, beyond a doubt, both the correspondence of religion to the common sense of mankind, and the likelihood of its Divine origin. Universal consent is the strongest proof of a dictate of common sense. What is not essentially reasonable cannot be accepted by the race. The two last propositions afford a strong presumption of an original revelation. If religion had been the discovery of reason, no account can be given, why it suffered in its purity as it was transmitted from generation to generation. The presumption contained in the fact that religion was received in the first ages, in its integrity, is strengthened by the traditional and historical evidence of revelation. This revelation was probably imparted to the father of mankind, and handed down from generation to generation. In the process of transmission it was no doubt grievously corrupted, but still the *fact* of an original revelation has never been cancelled from the faith of mankind.

From all these considerations combined, religion may be taken as a *thing proved*—as a matter of fact—which we can no more question than we can question any other phenomena of daily experience. It is then *true*, as much so as the course and constitution of nature. Necessity, therefore, if also *true*, *must* be consistent with it, for one truth cannot contradict another.

But it may be objected that although it does not directly refute these proofs of religion, yet it *does* set aside the postulate upon which all religion proceeds, the postulate of freedom. It is contended that no being can be considered as rewardable or punishable without being free—that freedom is essential to the conception of good or ill desert. If now religion assumes that we are *free*, when, in fact, we are *necessary* agents, it is founded in falsehood and no proofs can establish its credibility. It rests upon a lie, and no lie can be of the truth. "Here then the matter is brought to a point," &c.

Now as the method of government by rewards and punishments is a *matter of fact*, and not a deduction of reason—as it is a thing of *experience* and not a speculative inference, it *must be admitted;* and then one of two results must follows—either that *necessary* agents are capable of rewards or punishments, or that the doctrine of necessity is false. If necessity be true, necessary agents *can* be, for they *are*, the subjects of government—if false, the fatalist abandons his hypothesis. But to this complexion it must come at last.

Hence, necessity, supposed to be compatible with the course and constitution of nature, is not incompatible with the doctrines of religion. The fatalist, who recognizes any degree of responsibility in regard to his temporal interests, or who acknowledges that his happiness here at all depends upon his conduct, cannot consistently abjure the principle in its application to his final destiny. From his own mouth he is convicted; unless he acts in relation to this world, as he attempts to persuade himself that he *may* act

in relation to the next, he condemns his own reasoning. Still, in itself, considered, necessity is neither consistent with nature nor religion. It is true that *if* consistent with one, it *may* be with the other. But, in fact, it is a contradiction to both. But even, if it were in itself considered, consistent with religion, it becomes destructive of it, when employed as a practical principle. If men undertake to regulate their lives by the conclusions that seem legitimately to flow from it, they will encourage themselves in vice, and despise all the restraints of law and government.

PART I.—CHAPTER VII.

The design of Bishop Butler, in the present chapter, is to consider the answer which analogy suggests to objections against the wisdom and goodness of the Divine Government implied in the notion of religion, and against the method by which this Government is conducted. The answer, it is admitted, is not a direct one. Analogy can furnish no solution of the difficulties. Directly applicable only to contingent matters of fact, its immediate office is to answer the question of existence, and not of wisdom or propriety. To prove that a thing *is*, is obviously a very different thing from proving that it is *right*. Religion may conceivably be true as a matter of fact, and yet liable to serious imputations as a matter of propriety and wisdom.

It deserves, however, to be remarked that these questions, though logically distinct, are yet, in reference to the Divine administration, really one. The question of existence cannot be separated from that of wisdom, equity and goodness. To be from God, and to be wise and proper are, in fact, equivalent expressions—to prove that God has done a thing is to prove that it is wise and good—to prove it is not wise and good is to prove that He has not done it. Hence, for all practical purposes, objections against the truth, and objections against the character, of religion amount to the same thing, and the secret purpose of those who insist upon the latter is to invalidate the proof of religion as a matter of fact. They are well aware that if they can successfully impugn the wisdom and goodness of the moral administration which religion teaches to be true, none will be found to maintain its reality. Their design is not to impeach the Divine character, which would be the effect of their cavils, upon the supposition of the truth of religion, but to convict religion of falsehood through the reverence which men have for the Divine perfections; they wish to reduce its pretensions to a *reductio ad absurdum*. The argument is—whatsoever is not wise and good cannot come from God. Religion is not wise and good, therefore it cannot come from God. In this aspect of the case analogy certainly contributes to refute the objections in establishing the truth of religion as a matter of fact. If it shows that religion *does* come from God, it shows, at the same time, that its doctrines are wise and good. But this is not the light in which Bishop Butler has considered these objections in the present chapter. He treats the question of truth as entirely distinct from that of the excellence of religion—and undertakes to show, that independ-

ently of its direct use in establishing the credibility of religion, analogy is, indirectly, of service, in suggesting a satisfactory answer to all objections against the wisdom, equity and goodness of the Divine Government.

That answer is in general, our ignorance, which branches out in the progress of the discussion, into two propositions: 1. That we are incompetent to judge of the moral administration of God. 2. That it is highly credible, that if we were competent, if the ignorance which incapacitates us were removed, we should see that our objections were vain and frivolous. Analogy suggests the answer contained in these propositions by suggesting in the first place, that the Moral Government of God is a scheme, and a scheme incomprehensible by us—and, in the second, that being a scheme, it involves elements which, if they were properly understood, would obviate all our difficulties.

I. The first point is, that the Moral Government of God is a scheme, and a scheme incomprehensible by us. A scheme is opposed to a series of disjointed, isolated and unconnected events. It consists of dependent parts united in a harmonious whole. Moral Government which is a scheme, or system, is the antithesis of that which consists of single, unconnected acts of distributive justice and goodness.

That the Divine Government, implied in the notion of religion, is such a scheme or system, is inferred or rendered credible from its analogy to the Natural Government of God. That the Natural is a scheme is obvious from the relations which we find every where pervading its parts. Bishop Butler signalizes the relations betwixt individuals of the same species, betwixt different species, and the manifold connections of events as causes and effects, as antecedents and consequents, as phenomena to be resolved into the same general laws, he signalizes these instances as illustrations of the mutual dependence which obtains throughout the Natural Government of God. Nothing is isolated Every being has a tie which binds it to other beings; and how far these connections may extend, no mortal is able to determine. "And as there is not any action or natural event, which we are acquainted with, so single and unconnected as not to have a respect to some other actions and events, so possibly, each of them, when it has not an immediate, may yet have a remote natural relation to other actions and events, much beyond the compass of the present world."

This scheme, in its vastness and amplitude is incomprehensible by us—"so incomprehensible, that a man must really, in the literal sense, know nothing at all, who is not sensible of his ignorance in it." Where all is connected we can know nothing adequately without knowing all.

If the Natural Government of God is thus a scheme, it is highly credible that the moral, which, in other respects, is so much like it, is also a scheme or constitution made up of dependent parts. It is, indeed, probable "that the natural and moral constitution and government of the world are so connected, as to make up together but one scheme—that the first is formed and carried on merely in subserviency to the latter, as the vegetable world is for the animal, and organized bodies for minds." The subordination of the natural to the moral is not, however, the point before us. It is the analogy between them, which renders it credible that the one is as really a scheme as the other. Accordingly "every act of Divine justice and goodness may be supposed to look much beyond itself and its immediate object, may have some reference to other parts of God's moral administra-

tion, and to a general moral plan, and every circumstance of this, his moral government, may be adjusted beforehand with a view to the whole of it. And supposing this to be the case, it is most evident that we are not competent judges of this scheme, from the small parts of it which come within our view in the present life, and therefore no objections against any of these parts can be insisted on by reasonable men." To judge of any single part in a connected whole, its relation to every other part and to the whole itself, must be adequately understood. An isolated phenomenon requires to be known only in itself, but the dependent and relative must be known in their connections in order to be properly appreciated.

The conclusiveness of the answer drawn from our ignorance to the objections against the wisdom and equity of Providence, is illustrated by Bishop Butler, by taking the strongest of these objections and putting them in their strongest light, and showing how impertinent they are. It may be alleged either that evil might have been prevented by repeated interpositions so guarded and circumstanced, as to preclude the possibility of mischief arising from them, or, if this were impracticable, that a scheme is itself an imperfection, that it involves the chances of irregularity, and that consequently, more good is likely to result from single, detached acts of justice and goodness. In the first place, if all this were true, it only proves that the Divine Administration might have been better than it is—it does not prove that it is not really wise and good. But, in the next place, our ignorance precludes us from even approximating a proof that these things are or can be true. We are utterly unable to say whether evil could have been prevented by special interpositions, much less can we determine whether there could have been a government without system or dependence of parts. To say that these things *seem* to be possible is not to the point. "Many instances may be alleged, in things much less out of our reach, of suppositions absolutely impossible, and reducible to the most palpable self-contradictions, which not every one by any means, would perceive to be such, nor perhaps any one at first sight, suspect." We do not know what is practicable in the nature of things, and what is impracticable, and therefore our ignorance is a satisfactory answer to all objections which have no other foundation than that of surmise and conjecture.

This general answer, suggested by the government of God as a scheme, and a scheme incomprehensible, only shuts our mouths. It precludes us from making objections. But it leaves the question wholly undetermined whether or not, the objections, in themselves considered, may not after all be true. It conveys no intimation that knowledge would dissipate the difficulties. It represses presumption without satisfying faith. Bishop Butler now proceeds a step farther, and undertakes to show that analogy renders it highly credible, that more light would put an end to cavils, that such difficulties are, in all likelihood, the mere creatures of our ignorance.

II. This is done by pointing out two circumstances in the natural government of God, which if the like be found in the moral, furnish a key to the origin of our difficulties. 1. The first is, that no ends appear to be accomplished without means. We find, moreover, that the relation betwixt means and ends is discovered to us by experience and not by reason. We have no antecedent standard by which we can determine what means ought to be employed to accomplish particular results; and whenever we undertake from a priori notions of fitness and propriety to judge in the

case, we are involved in perplexity. Many things which by such a standard we condemn, we find afterwards to be conducive to most desirable results; and in general, all the objections which we make to the constitution of nature, gradually disappear before a fuller knowledge of the subservience and dependence of its events. If this relation of means and ends holds also in the moral government of God, as analogy renders it credible that it does, the objections which we make to its wisdom and goodness may be of the same kind as those which, antecedently to experience, we are disposed to raise against the ordinary course of Providence. The things objected against may be means employed to accomplish invaluable ends. It is nothing worth to say, that we see not their fitness and adaptation, so before experience we said of many of the arrangements of nature. And as increasing knowledge resolved our difficulties in the one case, it is credible that it may likewise in the other. But if evil is made productive of good, is not this to sanction the maxim, "Let us do evil that good may come." The argument does not imply that evil itself is a good, but that its permission is better than a forcible and and violent prevention of it. If men would voluntarily abstain from it, the suppression of it in this way would be an incalculable blessing; but when the question is, shall they be permitted to act according to the freedom of their own choice, or shall a resistless constraint be placed upon them in reference to evil, the permission of evil may be the wiser alternative. It may be made the means of securing in some a higher degree of virtue and in other ways of contributing to public happiness. 2. The second circumstance is that natural government is carried on by general laws. This is obviously a wise arrangement; men are enabled by it to foresee the future and to regulate the expectations from which they act. There could be no uniformity in conduct without a corresponding uniformity in the course of nature. Now it is the nature of general laws, from their stern inflexibility, to occasion hardship in particular cases. The infant or the lunatic, who falls from a precipice, will be as surely crushed, as he who plunges down with headstrong rashness. Perhaps difficulties of this sort cannot be in a system of general laws, and yet such a system is obviously wise and good, notwithstanding such occasional and incidental irregularities. Special interpositions to prevent them, would be manifestly productive of great mischief. They would induce idleness and negligence, and render uncertain the expectations, which a uniform administration is fitted to create. They would be a virtual abrogation of the natural rule of life. Now the like may hold in the moral government of God, it may be conducted upon general laws, and the hardships of which we complain may result from the operation of laws which are eminently wise and good, and which could not be suspended without producing infinite confusion.

But it may be said, that this method of answering objections from our ignorance proves too much, that it may be equally employed to invalidate the proof of religion. 1. To this it is replied, in the first place, that the ignorance on which we insist is not a total, or an absolute ignorance. That, of course, would preclude all proof as well as all objections. But we are supposed to know something of the moral character of God, and of the ultimate ends which His perfections would aim to secure. Our ignorance is in relation to the means by which these ends can be most succesfully achieved. The proof of God's moral character, of the general ends and

purposes of His government is drawn from facts with which we are acquainted—it is a matter about which we are not in the dark. Therefore ignorance cannot be pleaded to invalidate this proof, though it may be alleged to neutralize objections. A man may understand the general design of a factory or steam-engine, but he may be very incompetent to judge of the machinery—he may know the purpose of a watch, and yet be unable to explain the relation of its parts. 2. Even if our ignorance could be employed to invalidate the proof of religion, that would not set aside the obligations of duty. It would only render it doubtful what would be the consequences of conduct, it would not affect the certainty of the rule of life. This rule springs immediately from our nature, and though the consequences of observing it might be doubtful, its authority remains, and there is, in virtue of this fact, a presumption that the consequences taught by religion will eventually follow. Religion becomes the safe side. 3. In the third place, we have already seen that our objections spring from a method of argument that cannot be applied to the proof of religion, and a method which analogy shows to be delusive. We condemn particular measures on a priori grounds of fitness and propriety. In all similar instances of objection to the natural government of God, additional knowledge of the connection and relation of parts has removed the difficulty. The inference is, therefore, just that a similar knowledge of the relations and dependencies of the parts of the moral government would have a similar effect.—Analogy suggests the point of our ignorance and the probability of a solution. No such delusive method of arguing obtains in relation to the proof of religion. 4. Hence finally, it is not absolutely ignorance, but a particular kind of ignorance from which the answer to objections is drawn. It is our ignorance of the possibilities of things, and of the various relations in nature—a kind of ignorance which analogy forcibly suggests, and of which sober and reasonable men are habitually conscious. To reason from this kind of ignorance is to reason from what we know to be true, and to disregard it is to despise the teachings of experience.