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# PLEAS FOR FREE INQUIRY.

PART II.

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON "THE ARGUMENT  
FROM ANALOGY."

BY

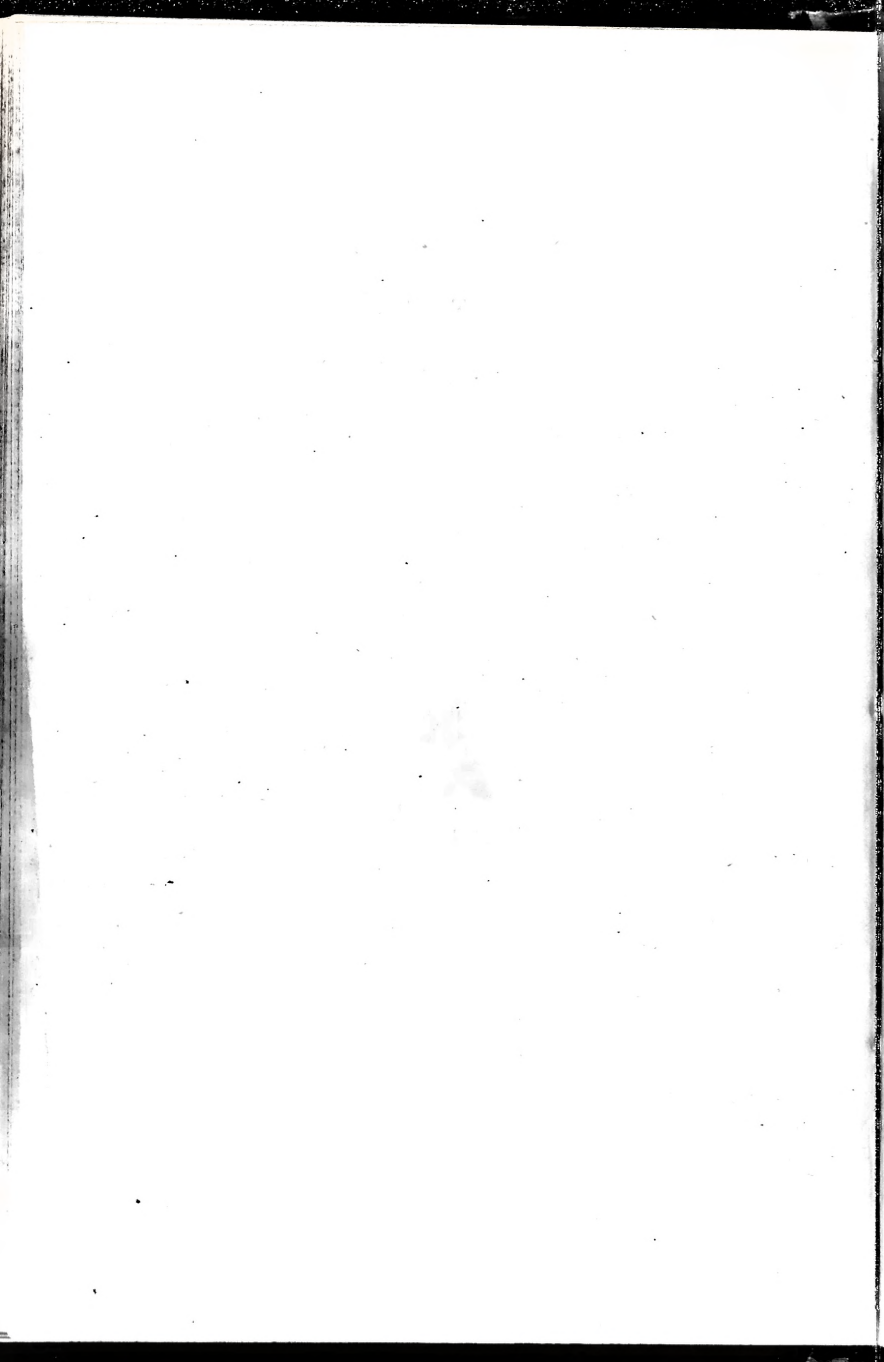
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## PLEAS FOR FREE INQUIRY.

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IN a paper, which I had the honour to contribute to this series some months ago,\* I ventured to point out that this much might be affirmed with confidence of the religious creed commonly, or perhaps rather nominally, entertained in this island, viz., that it is one which ought to inspire all men, and must certainly inspire all unselfish men, with the hope that it is untrue. In saying, and in repeating this, I do not conceive myself to have lit upon any new or strange argument bearing upon Revelation, or indeed to be doing anything more than drawing a very simple and obvious inference from the alleged facts which it brings under my notice. "All men are accursed; their natural destination is Hell, a place of excruciating and endless torment; from this fate, impending over all, some (or, if you please, many) will be rescued by miraculous means." The inference or conclusion which I draw from these statements is the necessary and unavoidable one, that they constitute very bad tidings, indeed tidings of the most appalling character, for mankind in general. And (suppose I put out of sight my own personal interest in the matter) this conclusion will certainly involve the hope—from which I am powerless to defend myself if it be a sin, and unwilling to defend myself, if I had the power, whether it be a sin or not—that the so-called Revelation, containing these announcements, may prove wholly untrue. Nor shall I be induced to smother the hope, if I am told (what, indeed, I am not very clearly told

\* Pleas for Free Inquiry, Part I.

in this case)\* that every man in the world, by the exercise of due care, may escape the dreadful fate impending over him ; since this will leave quite untouched the particular announcement which has called forth the emotion in question. I shall continue to hope that a number of persons will not perish in a coal-mine to-morrow, even after being informed that the death of every one of them, if it takes place, will be the result of his own fault. But, for a fuller discussion of this subject, I must refer the reader to the paper above mentioned. †

Yet, as I pointed out at the end of that paper, and as must suggest itself to every impartial mind, to assert (what I think is plainly demonstrable) that it would be greatly for the interest of mankind that such terrible tidings should be untrue, and that we are therefore entitled to hope that they may be untrue, is a very different thing from concluding that they *are* untrue. It may turn out that such a conclusion is by no means warranted, and we must be very careful not to mistake our wishes for proofs in the matter. No doubt it is difficult to understand that the Supreme Being (represented to us as invested with the attributes of power, justice, goodness, mercy, &c., infinitely multiplied) should reveal himself to us under such a terrific form, and animated by such intentions towards our race. Yet, satisfactory evidence that he had thus revealed himself and his intentions would, of course, be a complete answer as to the fact : though, whether we could continue to employ with respect to him the epithets "just," "good," "merciful," in any other than a non-natural sense, is another question. It is not proposed to discuss the evidences of Christianity in this paper, except in so far as a resemblance between what is to be found in nature on the one hand, and the matter and method of Revelation

\* See note at the end of Pleas for Free Inquiry, Part I., and the "Larger Catechism of the Church of Scotland," &c., quoted there.

† Note (A) at end.

so-called on the other, constitutes a part of such evidences. It is of this resemblance, or what is styled the "Argument from analogy," that I wish to say something.

I have said that it is difficult for any dispassionate person to suppose certain parts of Revelation (which word I use in the sense of the alleged miraculous Biblical Revelation) to be true. They come into direct conflict with the moral sense of such a person. There is, for instance, no orthodox believer out of the "Evangelical" School,—I mean no reasonable Christian—who does not admit that the endless torturing of sentient beings by their Creator is a difficulty of this kind. Accordingly, some sincere men, owing to the shock to their consciences of such a communication, and many others, carelessly jumping to a desired conclusion, have gone their way, satisfied that it would be a waste of time to inquire into the evidences of such a revelation as this.

It is at this point that the "Argument from Analogy" comes in. The very same difficulties, it is alleged, which are found in Revelation are also to be found in nature, and can in no wise be urged as objections against the former, unless they are admitted to be objections against the latter, which, however, is allowed to be from the hand of God (for Atheists are not dealt with by this argument). And this consideration not only removes all ground for holding that Revelation cannot be from the same hand, but also furnishes some positive reasons for supposing that it *is* from the same hand. Instead of imagining what God is, or is not likely to do, we are told, let us consider what he has done and is doing in this world of ours. For example, he certainly is permitting the existence of a great deal of evil here, to use the mildest form of words; and surely a greater difficulty than the existence and incidence of Evil is not to be conceived. Not only is there in the world a terrible amount of suffering, which an Omnipotent Being might have prevented,

but it is perpetually lighting upon the persons who from our point of view are the wrong persons. Indeed, nothing is more clear than that suffering is not proportioned to guilt in this world. Now, if you suppose a being with faculties even vastly superior to our own, but with no experience or information of a constitution of things like that of our planet, a being such as "may possibly be in the creation, to whom the Author of Nature has manifested himself under the most amiable of all characters, that of infinite absolute benevolence,"\* and should proceed to inform him, if he needed to be informed, that this world is under the immediate government of the same omnipotent, all-wise, and benevolent Creator, he would certainly deem it beforehand inconceivable that suffering of any kind should exist here; still more inconceivable, if such an expression be permitted me, that it should be inflicted on the innocent as well as on the guilty. He would indeed presume not only that there would be no suffering, but that there would be no sin. Possibly, the very nature of suffering (if not of sin) would be unintelligible to him. Yet here is sin and here is suffering. Surely then, it is most absurd to contend that a revelation which informs us of a great amount of misery to be inflicted hereafter (and that, not upon wholly innocent beings, nor according to its more humane adherents, upon any that might not have escaped) must needs on this account be untrue; that it may be rejected without examination of its proofs, as not possibly coming from God, by such poor ignorant creatures as ourselves. The writer who by his masterly treatment of it has made this subject of analogy his own is, as every one knows, Bishop Butler, the "Bacon of Theology," as he has been styled. Nor can I help saying that his argument seems to me unanswerable, if not pressed beyond a certain point. What that point is we shall shortly have occasion to consider.

\* Butler, Analogy, Pt. i., ch. 3.



It may be as well, however, to mention at once an inference or conclusion which this Analogy is *not* strong enough to sustain. For it has been contended by some recent imitators of Butler that we should *expect* a Revelation to contain the same difficulties as are to be found in Nature. This is equivalent to saying that we should expect the Almighty's handwriting, like that of a man, to be always the same; or, perhaps rather that from one ill-deciphered character we can form an idea of what his general hand-writing is. This kind of reasoning furnishes one, among many examples, of the way in which the guarded conclusions of great thinkers are often exaggerated by their disciples.\* We should, I venture to think, anticipate exactly the contrary. We should expect that a revelation (*ἀποκάλυψις*) from an all-good Deity—and such a one is taken for granted on both sides—would be, as the name indicates, an “uncovering,” not a means of darkening what was dim before; of clearing up some of the mysteries of life, not of deepening them; of removing, if only to a small extent, some of our difficulties, not of multiplying them a thousandfold. If we saw great suffering inflicted on many persons by a Prince of whose benevolence we had reason to feel assured, we should not be inclined to predict that a message from him purporting to deal with their case, would, while explaining nothing, convey news of a still more dreary, and dismal and, worse than all, of an unalterable fate, to these same persons. However, to argue that the occurrence of certain difficulties in connection with revelation is not a sufficient ground for rejecting it, inasmuch as the same or like difficulties are to be found in Nature—this is to take up quite a different position. And this really is a large part of Butler's contention. It will be observed that here are two distinct propositions stated—(1), That a Revelation is not rendered incredible by reason of certain difficulties, *when* the same or similar difficulties

\* Note (B) at end.

are found in Nature ; (2), That the same &c. difficulties *are* found in Nature as are connected with this Revelation. The former of these two propositions seems to me indisputable, and is taken for granted ; the latter (which is the real point) is, in my opinion, open to some observations. Supposing, however, it be admitted to the fullest extent, the reader will please to observe how far we shall be carried. Not by any means to the conclusion that revelation is not incredible (since the evidence for it may completely break down); but to this, that it is not rendered antecedently incredible by the particular objections referred to. Now, whether all the objections that may be brought against Revelation, before evidence heard, be or be not such as may also be urged against Nature, I take it that now-a-days few reasonable men contend that any of these objections, or any combination of them, render Revelation *incredible* ; but only that it is rendered very unlikely. If the argument from Analogy were supposed incapable of being pushed to a further point than I have above indicated, it would not be styled "an impregnable fortress erected for the defence of Christianity."\* Bishop Butler does carry it a stage further : so far as to meet this presumption by a counter-presumption of *likelihood* ; and as nothing more than a probable conclusion can be drawn from any Analogy, he has in reality made the utmost available use of it. His propositions, then, embrace what I have above stated and something more. They go to this (a) If there be an analogy or likeness between that system of things and dispensation of Providence which a Revelation informs us of, and that system of things and dispensation of Providence which Experience together with Reason inform us of, *i.e.*, the known course of Nature ; this is a presumption that they both have the same author and cause ; † (b) There *is* such an analogy, &c., between Revelation and Nature, or, as he himself expresses it further on—They are

\* Professor Alden. Bartlett's Life of Bishop Butler, p. 320.

† Note (C).

very much of a piece, and may be traced up to the same general laws, and resolved into the same principles of divine conduct. The conclusion is that it is probable that Revelation has a divine author. In this syllogism (and I have thrown the argument into this form merely for the convenience of remarking upon its parts) it seems to me that both the major and minor premiss are, to say the least, open to some criticism.

Let us take the latter first. What are the resemblances alleged to exist between Nature and Revelation? And a consideration of the points in which they are said to resemble each other will include that of "difficulties" common to both.

Now these resemblances may be classed under two heads. Firstly, those which exist between the subject-matter of Revelation and the inferences to be drawn from an examination of what may be called the natural scheme. Secondly, those which exist between the mode in which Revelation has been communicated to man, and the manner in which natural knowledge is conveyed. The first head includes a comparison of the two communications; the second, of the respective *modes* of communication.

Under the first head, probably most theists will admit, that there are some strong indications from other sources than revelation, of the present life not being the end of all things for man; that we may gather in the same way that we are under the government of God, a government carried on by rewards and punishments (many startling observations forcing themselves upon our minds as to both these means so employed; for instance, that punishment is often, to all seeming, quite out of proportion to guilt; and that there is often a point in a man's career at which no repentance or alteration of conduct will serve to stave off the earthly punishment incurred); that moreover the government of God wears the appearance of a moral government, one under which the practice of virtue has a *tendency*

to promote happiness, and that of vice, misery; that hence it would seem likely that we are in a state of probation, as implying difficulties, trial and danger, with regard to this world, and that there are reasons for inferring that we are in a similar state with regard to another world; that this state of probation seems intended for our moral discipline and improvement, certainly here, and probably hereafter; that we are seemingly in the midst of a *scheme* which is quite incomprehensible to man, full of mysteries and difficulties, and in which what would strike us as the best means are not always adopted to produce the required ends, but which is presumably—the wisdom and goodness of God being taken for granted—related to other parts of a great and general scheme, the very nature of which we are incapable of seizing; yet a part of which, we are entitled to infer, or at least to surmise, will consist in a final adjustment of our condition, in accordance with the principles of strict justice; of which final orderly settlement the *germs* are plainly discoverable in this our present state, where God has unmistakably marked his approval of virtue and disapproval of vice.

Now all these and other indications of a divine and moral scheme which an examination of the natural course of things suggests to us are authoritatively confirmed and republished by the voice of Revelation.

Besides its statements on these heads, revelation makes several others which will not be so generally accepted, *e.g.* (1.) that we are in a fallen and ruined condition. But whether this be true or not, it cannot be said (it may be alleged) that we are without an intimation to that effect from nature. Since all nations, even such as have never heard of the revelation we are discussing, have held substantially the same view. (2.) that we stand in need of some means of propitiating an angry Deity. Now, no one can deny that there is no notion more deeply impressed than this one by nature upon the mind of man, as is proved by the existence of sacrifices all over the world.



Further, Revelation teaches some dogmas (and prescribes certain ordinances) not to be discovered or approached to by reason. For example, the existence of the Trinity. We cannot compare these directly with anything in nature,\* or draw a comparison in any way further than by observing that they are mysteries, and that there are in nature also mysteries. Yet they are not, properly speaking, difficulties. I mean that the presence of such alleged truths, not discoverable by reason, in a revelation is not a difficulty. For we certainly should expect it to contain some things not only not discoverable by reason (else, why a revelation at all?) but also incomprehensible by us; though not, indeed, as has been before said, to reproduce in an aggravated form, and without explanation, *all* the difficulties of life. It is not intended in the argument from analogy to imply that everything out of what we are calling "nature" must needs be exactly like everything in it—which would be absurd. And the presence of such mysteries in a revelation would be quite in accordance with the acknowledged constitution and course of nature, which, as Butler justly remarks, is quite different from what, before experience, might have been looked for. Nor can any one say that the allegation of the existence of a Trinity in any way offends his moral sense, or furnishes an *à priori* reason for refusing to examine into the evidences of a revelation which inculcates it as a fact. Eternal punishment does indeed shock the mind. This and a few other dogmas, such as the atonement, should be considered apart, as being of an exceptional character.

It is rather in glancing at the second head, viz., the resemblance or analogy between the mode in which Revelation has been communicated, and that in which natural knowledge has been conveyed to mankind, that (subject to the exceptions just mentioned) the greater part of what have generally been considered *à priori*

\* Note (D).

objections to revelation will be met with. Thus, that the light of revelation is not universal ; that its evidence is not so strong as it might have been, on the contrary, is such as to leave many honest enquirers, before whom it is placed, in great doubt ; that, supposing man in a fallen state, the remedy should have been introduced only after so many ages, and then made known so gradually and partially, and through so long and intricate a series of means ; that there should be such diversities of opinion among those who accept Revelation, as to its real meaning, as are implied in the several creeds of the Roman Catholic, Protestant, &c. ; that all men who receive revelation are not necessarily made the better for it ; these and other considerations of a like kind have often been cited as difficulties in the way of belief. And certainly whatever may be thought of the force of the others, the second one instanced above *is* a difficulty, in the case of the persons to whom it applies, since there cannot be a greater difficulty to a man in the way of believing anything than the fact (admitted in this instance, in the case of many men) that the evidence for it is to him wholly inconclusive. Bishop Butler replies that it is precisely under similar conditions, and with like apparent inequalities and uncertainties, that God distributes all his blessings, and that all knowledge makes its way in the world. He bestows all his gifts with the most promiscuous variety among creatures of the same species.\* We are obliged to act, in the affairs of life, upon very uncertain evidence, and "strong objections are often seen to lie against the best concerted schemes, not to be removed or answered, but which seem overbalanced by reasons on the other side, so that the certain difficulties and dangers of the pursuit are by every one thought justly disregarded, upon the account of the appearing greater advantages in case of success, *though there be but little probability of it.*" And again, "numberless instances

\* Part ii. ch. 6.

there are, in the daily course of life, in which all men think it reasonable to engage in pursuits, *though the probability is greatly against succeeding.*\* And *ad summam*, he waves off, as it were by a flourish of his wand, all possible or conceivable objections against revelation, under either of the above heads (except one presently to be mentioned) with the remarks that we are no judges of what a revelation might be expected to contain, supposing one to be made; nor of the means which God would adopt to communicate it; nor as to how far he might choose to secure its transmission uncorrupted to posterity, or, on the other hand, suffer it to be handed down and consequently corrupted by verbal tradition.† Again, that things appearing “foolish” may, in a scheme so greatly beyond our comprehension, be the very best means to the very best ends.‡

(1.) The first observation to be made with regard to this analogy is, that—in Butler’s own words, though he, indeed, uses them with a different application—“it is of pretty large extent.”§ The legitimate conclusion to be drawn from it is, that there can be no such thing as an *à priori* objection, or indeed an objection or difficulty of any kind, in connection with any alleged revelation whatever (unless it be an objection to its morality, or by reason of plain contradictions in it—points to be presently considered). There are a number of religions in the world of which it may be said that they are republications of natural truths, and that they announce some dogmas not discoverable by reason; objections to the doctrines of which, as well as to the mode of their communication, may be met by precisely the same arguments as are here employed on behalf of the Christian Revelation. The very first objection which will perhaps occur to the mind against examining the claims of any of these religions, viz., that they are held by nations which occupy a comparatively low

\* Part ii. ch. 6.

† Part ii. ch. 3.

‡ Part ii. ch. 4.

§ Introduction.

place in the world, and whose civilisation is unprogressive, may be met in this same way. We are no judges of the manner in which a revelation would be given, nor to what sort of persons or peoples it might be given. Thus, there is great reason to suppose that a knowledge of the directive power of the magnet was first communicated to the Chinese, though it might have been expected that it would first have been made known to the maritime nations of the West, to whom it would have been of greater use. Nor are we in the least degree entitled to infer that the recipients of a divine revelation must needs, on that account, advance beyond others in other kinds of knowledge, or in material prosperity.\* For if so, certainly any one living between the ninth and the thirteenth centuries of our era might justly have concluded that Mahometanism was the true religion. Nor can any seeming absurdities or follies in any of these religions furnish us with a sufficient ground for not examining them; *e.g.*, the transmigration of souls, the passage of the departed over a bridge as fine as a hair, the invocation of the moon-plant and its juice, the avatars of Vishnu, the sacred character of crocodiles, oxen and snakes; and many other things of a like kind. If we were told that there is a devil with horns and hoofs, that it is incumbent on us to cross our fingers every time we see a magpie, and to pick up and throw over our left shoulder every rusty nail we find in the road—in none of which dogmas or ordinances can anything self-contradictory or clearly immoral be shown—such ingredients could furnish no objection to a revelation which contained them; since, every seeming absurdity is at once cured, as the lawyers style it, by the doctrine that we are no judges beforehand of what a revelation, supposing one to be given, might or might not contain, or how far things foolish and ridiculous in our eyes might be the very best means to the very

\* Note (E).



best ends.\* Again, in reference to the religions of which I have been speaking, the fact, if it be a fact, that there is very slender evidence for the supernatural events recorded in them can be no objection, "since we are equally ignorant whether the evidence of it (revelation) would be certain, or highly probable, or *doubtful*."† This very want of proof may be part of our probation in respect to some one of these religions. And it may be a true religion, even though the absurdities in it were admitted to be *real*; since these absurdities may be, after all, only corruptions of truths originally communicated; for, as we have just seen, we are no judges how far God, if he gave a revelation at all, might choose to secure its transmission uncorrupted to posterity. And it may be added, that as the difficulties in nature are numberless, it would be easy to find one which would match any given difficulty in any one of these religions, or even, to carry the argument a step further, and show a general resemblance between it and the constitution of nature.‡ Indeed, I will presently show why there *must* be such a resemblance, more or less marked, between what man learns, or thinks he learns, from nature and what is taught him in any religion.

Try this analogy, for example, on Mahometanism. And this may be shortly and fairly done by turning to the last paragraph in Butler's Introduction, where he has given "a general account of what may be looked for in his treatise." Every single word of that summary will hold good of Mahometanism, except one sentence, where, for "(dispensation) carried on by the mediation of a divine person, the Messiah," we shall have to substitute another form of words; as for instance, "carried on by a succession of divinely appointed persons,—Moses, Jesus, finally Mahomet." And this would be the substitution in place of a dogma for which even Butler finds it extremely hard to extract a satisfactory

\* Butler, Pt. ii., ch. 4.

† Pt. ii., ch. 3.

‡ Note (F).

analogy from nature (the atonement) of a much more simple and natural one, for which abundant analogies could be shown ; and, so far, the task of the Mahometan would be easier than that of the Christian apologist.\* It may be added, that the former would have no sort of difficulty in meeting, on Butler's lines, an objection which is commonly and foolishly brought against the divine character of his religion, viz., that it was propagated by the sword. We are no judges of the means by which a revelation would be propagated ; and it would be the height of presumption to argue *à priori* that God could not, or would not, use the sword for that purpose. And the examples from nature which make in an opposite direction are numerous. Knowledge constantly finds its way in the world in the train of brute-force. And brute-force has been largely employed as a means of spreading both Judaism and Christianity.†

In short, if any dispassionate person will look with a little care into this subject, he will not fail to see that, *mutatis mutandis*, the "Analogy" will hold good for the creed of Islam, at least so far as this—which is indeed the furthest point to which it can legitimately be pushed in support of any religion—that there are no *à priori* objections such as to render Mahometanism incredible, and that there are certain resemblances between its teachings, the circumstances attending its introduction, &c., and what we observe in the constitution of nature.

Turn, again, to Brahmanism or Buddhism. Here, we shall be told (what we cannot be told in the case of Mahometanism) that the analogy does not apply. For in these religions there are things—precepts enjoined, and actions related of deities—distinctly immoral. Now, immorality constitutes a clear *à priori* objection to a so-called revelation, as has been admitted when we conceded (at least I have been willing to con-

\* Note (G).

† Note (H).

cede) that the government of God is a moral government. This is a point which merits very careful consideration. And this seems to me a suitable place for considering it.

First, I must ask, What is meant by the word "immoral" in this place? The reader need not be afraid of being dragged into the interminable controversy to which such a question may seem to open the way. It will suffice, for my present purpose, to take an example or two of actions, and to inquire whether the term is held to apply in these instances. Is it immoral to bind one's unoffending son upon an altar, with the view of putting him to death? Is it immoral to borrow one's neighbour's jewels of gold and jewels of silver, and not to return them, or their equivalent in case they are lost? Is it immoral, after capturing a strong city, or subduing a hostile nation, to put to death in cold blood the enemy's women and their babes at the breast? I suppose there can be but one answer. Yet all these and similar things are found to have been enjoined by the Deity of our Revelation.\* Are we not, then, bound, on the above reasoning, if not to reject *in toto* the revelation of which they form a part; at any rate, to reject those portions of it in which they are represented as having been commanded by God? "Not at all," says Bishop Butler; and to show the desperate straits to which he is driven, I shall give this part of his argument entire:—

"Reason can, and it ought, to judge, not only of the meaning, but also of the morality and the evidence of a revelation. *First*, it is the province of reason to judge of the morality of the Scripture; *i.e.*, not whether it contains things different from what we should have expected from a wise, just, and good Being; for objections from hence have now been obviated: but whether it contains things plainly contradictory to wisdom, justice, or goodness; to what the Light of Nature teaches us of God, And I know nothing of this sort objected against Scripture, excepting such objections as are formed upon suppositions which would equally conclude that the

\* Note (I).

constitution of nature is contradictory to wisdom, justice, or goodness, which most certainly it is not. Indeed, there are some particular precepts in Scripture, given to particular persons, requiring actions which would be immoral and vicious were it not for such precepts. But it is easy to see that all these are of such a kind as that the precept changes the whole nature of the case and of the action, and both constitutes and shows that not to be unjust and immoral which, prior to the precept, must have appeared and really have been so; which may well be, since none of these precepts are contrary to immutable morality. If it were commanded to cultivate the principles and act from the spirit of treachery, ingratitude, cruelty, the command would not alter the nature of the case or of the action in any of these instances. But it is quite otherwise in precepts which require only the doing an external action; for instance, taking away the property or life of any. For men have no right to either life or property, but what arises solely from the grant of God. When this grant is revoked they cease to have any right at all in either. And when this revocation is made known, as surely it is possible it may be, it must cease to be unjust to deprive them of either. And though a course of external acts which, without command, would be immoral, must make an immoral habit, yet a few detached commands have no such natural tendency. I thought proper to say thus much of the few scripture precepts which require not vicious actions, but actions which would have been vicious had it not been for such precepts; because they are sometimes weakly urged as immoral, and great weight is laid upon objections drawn from them."—(Analogy, pt. ii., ch. 3.)

If the above reasoning is to be accepted, it must lead necessarily to this: that *nothing* in any revelation or religion—nothing, I mean, which is represented as an act or command of a Deity—can be objected to as being immoral. For every such objection, it may be urged, is also an objection to the constitution of nature in which effects similar to those caused by the acts or the carrying out of the injunctions in question are certainly to be found. If the Hebrew Divinity's orders to the Israelites to massacre the children at the breast of the Canaanites present no difficulty in view of the fact that God repeatedly smites infants at the breasts, and causes them to perish by diseases, and to be



swallowed up by earthquakes, fires, tempests, &c., all antecedent objections to infanticide as a religious rite are removed at the same time. The rapes of Jupiter and the thefts of Mercury cease to be immoral from this point of view, since it is certain that women are ravished and men are robbed in this world. And it comes to the same thing in the end whether the gods permit an act to be done, or order it to be done by another, or do it themselves. But the absurdity of even discussing this question at all, under the conditions set forth, is clearly shown by a consideration of Butler's next plea. It really comes to this, (1.) We ought to reject a revelation in which God is represented as commanding or doing anything immoral; (2.) Nothing which God commands or does *can* be immoral. Surely on the strength of this, a Hindu may unanswerably contend that no orders or exploits of (say) Vishnu, however extravagant or cruel—if such there be—can be held as constituting an *à priori* objection to his creed. The question will be simply as to the facts. For if Vishnu *did* order or do the things in question they became, *ipso facto*, right.

Bishop Butler of course sees this difficulty, and makes desperate efforts to get out of it. He distinguishes between "the doing an external action" and "the cultivating of certain principles and a certain spirit;" between "a few detached commands which have no natural tendency to form an immoral habit," and "a course of external acts which, without such a command, would be immoral, and would have such a tendency." It is obvious that here are distinctions which will not hold. It is quite idle to say that to order a man to massacre a *few* babes is not to cause him to cultivate a spirit of ferocity, or, at the least, of insensibility to human suffering. Or that to instigate a man to cheat a *few* people is not to develope in him, more or less, according to his nature, a taste for appropriating what does not belong to him. Or take the

case, which just now suggested itself to me, of rape. Rape is an external action: the depriving a woman of what may be of more value to her than life itself. Yet a woman has no right to this possession, except what is given her by God. When he has signified his revocation of the grant, it ceases to be unjust to deprive her of it. Now will any one contend that a man who, by divine command, had perpetrated a small number of rapes (or, if you please, one) would not necessarily have the spirit of lust cultivated in him? There is no distinction to be drawn here between a few immoral acts and many immoral acts, except as to their number; nor between cultivating certain principles and a certain spirit, and doing by command external actions which must tend towards their formation, except this much: that the doing *by command* of these actions would be calculated to foster in the agent and others those bad principles and to stimulate that bad spirit in an extraordinary degree, since such deeds would seem to have been invested with a divine sanction.

It may be thought, at first sight, that the argument might have been boldly driven over this difficulty. And, indeed, it might be contended, very much on the lines of the "Analogy," that we are no judges of what constitutes "immutable morality:" that actions, injunctions, &c., appearing in the highest degree immoral to us, might, if we knew more of the general scheme, be shown to be moral. That, consequently, it might be quite in accordance with the principles of such a scheme that certain persons should be ordered to cultivate the spirit of treachery, lust, cruelty, &c. In other words, that we are quite at sea as to absolute right and absolute wrong. And this is virtually the argument of those who uphold the dogma of eternal punishment, which is not maintainable except on these principles. This argument would, however, be quite at variance with the main positions of Butler (indeed, impossible to him), who, by the way, nowhere encum-

bers himself with the doctrine of eternal punishment, and avoids it as carefully as he avoids the subject of inspiration. It might, however, be plausibly urged by the adherent of any so-called false religion, in which an unusual number of monstrosities occurred. We need not, however, go into this. Taking the "Analogy" as it stands, and not debiting the author, even in imagination, with pleas which he would have repudiated, it seems there can be no objection on the score of morality to any religion, or else that there are objections on that score to Revelation. I venture to hold the latter view, for which I will endeavour shortly to state my reasons. This not being admitted by Butler, it will be found that his general reasoning leads to the former conclusion. And, since there can be no *à priori* objections on any other ground, save, indeed, such as may arise from manifest contradictions, in so far as these may be brought under this head, it follows that, with this exception, there can, on Butler's principles, be no *à priori* objection of any kind to any revelation or religion. This consideration in no way weakens the Bishop's legitimate argument, since objections of a certain class to Christianity are not the less removed, because objections of the same kind to other creeds are removed at the same time. But it is well to observe the wide scope of the general argument, and to notice at once that it is applicable, in its main features, to a vast number of religions, not all of which can be, possibly not one of which is, true, in the sense of containing nothing but truth.

(II.) The second observation which must, I think, force itself on the mind is, that this argument is not altogether satisfactory in its mode of dealing with certain difficulties. For instance, the one which as I said at the beginning has, more than any other, driven some people to pass by the evidence for revelation; the doctrine of Eternal Punishment. One scarcely likes to use the word with regard to a writer usually so candid,

but it certainly seems to me that Butler has somewhat *evaded* this difficulty. We read of punishment to be inflicted hereafter, punishment which may be greater than the offence seems to deserve, greater than the enjoyment derived from the sin, of people being finally disposed of according to their deserts (a belief which it is impossible to reconcile with this one) &c., but we nowhere, that I can recollect, meet with unmistakeable Eternal Hell-fire in the pages of the Analogy.\* Yet that it is to be found in Revelation is as plain as anything can be. If we attempt to soften down this doctrine into something which is not in the words conveying it, we shall be introducing a solvent of immense power and unknown range of application. There it is in the Bible, and we must make what we can of it. Now there is nothing in Nature at all corresponding to this ; unless it be said that there are such things as pain and punishment in the world. But punishment here—if we admit the existence of a moral scheme—is apparently inflicted, partly as a discipline and means of reformation (in which, its proper character, as opposed to the conception of a mere wreaking of vengeance, men, *i.e.* legislators, &c., have been gradually led by God to contemplate it, when appointed or inflicted by themselves). It appears, at any rate, to be designed for this purpose in most cases, and we cannot say that it is not so designed in all cases coming under our observation: since we cannot affirm that punishments seemingly final to us are really such. Indeed, (revelation apart) the opposite hypothesis would be more probable.† On the other hand, punishment made everlasting assumes the form of pure vindictiveness.‡ There is no analogy to be drawn between what is finite and what is infinite in this connection ; between what is after all of a nearly imperceptible character—for all the earthly sufferings of all who have ever lived, or will ever live, are but a mere prick of the thumb, not even that by comparison

\* Note (J).

† Note (K).

‡ Note (L).



—and what is beyond all that the imagination can conceive in horror, intensity and duration; between what is often seen, and may be always conjectured, to fulfil an end, and what cannot be conceived as fulfilling any.\* Indeed, it would be just as reasonable to call upon us to infer from the fact that a benevolent autocrat had been sometimes known to enjoin an extra drill upon a soldier who had neglected his duty, or even, if you please, upon one who had not neglected his duty, that the same monarch would be likely to order the greater part of his army to be roasted at a slow fire; though even here the ratio of the difference between the two commands to that between what we see in the course of nature and what is presented to us as a prospect by revelation is as the breadth of a human hair to the distance between the earth and the furthest measured part of the heavens *infinitely multiplied*. There is, I say, no analogy to be drawn between finite punishment and punishment involving unimaginable conditions. And as for pain and suffering, Butler (who like every other man was under the influence of the tone of thought prevalent in his day) is very fond of drawing similes from civil government, the government of the master over his servant, the parent over his child, &c. In the course of human training and education, a wise governor, parent, teacher, master, officer in an army, will constantly inflict pain and ordain sufferings, not for the mere gratification of causing them, or because he cannot help doing so, but with a view to the ultimate benefit and improvement of the sufferer. It was pain to the Spartan youth to have to endure his discipline, it is pain to the recruit to acquire his exercises, it is pain, often real pain, to the schoolboy to learn his lessons. This *modus operandi* may often for wise reasons be *immediately* exercised by the Almighty. And if it be replied that Omnipotence might have devised some other plan for the object in view, the answer may be found in Butler's own profound observa-

\* Note (M).

tion. "The benevolence of God may not be a bare single desire to make all men happy, but to make the virtuous and wise man happy." And how virtue can be tested and called forth, except by suffering, it is impossible for us so much as to conceive. And as to what is sometimes remarked, that suffering often seems to fall on the wrong people, we must answer that we really do not know that this is so. The still more profound saying of the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth," may be a complete solution of the difficulty. These people so exceptionally and as it would appear undeservedly tried may be ultimately advantaged in that they have been deemed worthy of a *higher examination*.\* It is not indeed pretended that here is a full explanation of the final causes of human suffering; but that here is an account of it not wholly unsatisfactory to our minds. Now, none of these considerations hold good with regard to eternal pain and punishment.†

Again, look at the case of alleged immoral commands of the Deity. The difficulty is not to be cut by the assertion that whatever God commands must be moral, any more than the former difficulty can be settled by alleging that whatever he does must be just. This is only to use words in a non-natural sense. There is no resemblance or analogy to be found in nature for these commands. A revelation which represents the Almighty as enjoining murder and theft presents difficulties which are not at all paralleled by the undoubted fact that in this world people are murdered and robbed: since in the latter case it is admitted in the argument which we are considering that such acts bear the stamp of his displeasure; in the former case, they bear the very strongest mark of his approval which we can imagine it possible for God to put upon them, viz. the breaking through the general order of the Universe specially to enjoin them. And strange as it may seem to us that

\* Note (N).

† Note (O).

an all-powerful Being should endure things, indeed all forms of evil, which at the same times he disapproves, yet this is a mystery the existence of which is admitted; and it is impossible therefore to show an analogy in things permitted *but* disapproved to similar things ordered *and* approved.\* Nor can any analogy be shown between these immoral commands and the operation of diseases, pestilences, earthquakes, fires, &c. Some people suppose the matter quite settled by pointing to the course of nature. A thousand children (say) are swept away by small-pox, so many others go down in a ship, and so on. "Does not this," they ask, "amount in effect to precisely the same thing as if God had ordered their slaughter through the agency of man?" This is not so clear to me. The introduction of human agency into the problem seems to me to make all the difference. From no source can we gather that God approves of the pestilence, &c., *as* a pestilence. Much less is it possible to conceive that the work which it effects could be entrusted to man without his being thereby demoralized,† for the direct contrary of this can be proved. To be sure this pestilence *may* be the best, perhaps the only, means of accomplishing an object in the end beneficent for the race; just as a surgical operation which, though if viewed *per se*, and by some one who did not understand its purport, it would seem a cruel and horrible process, might yet be of great service to the patient and a beneficent act on the part of the operator who knew all about it; while to make a man hack and mangle a number of other men, without his knowing the why or the wherefore, could not but injure *him*. We should deem in the highest degree unlikely the news that a good schoolmaster had set his boys to flog each other, because such a course could not be otherwise than deeply injurious, particularly (which is the point here) to the floggers. And it would not remove our difficulty to be informed that the Schoolmaster had

\* Note (P).

† Note (Q).

*himself* flogged boys for the same offences. But, further, it is not absolutely certain that God approves of the catastrophe, earthquake, pestilence, &c., at all. These things may be as hateful to him as sin itself. Nor will it suffice to reply that he *must* approve of them, since he as the Author of everything must be held to send them, or since he does not prevent them, though he is admittedly able to do so. For, if so, then God must approve of the murder of B. by A., since he is the author of everything and did not prevent A. from sticking B. Which supposition would be fatal to the whole theory of a moral scheme. Here, indeed, is an old difficulty, the existence of evil side by side with an all-wise and all-powerful God: and we must at once pronounce it insoluble by man. But it is important to note that certain forms of evil (sins) are allowed full scope in the world, while yet it is certain that they are reprobated and loathed by God: for it follows that the same may hold of many processes which we call natural ones, the presence of which, due it may be to some mysterious cause quite out of our reach and range of apprehension, need not by any means show that they are viewed with divine favour. At any rate, unless it can be demonstrated that this is not so, it is not certain that the destruction of a hundred persons by a tempest can be in any way compared, for the purposes of this argument, with the killing of those persons by human agents on express command, *i.e.*, that there is any analogy, of the kind required, between evil, as to the genesis of which we are in the dark, knowing only that it exists, and evil with the process of manufacture of which, and the direct agents in producing which, we are made acquainted, in the shape of a God miraculously ordering a crime and man executing it.

The common-sense of civilised mankind has perceived the force of this distinction, without, perhaps, (as often happens), having analysed it. There can be no doubt that news of the most extensive destruction



of human life, *magno arva teneri Diluvio, nutare urbes, subsidere terras*, would not affect us in the same painful way as if we had learnt that God had ordered a man to sacrifice one of his own sons. It may be said that this difference in our feelings would be owing to the comparatively ordinary character of the former series of events, and the (in any case, happily) uncommon character of the latter event. But the commonness or uncommonness, the natural or miraculous character of the news would have nothing to do with the peculiarity of the shock occasioned. The reason of the difference lies in this, that nowhere in nature is there to be found an intimation that human life is "to be held sacred" by God. Quite the contrary. But there *is* to be found in the human conscience an intimation from God that human life is to be held sacred *by man*.

Of course it will be said—it is virtually said by Butler—that the intimation only amounts to this, that human life is not to be taken by man (to keep to this illustration) *unless an order from God to the contrary is received*. Very well. I am willing to accept this account of the matter. But now arises a question of the utmost importance in this inquiry. What evidence am I entitled to require in order to be satisfied that such a command has really been given? Here are, as it were, signs of God calling me in two different directions at one and the same time. Which is the voice, and which is the counterfeit?

Let us look a little more closely to this point, which goes to the very heart of the analogy.

We must approach the consideration of an alleged Revelation either with no preconceived notions of the nature of God, or with some preconceived notions. Butler, of course, takes the latter view, and he fairly admits that injunctions contained in it, which should be contrary to immutable morality or plain manifest contradictions, would form a sufficient reason for re-

jecting a revelation. Why? Because we evidently start on our inquiry with these among other assumptions : that God is moral, that God is truthful, and will not deceive us. Indeed, without postulating the latter quality for the Deity, all inquiry would be useless. The ground would be cut from under our feet. Now, we must derive these notions (1) from an observation of the course of external nature, and the indications as to the character of God given in it ; or (2) from some other source, which can only be human conscience—using the word without entering into nice discussions, wholly unnecessary in this place ; or (3) from a combination of the two.

If our notions are to be derived wholly from (1) external nature, the question will arise, "How can we get from this source an assurance of the *veracity* of God?" I must confess I do not see how we are to infer this from nature. There are, indeed, no such things in nature as truth and falsehood ; because nature makes no assertions, no positive promises ; while instances abound every hour of the day of men being cruelly and fatally deceived by her *supposed* promises. It may be said that the observed uniformity of natural processes, what is called the order or course of nature, contains in it an implied promise that it will never be broken through, and that that promise is kept. But this ground, which is not really philosophically sustainable, is at any rate not open to orthodox theologians, part of whose case it is that past uniformity in nature is no guarantee whatever (*i.e.*, contains no promise) of future uniformity.\* For, indeed, if it were admitted that it did, either there could be no miracles, or every miracle would be a divine lie. It will be found, as a matter of fact, that the idea of God's veracity does not come into existence in our minds, till we have begun to *anthropomorphize* God, which, from the very constitution of our minds, we are com-

\* Note (R).

pelled to do. We can only take in a knowledge of God, like all other knowledge, subjectively. He can (perhaps rather, does) only reveal himself to us in terms of the human conscience. It will be found that from this latter source mainly spring our ideas of God's truthfulness ; so also of his infinity, omnipotence, and, in a large degree, of his morality, justice, benevolence. For though (as I have allowed) there are *indications* in nature of a benevolent Deity, a moral government, &c., I by no means admit that these are strong enough, taken alone, to justify anything like an assurance on the subject. To use, with a little latitude, the language of the metaphysicians, it is from the ego rather than the non-ego that these conclusions are drawn. Similarly, it may be remarked, that our belief in a future state (without which, all these our inquiries would lose the greater part of their interest) is almost entirely drawn from within. It is the resultant of an internal desire implanted in us by our Maker, and a confidence in his goodness and justice similarly communicated to us : from which we gather that he would not be likely so cruelly to mock and deceive us as to implant in us a natural instinct destined never to be satisfied.\* Several indications in nature serve to confirm this internal anticipation of a future life : not all of them put together are strong enough to serve as its foundation.†

If this internal apprehension of the essential qualities of God (essential, that is, to the conception which he himself compels us to form of him) be, as the very statement of it imports, a revelation of himself from God to man, made in the terms of human conscience it follows :

(1) That we must accept the revelation in those terms. Any other so-called Revelation which contradicts this one in one particular, is as *unlikely* to be true (I am satisfied to put it in this way) as one which contradicts it in another particular. We should all of

\* Note (S).

† Note (T).

us, I suppose, cry out that we found it very hard to believe a message, no matter how great and how numerous the miracles which were said to confirm it, which should represent God as having lied continuously for six thousand years ; because this would contradict our fundamental conception of God's veracity, *i.e.*, what he has told us of himself on this head. Yet this message would certainly not be more unlikely to be true than one which represents him as ruthlessly fiendish and cruel to all eternity. For I shall not waste words upon any one who tells me that the doctrine of eternal punishment does not contradict his conception of God's benevolence. The notion of *goodness* having come to us in the same way as the notion of *veracity*, must be accepted on the same terms, *i.e.*, as meaning what *we* mean by it. And a statement which conflicts with our necessary conceptions on one point, is as improbable as one that conflicts with them on another point. The only way of getting out of this is, by making "goodness" to mean something different from what we mean by it. But in that case, as I have already pointed out, we are entitled to apply the same process to "veracity ;"\* and the basis of all possible religion, natural or revealed, crumbles away beneath our feet.

(2) That no act, command, &c., contradicting our conscience can be accepted on evidence less strong than that given in our conscience. Hence, evidence that would be sufficient to establish a physical miracle would be insufficient to establish immorality — immorality in a human sense, there is no other sense in which language can be used—on the part of the Deity. An authoritative communication from on high, "the voice of God speaking in us," as Butler terms conscience, cannot be overthrown by any amount of *doubtful evidence*. Yet it is admitted by Butler that the evidence in favour of a miraculous revelation, containing these immoral acts and commands, *is* doubtful ; this very

\* "Pleas for Free Inquiry," Pt. i., p. 33.



doubtfulness being part of our probation in respect to it. I conclude, not indeed (I will take it) that there is any absolute antecedent incredibility in the statements that God has encouraged lies, and prompted various cruel and immoral actions in this world, and that he will torture sentient beings eternally in the next world ; not that statements to that effect are incapable of being established by *any* evidence ; *but* that, on Butler's own showing, the evidence which he is prepared to adduce on their behalf cannot be held sufficient for the purpose which he has in view, since nothing short of a demonstration will suffice ; and he says he is not (and, indeed, we know he is not) prepared with a demonstration.

(III.) The question of miracles seems to me to be very unsatisfactorily treated by Butler and his chief followers.\* It is clear that nothing in the remotest degree approaching to a supernatural interference with established laws can be traced in nature. The utmost, therefore, that can fairly be urged, in the course of this argument, on behalf of Revelation, is that Miracles are *not impossible*. And this I should be, for my part, quite prepared to concede.

But instead of maintaining this impregnable position, orthodox theologians of eminence, in their desire to carry the war into the enemy's camp, have gone so far as to assert that we ought to approach the miracles of revelation with a *presumption* in their favour. They seem to think that by assigning what they choose to call an "adequate cause" for these interferences, they have thrown the *onus probandi* on their adversaries. At least, so I cannot help understanding the late Dean Mansel, who paraphrases a passage in the argument of Butler (the original of which is, however, far more guardedly and cautiously expressed) in these words, "If we 'take in the consideration of religion' we see, not merely that there *may be some possible* reason, but

\* Note (U).

that there *is an actual* reason for such a departure (from God's ordinary course of government); and thus, when the miracle is part of a religious revelation, the weak presumption against it, *merely as a miracle*, is destroyed, and gives place to a positive presumption in its favour.\*

It is impossible not to protest against this assumption, which makes miracles immediately probable, on condition of their being wrought in behalf of some religious system, and deduces from this, their supposed function, an actual (*i.e.*, an adequate and sufficient) reason for God's departing from his ordinary course of government. We are no judges at all of what would constitute to God an adequate cause, or occasion, for such an exercise of his power; still less are we entitled to assume that the communication of certain mysterious dogmas or religious truths would furnish such a cause, or even the faintest approach to it. For it is at any rate conceivable that these might be conveyed to us by the Almighty in the same way as in point of fact all other kinds of knowledge have been conveyed. Miracles, I repeat, are quite possible, but I deny that you can anywhere point to a spring *likely* to set them in motion: for this would be attributing to you an approximate knowledge of the Deity's ultimate intentions which neither you nor any one else on this earth can possess. Your argument is virtually this:—"Here is a world plunged in darkness, from which it *can only* emerge by supernatural aid directly applied. This supernatural aid *can only* be given by means of a Revelation. A Revelation *can only* be given through the medium of miracles. Therefore an *actual reason* for miracles has been shown." Here is nothing more than a series of assumptions. Miracles, in whatever

\* "Critical Examination of the Argument of Butler" by the Rev. H. L. Mansel, B.D., given as an Appendix to "Lectures on Butler's Analogy," by the Right Hon. Joseph Napier, LL.D.

connection they may be alleged to occur, must be judged of on the evidence produced, no test as to the *à priori* probability or improbability of their being wrought being possible to us in our present state of knowledge, or rather of ignorance. And it is as gross ignorance and presumption to talk of their *probability* under *some* given circumstances (however important these may seem to us) as to deny their *possibility* under *any* circumstances.

It does not fall within the scope of this paper to discuss the evidence which may be produced in favour of the Biblical miracles. But perhaps I may be permitted in passing to submit a consideration, obvious indeed, and, on that very account, to be borne in mind, because it will be found naturally to suggest itself whenever the question arises, as it must do at some point in the enquiry, "*What* is the precise amount of evidence requisite to establish such and such alleged violations of what we call Law?"

Granting that the most stupendous miracle *may* take place to-morrow, I hold it for a clear and certain law or canon with regard to all past alleged suspensions of the course of nature (those in Scripture excluded) that

"The miraculous element in every such narrative fades away in proportion as light is poured upon it: so that *full light* (by which I mean sufficient to guide us to a proof or demonstration on the subject) causes it instantly to vanish."

Now if we find this law illustrated in any one of the miracles—and it is admitted that they all hang together—in the Inspired Records submitted for our examination, this will raise a suspicion that they may all of them be subject to the same Law. If we find it apply to a second, the suspicion will be deepened, and so on. If we find it apply to all the miracles on which direct light can be thrown, and only not applicable to those which cannot be subjected to such a test, here are grounds for an Induction—not indeed a complete one,

but something a long way towards it—that if the same process could be employed in their case, the latter would in like manner vanish from sight; in other words, that they are only kept in a fictitious state of existence owing to their nature being such as to elude the *process of verification*.

For example, no one can *prove* that Jonah did not voyage in the belly of a large fish, that Jesus was not miraculously conceived and raised from the dead, &c. And it would have been well for them as a whole, if all Biblical miracles had been of this character. But unfortunately some of them do confront science in such a way as to fall directly under the law above mentioned: with the result of entirely vanishing in some cases, of being practically effaced in others, partially effaced in other numerous cases—according as the light thrown on them is full, or of a strength less than this in varying degrees.

Thus the Deluge is a miracle on which *full light* can be thrown. This, it is needless to say, is one of the greatest physical miracles on record; indeed, in respect to its material effects on the race of man, *the* greatest. We know that it was accepted as an historical event by Jesus and his apostles. Yet nothing is more certain than that no supernatural interference such as that which is here related ever took place. The earth has been interrogated and has told its story, written by the hand of Almighty God, and the revelation thus accorded us is to the effect that vast tracts of country have never undergone the universal submersion recorded in Genesis. Again we have full light poured upon the alleged miraculous creation of animals, after man and before woman, contained in the Jehovist's account of the world's beginning, and the whole narrative disappears as a history.

Two other stupendous physical miracles are to be found in the Scriptures—stupendous, that is to say, relatively to man, since they are not really more won-



derful than an interposition which should produce a shower of rain, or heal a sick person in an exalted station; miracles which the Church of England habitually prays for.\* They have moreover an exceptional importance for us, in that their character renders them subject to the test which I have proposed. These are the stoppage of the sun in Joshua, and its retrograde movement in Isaiah. Of these we may say with confidence that they never happened; that they are, except upon the wildest suppositions, demonstrably untrue. They are evidently founded on the idea that the sun was a ball of fire, of comparatively small size, subject to no law except that of appearing in the heavens to give light during the day, and disappearing at night, and capable of being waved to and fro, without causing disturbance to anything else, like a lantern. From no individual, from no nation possessing a correct idea on this subject, could such a tradition have emanated.† Accordingly, after a desperate resistance to scientific teaching (God's truth) founded on this very passage, the orthodox have devised an explanation to the effect that popular language is used here to describe a stoppage of the *earth's* motion. But the earth itself could not be stopped without another series of miracles being wrought to avert the consequences of such an event. And if we are driven to evoke an immense series of subsidiary miracles, it would be better, one would think, to suppose such as should confirm the *literal* accuracy of the inspired writer. This might be done by making the sun boldly circulate round the earth for the occasion, and be stopped, things being afterwards restored, without disturbance, to their usual order—a double change in the arrangements of the solar system which might have been effected by a series of interpositions not more wonderful than would be required on any other hypothesis, and the narrator's credit being completely saved. Then, there is the supernatural darkness which over-

\* Note (V).

† Note (W).

spread "the whole earth" at the crucifixion of Jesus. The absence of all mention of such an occurrence by contemporaries, or of any tradition confirming it, is to us (who are better able to estimate, than were our predecessors some centuries ago, the amount of *light* which such a silence throws on the subject), conclusive proof that it never took place. So, some have taken the words to mean the land of Judæa only. If the event had been laid a thousand years earlier, we should never have heard of this subterfuge. It would have been confidently asserted that the words mean what they do mean, and what the early Christians held them to mean, the whole earth.\* Similarly, that Jesus saw all the kingdoms of the world from a lofty mountain is disposed of by the discovery that the earth is not flat. The idea of the narrator evidently was that Jesus on this occasion was furnished with the power of seeing to an immense distance. He would never, we may be sure, if he had known the facts, have placed his hero under the necessity of seeing round an immense globe. Here, "a vision" is nowadays adopted as the solution, in absolute defiance of the context, for why should any one be taken to the top of "a lofty mountain" to see a vision? These clumsy tonings-down of events, once honestly accepted in the sense they were intended to bear, furnish good illustrations of the operation of our Law. Where the full light of science penetrates, miracles disappear. Let but its beams strike upon them ever so little, *their limits contract*.

Again, diabolical possession, witchcraft, divination, the prophetic and monitory character of dreams, throwing of lots, &c., in the Bible, have had some additional indirect light thrown upon them in recent centuries, and with the inevitable result of causing them to lose something of their distinctness even to orthodox eyes. Of course, it cannot be *proved* that the scriptural narratives on these heads are not true; but they

\* Note (X).

are certainly somewhat dimmed by the discovery that everywhere else the phenomena in question are gross delusions engendered by ignorance—a discovery which has, comparatively speaking, been only recently made. This last observation, it is true, holds good of all miracles. We believe all so-called supernatural occurrences, outside the Bible, to be mere delusions. But then, as we have seen, those who support the Biblical miracles see some *special* reasons for the more important ones, which render them worthy of credit. Now it cannot be pretended, at least it is not generally alleged, that there was some special and exceptional cause why witchcraft, proved everywhere else to be a mischievous superstition, should have been a reality in Judæa and in some other countries. So that these occurrences have been allowed, by general consent, to sink into a kind of half-light from which we may be sure that they will never emerge.

The above consideration (and it is time that I should apologise for what has been somewhat of a digression) is only one of many which would I think entitle us to ask for very strong evidence as to any alleged miracle, lying quite out of the path of direct observation: and would not permit us to accept Butler's statement that no stronger evidence "is necessary to prove the truth and reality of them than would be sufficient to convince us of other events, or matters of fact," or to agree with him that "it is by no means certain that there is any peculiar presumption at all, from analogy, even in the lowest degree, against miracles, as distinguished from other extraordinary phenomena."

(IV.) The line of argument adopted in the "Analogy" is surely fraught with great danger to the doctrine of Inspiration, a subject which the author has somewhat passed over. It may be urged, with great force and truth, that there is no *à priori* incredibility in a miraculous revelation, nor in the circumstance of such a revelation being attended with great difficulties (1.)

in relation to the character of the doctrines conveyed, ordinances prescribed, &c., (2.) in reference to the means employed for propagating a knowledge of these. And it may fairly be shown, or attempted to be shown, in support of this line of argument, that similar difficulties exist in the constitution of nature. But all these observations bring us, of course, no nearer to Inspiration than this: that it is not incredible that a miraculous *record* of the revelation might be given us (which we admit); and that we must judge on the evidence, as in the more general case of a revelation itself, whether such a record has been given to us or not; while as to this particular dogma, the ground is completely cut away from under those *à priori* considerations which lend to the evidences which we have for its truth all the value that they possess.

It must be borne in mind that the evidence of Scriptural Inspiration is wholly different in kind from that adduced in favour of open and patent miracles. For inspiration such as we are treating of is, from its very nature, a secret process; in the course of which the Spirit of God is supposed to operate upon the mind of the writer, without any witnesses. It *might*, of course, rest upon the same kind of evidence as other miracles. Thus, five hundred persons who asserted that they had seen and heard an angel dictate to St Matthew the words of his gospel, would furnish us with the same kind of testimony for his inspiration which we are said to possess for the resurrection of Jesus. Or, again, if we were told that Mark had gone about performing miracles in attestation of the divine guidance vouchsafed to him in the composition of his book, here again would be evidence of the same sort brought before us. But we are confessedly without anything of the kind. We are not even told by the Evangelists themselves that they are writing under other than ordinary conditions. A few passages which have been cited from the Epistles are of much too doubtful a



character to constitute evidence, even if we could accept a writer's own bare statement of his inspiration as evidence.\* It will be found, then, that the arguments on which a belief in inspiration is founded are mainly two. (1.) It is not likely that God would interpose miraculously to give man a religion without providing an infallible record of it for his guidance ; (2) the early Christians and the Universal Church have always held the Bible to be inspired—an argument which, even admitting the literal truth of what is here stated, is of no weight at all, since the early Christians were no better judges of the divine character of published documents than we are, *unless* it be implied that God would not be likely to suffer the early Christians and the Church to be mistaken in so important a particular. But both these *a priori* considerations are entirely upset by the argument from analogy. It teaches us that we are no judges at all of what God would be *likely* to do in such a case. There is no *a priori* unlikelihood that he would give a revelation, and suffer its incidents and doctrines to be communicated to posterity through ordinary channels. Nor can it be said to be improbable that he should have allowed a mistaken notion on this head to be held along with substantial truths. Indeed, analogy shows us that it is extremely *probable* that he would do this. To take one conspicuous example out of many that might be cited. A belief in the immediate return of Christ was certainly held most firmly in the first centuries ; and most justifiably, since there is no dogma more unmistakably asserted than this is, throughout the whole of the New Testament ; and it was among the most potent (if it was not *the* most potent) means of spreading Christianity. Yet we know that this belief was a complete mistake. Similarly, it might be necessary for the success of Christianity, in some of its early stages, that the New Testament books should be

\* Note (Y).

looked upon as inspired. Yet this belief might be equally unfounded.

As this point is of the utmost importance, I may be excused for saying, at the risk of some repetition, that here, in my opinion, is one form of the Nemesis which must pursue this "Argument from Analogy." Here is the inevitable "reverse of the medal." The orthodox champion may legitimately take the ground that there is no improbability in God surrounding revelation with, and introducing into it, all manner of difficulties (ground which he is indeed driven to, on observing the unquestionable difficulties that there are in it). But having done this, having gone to the constitution of nature for his guide, he is *estopped*, as the lawyers style it, from all *a priori* defences of inspiration, and driven back upon the evidence; which, if arguments of this kind be excluded, is *nil*, as far as any external support of the Bible is concerned. Some of the more able and candid religious writers have perceived this dilemma; and, accordingly, a prelate, who has taken a conspicuous position in these discussions, has recently announced that the history and doctrines of the New Testament "might be capable of proof, and so deserving of credence," even if we adopted the lowest view of inspiration, or gave it up altogether.\* Unfortunately for this view, some of the most vital dogmas of the Bishop's creed are supported wholly and solely by the inspiration of the writers from whose pages we take them; and if this be withdrawn, or if it be supposed that the writers in question may have made mistakes, there is worse than no evidence for these events; there is evidence of the strongest kind, internal and external, against them. Thus, to take one example, the narratives of the nativity in Matthew and Luke, recording events wholly unknown to, and unsuspected by Paul and Peter, and utterly irreconcilable either with themselves, or with each other, or with

\* Note (Z).

other parts of the Gospels, will have to be rejected by every dispassionate inquirer as obviously legendary.

What applies to the whole applies also to the parts, since we have no miraculous guarantee that the canon was formed under infallible guidance.\* Admitting, then, that the whole of the rest of the New Testament were inspired, there is no difficulty in supposing (indeed, there are many reasons to induce us to suppose) it likely that God might permit an uninspired Gospel (*e.g.*, say that of John), good for edification generally, but containing exaggerated statements of certain doctrines, to circulate with the rest. Again, there is no difficulty in supposing that, the bulk of the New Testament being inspired, the Divine Being might allow spurious passages to be interpolated into the divine text. Indeed we have one momentous example of an admitted insertion of this kind (the *one* text on which the doctrine of the Trinity reposes), still read in our churches, and accepted as inspired by the bulk of the Christian world.† On either of the above suppositions we let in Unitarianism. And, indeed, it has always appeared to me that, with some changes here and there in forms of expression, Butler's argument might be adopted in its entirety by members of that creed.

Let us see how far the foregoing observations are confirmed by a reference to the principal passage in which Bishop Butler deals with the subject of Inspiration. It is to be found in Pt. ii. chapter 3 of the Analogy. The words between brackets are my own.

“These observations, relating to the whole of Christianity, are applicable to inspiration in particular. As we are in no sort judges beforehand by what laws or rules, in what degree, or by what means it were to have been expected that God would naturally instruct us ; so, upon supposition of his affording us light and instruction by revelation, additional to what he has afforded us by reason and experience, we are in

\* Note (AA).

† Note (BB).

no sort judges by what methods and in what proportion it were to be expected that this supernatural light and instruction would be afforded us. (It might be afforded us through ordinary channels. A supernatural revelation by no means necessarily involves the idea of a supernatural medium for communicating it to all ages. The substance of the revelation and the events attending it, might be left to the world on evidence of the usual kind, the same kind of evidence that we have for the existence and exploits of Cæsar, and the discourses of Socrates. Nobody on the above reasoning can say this is unlikely. "We are no judges, &c." Surely this goes to the root of Inspiration itself). We know not beforehand what degree or kind of natural information it were to be expected God would afford men, each by his own reason and experience; nor how far he would enable and effectually dispose them to communicate it, whatever it should be, to each other; nor whether the evidence of it would be certain, highly probable, or doubtful; nor whether it would be given with equal clearness and conviction to all. Nor could we guess, upon any good ground I mean, whether natural knowledge or even the faculty itself by which we are capable of attaining it, reason, would be given us at once or gradually. In like manner we are wholly ignorant what degree of new knowledge it were to be expected God would give mankind by revelation, upon supposition of his affording one, or how far, or in what way (or whether at all) he would interpose miraculously to qualify them to whom he should originally make the revelation for communicating the knowledge given by it, and to secure their doing it to the age in which they should live, and to secure its being transmitted to posterity. We are equally ignorant whether the evidence of it would be certain or highly probable, or doubtful; or whether all who should have any degree of instruction from it, and any degree of evidence of its truth, would have the same; or whether the scheme would be revealed at once, or unfolded gradually. (So that we could not say beforehand, it was at all unlikely that God would suffer the bulk of Christians to misunderstand his revelation so far as to believe in the Divinity of Jesus, for two thousand years; gradually—through such means as improved knowledge which should lead them to reject some interpolated passages, and better to understand others—unfolding to them Unitarianism as the truth.\*) Nay, we are not in any sort able to judge whether it were to have been expected that the revelation should have been committed to writing, or left to be handed down and consequently corrupted by verbal tradition (or have been committed to writing *and* got consequently corrupted, *e.gr.* by insertion of foolish traditions about the

\* Note (CC).



Nativity) and at length sunk under it, if mankind so pleased, and during such time as they are permitted, in the degree they evidently are, to act as they will." \*

There is more to the same effect, the argument, as the above extract will sufficiently show, being virtually this: that as we are no judges of the circumstances and conditions under which God would give us an inspired record of revelation, supposing he gave one at all, we can in no wise say that it might not be attended with precisely those difficulties which are now urged against its acceptance. And this is a good answer to certain assumptions in the form of objections which are alleged against the Bible and other sacred books, the Koran, Vedas, &c. But it is equally, in effect, an answer to similar assumptions in favour of Inspiration, viz., that God would not be likely to grant a revelation without providing an inspired record of it, that he would not be likely to suffer the early Church to be deceived. And as these assumptions appear to me the only grounds on which the doctrine of Inspiration can be based, † (since we have no direct evidence for it), I cannot but think that this Dogma is rudely shaken by the line of argument adopted in the Analogy.

(V.) There is an observation to be made upon what I have called the Major premiss (*a*) at page 8.—

“If there be an analogy or likeness between that system of things and dispensation of Providence which a revelation informs us of and that system of things and dispensation of Providence which Experience together with reason inform us of *i.e.* the known course of nature; this is a presumption that they both have the same author and Cause.”

This may be admitted, with Butler's limitation “at least so far as to answer objections against the former's being from God, drawn from anything which is analogical or similar to what is in the latter.”

\* Note (DD).

† There is, of course, the argument from *internal* evidence, to which reference is made in p. 52.

And this remark, so limited, will apply to all religions, for in all religions there are the same difficulties as are to be found in nature, and a general resemblance between what is taught in any one of these religions and what is found in the course of nature could be established. The correct way of putting it would be, as we have seen, that there is no objection whatever to be raised beforehand against any religion, and that each must be judged of on the evidence. However, all apologists are not so cautious as Butler, and unquestionably the argument has often been put in this form: that if the same difficulties are exhibited in nature as are urged against revelation, and if a general resemblance can be shown between the two, we ought to *accept* the latter as being from the same hand as the former.\*

Now this is by no means to be at once admitted in the sense intended. For it is at any rate possible that man might have put his experiences and impressions, his hopes and fears, into the so-called revelation; indeed, on the supposition (and whether this be a correct one or not is precisely the point at issue) that it was the outcome of human reflection and speculation on the mysteries of the universe, he would be compelled to do this. These speculations would be founded on what he saw, or fancied he saw, in the constitution of nature, including under this term the operations of his own mind. Indeed, they could not be founded upon anything else.

Thus revelation teaches us, among other things, that there is a God, and a future life, that we are now in a state of probation for this future life in which rewards and punishments will be dealt out, that we are at the same time in a condition "of apostacy and wickedness, and consequently of ruin," that this gave occasion for the scheme called the atonement, &c., &c. It is said that these dogmas which we will call collectively (R), bear a strong resemblance to and are confirmed by what is observed in the constitution of nature (N). But it by no means follows from this that R and N are both to be traced

\* Note (EE).

directly to God (G) in the sense intended. One may spring from the other, and as N cannot be made to come from R, it is possible that R may have been deduced by man from N. It does not from this by any means follow that a vast number of the inferences contained in R may not be true ones, for this may have been the particular mode adopted by providence for the evolution of these truths. But neither does it follow that we are bound to accept them as the subject of a miraculous revelation. And a resemblance between R and N is not of itself sufficient to establish the probability of any such revelation having been made.

To give an illustration or two of what I mean. The atonement may be instanced, because I have just mentioned it, and because it happens to be the leading dogma of Christianity, yet a variety of other instances would serve as well. The prevalence of sacrifices all over the heathen and savage world has been repeatedly pointed to as confirming this dogma ; inasmuch as this shows that there is a natural sense of guilt in man and a belief that the Deity, or Deities, require some offering by way of propitiation. But the opposite theory is, to say the least, as worthy of attention, viz., that man has himself put these notions, which may be partly true and partly false, into revelation ; so that an announcement of the wickedness of the world (let us suppose a very true one) is found in it side by side with that of a supreme sacrifice, which may be after all only an example of "survival" of a baseless superstition, which has come down to us in a transmuted form in the shape of the dogma of the Atonement. We cannot pronounce a dogmatic judgment *prima facie* between these theories ; but some light is thrown upon them by analogy, at least so far as to render it by no means necessary that we should immediately accept the former ; and this is all I am contending for. For instance, an idea quite as indigenious to the mind as the efficacy of sacrifice, is that of the supernatural character of

dreams. Every savage tribe is imbued with this idea, every child, every untutored person retains strong traces of it, nor has civilization by any means completely eradicated all vestiges of it even from the minds of the most educated. Now it will not be asserted that the prevalence of this belief all over the world could be of the slightest value for confirming any religious dogma that might be represented as corresponding to it, since the belief itself is now-a-days known to be a false one. On the other hand, supposing revelation to be after all only a human creation, we should expect to find this superstition extensively introduced into it; and so to be sure it is. The Old and New Testaments literally teem with prophetic and monitory dreams; and the same may be said of witchcraft, magic, throwing of lots, ghosts, evil spirits, &c. A strong suspicion is engendered that the notion of sacrifice may have been introduced in a like way, and that the doctrine rests upon no better foundation. At any rate, a correspondence between a wide-spread natural belief and a scriptural dogma, &c., cannot be cited as any confirmation of the truth of the miraculous communication of the latter, since, as we see (1), its prevalence is no proof of its being true; (2), whether true or false it may have engendered the dogma.

Again, Death has always seemed to man, and especially to primitive man, a very terrible and mysterious thing. This idea, or instinct, is confirmed by revelation, in which we are expressly told that Death came into the world as a punishment for sin. Here we have an undoubted resemblance between what is conveyed in natural and in so-called miraculous teaching. Does it follow that because of this resemblance the latter is to be accepted off-hand for what it pretends to be? Here we are, in the present day, not without light which, as far as it reaches, is full light upon the subject. For we know that there was such a thing as Death in this planet ages before the first appearance of man. Death,



then, could not have been brought into the world by the sin of man. If inflicted on account of the sins of any beings, these must have been shell-fish of some kind—foraminifera, or trilobites,—or, in the event of successive acts of creation having taken place, perhaps sins of these and subsequently of the iguanodon and megalosaurus. If it be contended that it was inflicted *on man*, for the sins of man, this is equivalent to asserting that our species was alone originally intended for earthly immortality, in the midst of the decay and dissolution of every other material form surrounding it: a wild hypothesis, rendered violently improbable (to use no stronger term) by the constitution of our bodies and by a variety of other considerations.\* It is as impossible to disprove it as to disprove the assertion that Sirius has satellites of green cheese revolving round him; but its value may be left to be estimated by every unbiassed mind. Here is a case where a resemblance between what is taught in revelation and an instinct or prompting of nature (greatly confirmed as this must have seemed to be previously to geological discoveries by an observation of the apparent order of nature) cannot convince us that we ought to accept the teachings of revelation. On the contrary, there is overwhelming evidence that man has put his rude impressions and superstitious guesses on this subject into the revelation.

The same observations apply, with increased force, to the *mode* in which the so-called revelation has been conveyed to man. It is legitimately argued by Bishop Butler that the circumstances of the latter having been very gradually made known to the world—and as yet indeed only to a portion of the world—of the evidence for it being doubtful, of errors having been suffered to be mixed up with it, &c. &c., furnish no conclusive objections against its Divine origin, inasmuch as the same phenomena are observed to attend the progress of

\* Note (FF).

all kinds of knowledge. This, I say, is perfectly fair (even if not convincing to all minds) as an answer to objections. But to push the argument a step further, and to urge that a revelation ought to be *accepted* because its course has been attended by the same circumstances as attend the progress of naturally acquired knowledge, is evidently ridiculous. For the question here is as to whether this revelation has or has not been naturally developed, and if developed by natural means, it must, of course, have followed the same course as other kinds of natural knowledge.

(VI.) But the chief observation to be made upon Butler's main line of argument—and, as far as I know, it has not been made before—is this: that it is perfectly good, in defence of a system of pure Theism, in defence of the belief that there exists a God who has never, except by natural means, revealed himself to mankind. *All the objections and difficulties which can be urged against such a belief can also be urged against the constitution of Nature.* And it has the advantage of being in complete accordance with the natural constitution of things, whereas, on the other supposition, the analogy has constantly to be strained in order to make it fit in with a set of pre-established dogmas upon which, so to speak, it has to wait; or is otherwise not conclusive for the purpose intended, just as a resemblance between the anatomy of man and that of the monkey is not conclusive as to the miraculous creation of each species by the same hand, but is consistent with the theory of a natural development of the one from the other.

What are the objections which can be urged beforehand against a system of pure Theism? Virtually, it will be found that there is only one, however much the form of expressing it may be varied. "It is not likely that God would leave us in a state of ignorance on such momentous topics as those treated of in revelation. It is not likely that God would submit his children to

such pain and confusion as would result from their uncertainty as to their duties here and their destiny hereafter. Or (which amounts to the same thing) without revelation, man would not have sufficient light to guide him, and it is not likely that a benevolent God would leave him without sufficient light."

But these objections or difficulties, formidable as they may appear to some, and may be in reality, cannot consistently be raised by an adherent of the "Argument from Analogy." For the very basis of this argument is that we have no means of judging beforehand of what God would be *likely* to do, other than such inferences as may be drawn from an observation of what he has done and is doing; in other words, from the constitution of the world in which we find ourselves. I shall directly have occasion to advert briefly to the inferences to be drawn from such a survey, and their bearing on the whole question of what I call Theism. Let it suffice here to say, in reference to these particular objections, that the most cursory glance at Nature will show us man left by God in a state of uncertainty, *i.e.*, without proof of absolute Truth, on all the most momentous questions which affect him. This uncertainty as to our whereabouts, prompting to searches and explorations in various directions would seem to be the source of the same kind of healthy movements as those which in the physical world prevent stagnation and corruption. Be that as it may, its existence in the case of all other subjects save this one is indisputable. Nay, as to religion itself, it is admitted by the orthodox that the vast majority of the human race have always been and still are and (for ought that can be proved to the contrary) always will be in a state of profound ignorance and uncertainty; indeed this allegation is part of their case. It follows that the objection if good for anything is good against any revelation which is not universal. Again, if stress be laid on the *pain* and *misery* which absence of

certainly on such a topic would cause us to endure, and the improbability of a benevolent God inflicting them, then—putting altogether out of sight the condition of the bulk of the world in this very respect—the objection in this form is utterly demolished by an observation of the constitution of things, that is to say by analogy, which at any rate shows that a benevolent God does inflict or suffer to be inflicted on us pain and misery of various kinds. And there is no reason *à priori* why we should not be made to endure pain in this way as well as in any other; while very many reasons could be given why we should, if the course of nature be the same here as elsewhere. Moreover, such pain and misery as may be involved in an absence of absolute certainty as to the existence of a God, a future state, &c., is as nothing compared to Eternal Damnation; and to be sure it would be singular that the theory of a divine revelation should be based on an *à priori* conception of God being too good to leave us without one, yet that it is to be no presumption against this revelation, when set before us, that it upsets this *à priori* conception of God's goodness.\* Again the objection put in this form, that without revelation man would not have sufficient light to guide him, that the light of nature would be insufficient, &c., is itself open to very serious objections. What is meant by "sufficient?" We are no judges of what God might deem sufficient in such a case. What is meant by the "Light of Nature?" If it be intended that God could not convey a knowledge of himself and of our duties to us such as should be adequate for our guidance, by natural means, and without the help of miracles, this is a baseless assertion not an argument. If it be meant that, in point of fact, natural light *has* hitherto everywhere proved inadequate, as is evidenced by the condition of the Heathen world past and present, the answer from the other side is that the growth of man's religious know-

\* Note (GG).



ledge has been extremely gradual, like that of all other kinds of knowledge. It is still, to use Butler's words, "a small light shining in a dark place." This "very gradualness" observable in natural operations, has we have seen been appealed to by the apologist on behalf of revelation. It is no reason, he says, because the progress of certain religious dogmas has been slow, that they may not have been miraculously communicated. And assuredly the slow progress of any religious knowledge can form no reason why it may not be of natural growth; and conversely, if of natural growth then judging from analogy its progress would be slow. There is therefore no ground for the assumption that because such light as the Romans had attained to in the first, or the Chinese in the nineteenth century, was insufficient for their guidance (granting this) therefore no light sufficient for such a purpose could or would ever be likely to be kindled in the human mind by natural means. This assumption does not take account of the immense scale, as to time, of the Almighty's natural operations, and moreover it takes for granted — what is indeed one of the main points in issue, viz. — that a great part of the teaching of Christ, which we all accept, is *not* to be admitted as an element in our progressive religious knowledge naturally imparted to and acquired by man.

So then, neither absence of "sufficient light," *i.e.*, of certainty as to God, our duty, our future; nor the consideration that a development and dissemination of a belief in God, &c., by natural means must needs be exceedingly gradual; nor again, that all sorts of false notions and superstitions would probably for a long time disfigure these beliefs in their natural progress, or that in point of fact they have always done so: none of these or other considerations of the same kind can be urged as objections to a system of pure Theism by those who argue from Analogy; for Analogy shows us a like want of certainty, a like gradual development, a

like admixture of error accompanying, and marking the growth of all other kinds of knowledge.

So also there are other objections which are not properly speaking *à priori* objections to Theism, but objections to Theism on a comparison of that system with Revelation, which are similarly overthrown by analogy. Thus ; that the moral teaching, at any rate, of Christ is inexpressibly sublime and full of divine truths, according to the admission of infidels themselves, and that it is not likely that God would have allowed these truths to be circulated in conjunction with narratives of impostures or hallucinations such as Theists represent miracles to be ; that it is not likely that God would have allowed so many generations of civilised men, including saints and martyrs, to be mistaken in this matter and to build their hopes on a foundation of sand, &c. And many other similar arguments will readily occur to the mind, since they are indeed those on which a very large portion of the Christian world, often unconsciously to themselves, found their belief in the supernatural parts of their creed. Yet Analogy will show that it is extremely likely that God would act in the way here objected to, and that in supposing a Deity unlikely so to act, we are only dealing with a creation of our own fancy, not at all representing God as he reveals himself to us in the constitution of nature.

An objection of this kind against Theism may be noticed in passing. It is said that revelation carries with it its own credentials, that it bears internal evidence not only of the truth of the doctrines which it conveys, but of their having been miraculously conveyed : it shows us a system such as man *could not* have evolved for himself. This is very much the way in which a savage looks upon a watch. Without entering into the very large question which is completely begged by this objection, it may suffice to say that the votary of every religion holds precisely the same view as to his particular creed ; which indeed presents itself to him

subjectively, and through the medium of that sixth sense (I had almost called it) formed by education and habit; whereas, to the rest of the world, looking at it objectively and with their natural eyes, the natural filiation of its tenets is plainly discernible. There is not a single dogma, hardly a precept, in the Christian revelation which might not have been, nay, which had not been, already in some shape or other evolved by man. And this is a complete answer—not indeed to those who contend that they were miraculously conveyed and confirmed, since this might be established by external evidence—but it is a complete answer to their alleged *internal* miraculous character. And if this fact of their having been confusedly evolved by man, be urged—not very consistently it seems to me,—as additional evidence of their truth, as the voice of nature confirming revelation; I say that the voice of nature repeating itself in revelation is by no means a confirmation of revelation, in the sense intended; for this would serve to show that revelation is, to this extent, only the echo of the natural voice of mankind, not (as the savage just mentioned supposes echoes to be) the miraculous voice of an unseen being. But as I have touched on this point in the preceding section, I will not dwell further on it.\*

Let us, then, for a moment, do as Butler bids us, and, “instead of that idle and not very innocent employment of forming imaginary models of a world, and schemes of governing it, turn our thoughts to what we experience to be the course of nature with respect to intelligent creatures,” and we shall find such a course of nature perfectly consistent with the gradual and natural growth of religious knowledge—a knowledge not including certain proof in matters commonly called transcendental, yet amounting to probable evidence, that will serve as a light to humanity. And this is very much of a piece with the general “Scheme of

\* Note (HH).

Nature," in conformity with which man, from the beginning, seems to have been placed under the necessity of forming opinions with reference to questions most practical and vital to him, upon very uncertain data; the better opinions pushing their way onwards by a principle of natural selection, and through the medium of the more favoured races,—a process slow, indeed—to theological eyes, intolerably slow—yet startling to those only who have not sufficiently considered the processes of nature as recently made known to us by the Almighty in a revelation which cannot be disputed. Science, in these late days, has changed the popular conceptions as to the physical world, and will assuredly change the popular conceptions as to the moral world. Instead of the earth and the heavenly bodies having been called into being by a series of instantaneous fiat (the representation most consistent with the old ideas of the mode of working and dignity of the Creator), we now see their origin thrown far back into what, to us, is the Eternity of the Past. Instead of the heavenly luminaries dancing attendance upon our planet, we see the latter to be a mere infinitesimal speck in the midst of space, with no apparent connecting link between the system to which it belongs and countless other systems, except such as are to be found in uniformity of observed laws, and in the consideration borne in upon a thinking being by all that he finds without and within him, that "the hand which shaped them is divine." And this planet of ours, with which we are mainly concerned, grew, only after long ages, into a habitation fit for man. Man, after his appearance, crawled upon its surface, an ignorant, brutal, and naked savage, for thousands, and possibly tens of thousands, of years before the date commonly assigned to the supposed Adam. His divinities were malignant spirits; of a life beyond the grave he had either no conception, or at the best a very vague one. Ninety-nine hundredths of the



human race have lived under these conditions. Yet, just as happened in the physical world, *layers* of morality and religion seem early to have been forming. These people, we may be sure, went on robbing and murdering each other till it was found that, without protection to life and property, human society could not go on. Here was a *revelation* that murder and robbery are wrong. Other experiences were gathered and reduced into form, which means that other beliefs were founded. The ground reached by the furthest wave was necessarily retained and made good, as long as there was a general advance of humanity represented by the races which, for the time being, constituted its vanguard; and that this general advance (to whatever cause it may have been due) has taken place to the present time, seems very plain. So, step by step, out of the first Cimmerian darkness and the subsequent twilight, there emerge into the clear morning of History certain advanced races, the Egyptian, the Jewish, the Greek, each of them bearing to the common fund treasures wrought from the common soil by its own individual genius; treasures in the shape of science, art, philosophy, and religious knowledge. In each of these cases the rude instincts of early man saw in such possessions gifts supernaturally bestowed by the gods. Just as Ceres teaches man to cultivate the staff of life, and Saturn frames laws for the Latians, and Prometheus saves the human race from destruction, and instructs them in astronomy and mathematics; so the Hebrew Jehovah miraculously instructs his people in the worship of one supreme Divinity.\* In all these cases, save one, the notion of supernatural communications is now discarded: the miracles have dropped off, the truths and discoveries which they enveloped, and at one time served to protect, remain. In one region alone, that of religion and morality, "Survival" still keeps alive a belief in miraculous interventions. Yet

\* Note (II).

analogy is strongly in favour of religion and morality having been developed in the same way as all other kinds of knowledge. And dreadful as it may appear to some that such countless generations should have been left without any external light for their guidance; that the truths painfully arrived at by man should have been so largely mixed up with fables and errors, often indeed owing their lives to these fables and errors; that even now we are without anything like certainty on questions of the deepest interest to us, and are obliged to content ourselves with inferences more or less plausible;—yet, after all, this state of things is strictly in accordance with “what we experience to be the course of nature with respect to intelligent creatures.”

My limits do not permit me to enter into a closer examination of the analogy which might be established between the general course or scheme of nature, and a system of non-miraculous development of religious knowledge or (if the term be preferred) of religious ideas. It has here been only hinted at: it will be found to form a subject full of interest and instruction to those who inquire more narrowly into the matter. To revert, before concluding, to Butler's main argument, the theme of Part I. of his famous “Analogy.” On behalf of revelation it has swept away certain objections (still very often raised by people who ought to know better), just as similar objections against a system of pure Theism, or Mahometanism, or even Spiritualism\* might be demolished. And it has shewn a certain resemblance between Revelation and the course of nature, just as resemblances between nature and many other religious systems might be established. Only, that on behalf of none of the latter has a champion in this particular line of Butler's powers arisen. The writer renders no light service to a creed who

\* The author has attempted to shew how some of Butler's arguments may be employed on behalf of the last-named creed in “Hints for the Evidences of Spiritualism,” Trübner & Co., 1872.

establishes this much, that its evidences demand serious investigation; and at the same time he renders service to the truth by establishing a true proposition on this as on any other subject. The evidences of Christianity do then demand inquiry. Its witnesses are entitled to come into court; and the greater part of the *à priori* objections which have been urged against their admissibility must be held to have been overruled. This much—no more than this, but still this much—must be conceded to Bishop Butler and his followers.

It is not my intention, either now or hereafter, to adventure myself into such a vast subject as is here presented to us—that of the claims of Christianity to a miraculous origin. There is, however, one point of capital importance lying on the threshold of such an inquiry, and which seems to me capable of being adequately considered within a moderate compass. Necessarily, the first step in the investigation will be to examine the records of Revelation. Now it is distinctly alleged by those who put them in evidence that they are different in character from all other records, in that they have been divinely inspired, and are consequently (the veracity of God being admitted) infallibly true. Should this claim be established, it is clear that we shall have to accept whatever they contain. On the other hand, should the claim fail, or even if it be left doubtful, it is equally clear that we shall be entitled to submit their contents to the same sort of criticism which we are authorized, indeed bound, to employ in regard to all other books. I propose, then, in a succeeding paper, to offer a few further remarks on this subject of Inspiration.

## NOTES.

NOTE, (A) p. 4.—One would think that this proposition—that it is greatly to be *hoped* that a large portion of mankind are not destined to be excruciatingly and unceasingly tormented, or, in other words, that a Revelation so fearfully opposed to the interests and happiness of the race may prove to be untrue, is so self-evident, that no person who had reflected on the subject could be found to dispute it. I mean no person outside a lunatic asylum, whither reflection on this hideous theme has driven many people. One would think that the ground the orthodox must needs take up would be this: that no doubt the tidings were inexpressibly awful, but that unfortunately they were true. And yet (as noticed in Part I.) divines will boldly stand up and argue as though their orthodox belief—doubtless a very sincere one—were not a fearful necessity to them; as if it were the *unbeliever* or *sceptic* who had cause to be frightened and awe-struck at his conclusions or uncertainties. Thus, for instance, Mr Henry Rogers, a writer of great reasoning powers, and a candid writer when his prejudices do not obscure his reason, can pen what follows:—

“What may be expected in the genuine sceptic is a modest hope that he may be mistaken; a desire to be confuted; a retention of his convictions as if they were a guilty secret; or the promulgation of them only as the utterance of an agonized heart, unable to suppress the language of its misery; a dread of making proserlytes,” &c.—(*Eclipse of Faith*, 4th edit., p. 32.)

What a conscientious sceptic (in the author's sense, of one who has brought himself to doubt the truth of Revelation) ought to feel and to do, is to experience a lively sense of joy to be able to think that mankind



may not be in such an awful position as that which Revelation represents them to be in ; to welcome even the gloomiest suggestions of scepticism—such as universal annihilation (which, though not, as I believe, representing the truth, would be only an evil to the fancy of the living man, and soon therefore to him no evil at all)—as a happy substitute for the frightful and very realistic bugbear of countless millions seething in eternal flames, from which he has in some degree delivered his mind ; to be anxious to impart his doubts to all whom he meets ; and, in case they should become something more than doubts, and amount to reasonable convictions on that side, then, as the happiest of all discoveries, as the utterances of an over-joyed heart unable to suppress the language of its contentment ; to wish to make as many proselytes as possible ; in fact, his feelings and course of conduct ought to be the exact opposite of what the author of the “Eclipse of Faith” enjoins on him.

(B) p. 7.—It is true that Origen, from whom Bishop Butler is supposed to have taken the hint for his “Analogy,” has expressed himself to the effect that “he who believes the Scripture to have proceeded from him who is the Author of Nature may well expect to find the same sort of difficulties in it as are found in the constitution of nature ;” but this does not amount to more than this, that he who believes the Bible to be from God need not be startled by any difficulties similar to those attending the constitution of nature which may be found in it. Butler always expresses himself very cautiously on this point, *e.g.*, “the things objected against, considered as matters of fact, are shown to be *credible* from their conformity to the constitution of nature.” This reasoning is perfectly legitimate, and is quite a different thing from asserting that we should expect beforehand that a revelation from God would contain the same difficulties as are to be found in nature.

In addition to the above passage from Origen, a verse

in the Apocrypha has been frequently cited, as having furnished Bishop Butler with the key-note to his work. It is to be found in Ecclesiasticus, xlii., v. 24, "All things are double one against another, and he hath made nothing imperfect."

But this verse really does not bear the sense which is sought to be fixed upon it, viz. : that the visible order of things may be surmised to be a copy of the invisible. The real meaning of the writer is to be gathered from another passage of the same book, where he sets forth the same sentiment more in detail, "Good is set against evil, and life against death. So is the godly against the sinner, and the sinner against the godly. So look upon all the works of the Most High, and there are two and two, one against the other."—Ecclesiasticus xxxiii., v. 14, 15.

The meaning of the writer is plain, and we may be sure that he had nothing resembling the "Argument from Analogy" in his mind. His views are exactly those alleged by Chrysippus (and by a great many men before and since Chrysippus) in explanation of the existence of evil in the world. "Nihil est prorsus istis imperitius, nihil insubidius, qui opinantur bona esse potuisse, si non essent ibidem mala. Nam cum bona malis contraria sint, utraque necessarium est opposita inter sese, et quasi mutuo adverso quæque fulta nisu consistere: *nullum adeo contrarium sine contrario altero.* Quo enim pacto justitiæ sensus esse posset, nisi essent injuriæ? . . . quid item fortitudo intelligi posset nisi ex ignaviæ oppositione?" &c.—Chrysippus apud Aul. Gell. Noctes Atticæ, vi. 1.

(C) p. 8.—It is true, he adds, "at least so far as to answer objections against the former's being from God, drawn from anything which is analogical or similar to what is in the latter." Indeed, as Reid observes, Butler "only makes use of analogy to answer objections against the truths of religion." Still, the ground taken

up here is in advance of that indicated in (1) and (2). It is asserted, not only that there are the same difficulties in Nature as in Revelation, but that there is a general likeness between them; not only that the difficulties do not render the latter incredible, but that the resemblances render it probable.

Under the words "system of things and dispensation of things which a revelation informs us of," the author must be held to include the character of the revelation ("not made known to all men, nor proved with the strongest possible evidence," &c.) for this its character furnishes him with much of his analogy.

Further on, the expression "the same author and cause," may be objected to on the ground that a Theist would admit Christianity, and, indeed, everything else, to have God for its author and cause in a certain sense. But every one understands what Butler means.

(D) p. 11.—Of course scores of fanciful analogies have been drawn between the mysteries of the Trinity, Incarnation, &c., and things observed in nature; *e.g.*, In the simplest figure there are three lines, in every body three dimensions. For other examples see Buchanan's "Analogy considered as a Guide to Truth," pp. 36, 37.

(E) p. 14.—The heads of the most important, if not the most ancient, branch of the Christian church have always taken care to distinguish between material progress, and much that we should hold to evidence increased civilization on the one hand, and advancement in divine knowledge on the other. Indeed, the remorseless logic of events has forced them to this. The Pope and all his Cardinals were quite ready to admit that London was richer, better lighted, better paved, better drained than Rome when under their sway; that life was more secure in England than in the Papal

states, Ireland, or Spain; that there were more railways in Middlesex than in the Campagna, &c., &c., but they by no means drew the inference that Protestantism was, on these accounts, more likely to be true than Catholicism.

(F) p. 15.—Let any one carefully peruse the chapter (Part ii., c. 5,) in which Butler brings forward Analogies in Nature for “the appointment of a mediator, and the redemption of the world by him,” and then set himself, as an exercise, to apply the same kind of reasoning to almost any doctrine that has ever been believed in by man, Manichæism, Sun-worship, the Metempsychosis, the Nirwana of Buddhism, the immaculate conception of the Virgin, the infallibility of the Pope, and he will be surprised to find how any or all of these dogmas may be shown to be credible in a like way, and to be greatly confirmed by what we observe in Nature.

As a specimen of this kind of perverted ingenuity, though by no means one of the strongest that might be quoted, the following from Dr Bannerman’s “Inspiration” merits attention. He tells us that “in the province of nature there are analogies appropriate and sufficient to meet the objection brought against the doctrine of plenary inspiration.” The way he establishes this is by showing that “in one sense the actions of men are their own, moved by their own will, &c. In another sense the actions of men are God’s, dependent on his will,” &c. “And standing upon the ground of such analogies, we have reason to assert that the objection so generally urged against the doctrine of Scripture inspiration, that we cannot conceive or explain the possibility of the human agency in its freedom and variety combining with the divine in its plenary perfection, is no objection at all, seeing that the very same difficulty is found in every other department of the operations of God.”



(G) p. 16.—It may be said also that the passage in Butler's introduction " (dispensation) proved by miracles " would not apply to Mahometanism. If so, this again would render the task of the Turkish or Persian apologist all the easier. However (not to speak of the night-journey to Jerusalem, &c.,) there are miracles in Mahometanism, even though it cannot perhaps be said that they proved the revelation in the above sense. The divine inspiration of the Prophet was miraculous.

(H) p. 16.—No one can dispute that Christianity has been greatly indebted to force for its spread. Without going so far as a writer in this series who asserts that from and after the date of Constantine "The Roman soldiers spread the Christian Church over the Roman Empire" we must at any rate admit that "the native religion in Mexico was literally butchered out of existence; while the countries of Quito, Peru, and Chili, were baptized in blood into the pale of the Christian Church." (Date of the New Testament Canon, p. 7). Christians have forcibly taken possession of the whole continents of America and Australia, and multiplied there: and this was just as much spreading their religion by force as if they had in all cases (like the Mahometans) compelled the aborigines to choose between conversion and death. If we were to land in France and gradually extirpate the French till we occupied their country, this would be greatly to spread the English language in Europe, *by the help of force*. And it is no answer to say that it was not the object of the colonizers to spread their religion: so again in the latter supposed case it might not be, and probably would not be, the object of the invaders to spread their language. The question is, not whether means were intended for a particular end, but by what means that end was achieved.

As a specimen of the manner in which the Christians obtained their foothold in the New World let the fol-

lowing account suffice. The Pilgrim Fathers (probably the most respectable body of emigrants that ever left these shores) made a night expedition against a fortress of the Pequod Indians. "Their guns dealt out death pitilessly. Still the number and arrangement of the wigwams made the task of conquest slow and difficult. 'We must burn them out!' cried the leader, and he threw a firebrand into one. The English formed a chain round the place, and in a few minutes the whole settlement was ablaze. Thus embarrassed and beset, the Indians were shot down easily; none were spared. As the Israelites slew the Amalekites, so did the Pilgrims slay the Pequods. In an hour, six hundred of them had perished, and only two Englishmen had fallen. When morning dawned, three hundred more warriors came confidently up from the other fort; aghast at the scene of carnage which met their astonished eyes, they tore their hair and beat the ground; they too were swept down. Before many days were over, not a man, *woman*, or *child* of that Pequod tribe was left behind!" (*Westminster Review*, vol. lxxx. p. 336).

(I) p. 17.—Besides these immoral actions directly enjoined, and examples of immoral legislation, *e.g.*, Exodus xxi. 2-6: 20, 21, there are, as is well known, a number of actions of a similar kind recorded in the Hebrew Scriptures with the approval of the narrator and which, on the supposition of his having been divinely inspired, must be held to have been approved by God. In this category are the lies of Abraham about his wife, the theft of her father's images by Rachel, the treachery of Rahab, the cold-blooded perfidy of Jael, the hewing in pieces of Agag by Samuel, the vindictive curses of Elisha entailing the violent death of children (or young men) who had wounded his vanity by a harmless jibe, &c., &c. The whole career of Jacob furnishes an example of the lowest and meanest vices crowned with

Divine favour. What would be the estimate formed by the Christian of these events and transactions if he found them in the Vedas or the Koran? Or what would he say to the morality of Mahomet cursing a barren fig tree, or Abubekr striking with death two persons guilty of the same offence as Ananias and Sapphira?

(J) p. 22.—In a note to Pt. i., ch. ii. of the Analogy, the author certainly speaks of “the duration and degree” of future punishment held out by Scripture. In the same note we have that “each shall receive according to his deserts,” that God “will render to every one according to his works.” It is impossible for me to reconcile these two conceptions, except by that use of language in a non-natural sense, which is a favourite device of Theologians for escaping from difficulties in a cloud. I do not think that Butler (one of the most humane and benevolent of men) had ever brought himself fairly to face the difficulty, as his gingerly mode of handling the topic shows. “Butler argued that the Analogy of Nature gave much reason to suspect that the punishment of crimes may be out of all proportion with our conceptions of their guilt,” says Mr Lecky, *Rationalism in Europe* I. 368. So they might be, without anything in the faintest degree approaching to Hell being realized. Leibnitz on the other hand (quoted by the same author) goes straight to the mark, without any compromise. Offences against an Infinite Being, he says, acquire an infinite guilt, and therefore deserve an infinite punishment.

(K) p. 22.—Butler (in his note just quoted) admits that the opposite hypothesis would be *as probable*. “All that can positively be asserted to be matter of mere revelation with regard to this doctrine (that of a ‘future’ state of punishment) seems to be that the great distinction between the righteous and the wicked shall be made at the end of this world; that each shall *then*

receive according to his deserts. Reason did, as it well might, conclude that it should finally and, upon the whole, be well with the righteous and ill with the wicked; but it could not be determined upon any principles of reason whether human creatures might not have been appointed to pass through other states of life and being, before that distributive justice should finally and effectually take place." Revelation apart, then, there is no reason whatever why death, when viewed as the punishment of an offence or offences, may not be inflicted as a discipline and means of reformation, just the same as (say) a fit of the gout after drinking. This is what is meant in the text.

With regard to human creatures being destined to pass through other states of being, an hypothesis as reasonable as any other in a matter on which we have no certain information—the notion certainly must be held to derive some support from the fact of the vast proportion of mankind who die in infancy and childhood, and to whom this world cannot be said to have been a place "of probation." If the next state be final, then the law of probation which we are told is "a general doctrine of religion," does not hold universally for natives of our earth. If it does hold, then there must be a probation for these excepted ones in another state. In other words, the next state will not be final for some. If not final for some, it may be not final for all of us. Analogy is strongly in favour of this view, and the wide-spread belief in the metempsychosis may as fairly be cited in its favour, as a belief in the efficacy of sacrifices in favour of the doctrine of the Atonement.

(L) p. 22.—This, so far from being an objection in their eyes, is precisely the light in which many eminent and devout Christians love to contemplate Hell. It would be difficult, without quoting him at some length, to give an idea of the almost boyish glee of the exemplary



Baxter at the prospect of the exquisite torments prepared for the greater part of his fellows; with what an evident gusto he rolls about in his mouth the words "revenge," "vengeance," &c., like a child sucking lollipops; how the mere iteration and reiteration of the sounds fascinate him. Here are specimens from his book, and without which I suppose that no Evangelical's library "is complete," the well-known "Saints' Rest."

"The torments of the damned must needs be extreme, because they are the effect of divine *revenge*. Wrath is terrible; but *revenge* is implacable. . . . And how hotly *revenge* will pursue them all to the highest. . . . Consider also how this justice and *revenge* will be the delight of the Almighty," &c., &c.

And we have God with a rod in his hand, "laying it on," God laughing at sinners, mocking at them, rejoicing over their calamities, never wearied of plaguing them, the wrath of God burning up souls as fire burns fuel, the flames of hell taking hold upon them with fury as gunpowder seizes tinder, &c., &c.

By the way, in reference to these frightful descriptions of the place of torment, I have heard it said that such language as Baxter's would not be used by Protestants now-a-days. This seems to me, then, a suitable place for introducing a few quotations from a published sermon by the most popular noneonformist preacher of our day, Mr Spurgeon. For although Mr Spurgeon's readers to mine are doubtless as a thousand to one, yet I think it likely that the one person, here and there, whom I have in my eye, may not have seen this sermon. The Italics are my own. But every one who has heard this famous preacher will readily imagine the unction with which these passages must have been italicised in the delivery. I quote from the "New Park Street Pulpit," No. 86. "That endless period

of unmingled misery which is the horrible doom of the impenitent." . . . "If you have not (confessed your sins) you have not felt the sentence of death in yourselves, and you are still waiting till the solemn death-knell shall toll the hour of your doom, and you shall be dragged out, *amidst the universal hiss of the execration of the world*, to be condemned for ever to flames which shall never know abatement. . . . hell itself is but a rightful punishment for sin. I have heard some men dispute whether the torments of hell were not too great for the sins which men can commit. We have heard men say that hell was not a right place to send such sinners to as they were; but we have always found that such men found fault with hell because they knew right well they were going there. . . . I ask you, when you were convinced of God, whether you did not solemnly feel that he would be unjust if he did not damn your soul for ever. Did you not say in your prayer, 'Lord, if thou shouldst now command the earth to open and swallow me up quick, I could not lift up my finger to murmur against thee; and if thou wert now to roll o'er my head *the billows of eternal fire*, I could not, *in the midst of my howlings in misery*, utter one single word of complaint about thy justice?' And did you not feel that if you were to be ten thousand thousand years in perdition, you would not have been there long enough? You felt you deserved it all; and if you had been asked what was the right punishment for sin, you dare not, even if your own soul had been at stake, have written anything except that sentence, 'everlasting fire.' . . . Oh what a horrible fate will yours be, when, as you walk into the mouth of hell, you will see *eyes staring at you*, and hear a voice saying, 'Here he comes. Here comes the man that helped to damn my soul.' And what must be your fate, when you must lie for ever tossed on the bed of pain, with that man whom you were the means of damning. As those who are saved will make jewels

in the crown of glory to the righteous, sure those whom you help to damn will forge fresh fetters for you, and furnish *fearful faggots* to increase the *flames of torment* which shall *blaze around your spirits*. . . . But as for my poor words, they are but air. For I have not heard the miserere of the condemned, nor have I listened to the sighs and groans and moans of lost spirits. If I had ever been permitted to gaze within the *sheet of fire which walls the gulf of despair*, if I had ever been allowed to walk for one moment o'er that *burning marl* whereon is built the *dreadful dungeon of eternal vengeance*, then I might tell you somewhat of its misery. But I cannot now, for I have not seen those doleful sights which might fright our eyes from their sockets, and make each individual hair stand upon your heads. . . . Those bones of yours which you thought were of iron will suddenly be melted, that heart of yours which was like steel or the nether millstone will be dissolved like wax in the midst of your bowels, you will begin to cry before God, and weep and howl. . . . And thou wilt say, 'O Lord! it is true I am now tossed in fire, but I myself lit the flame. It is true that I am tormented, but I forged the irons which now confine my limbs. I burnt the brick that hath built my dungeon. I myself did bring myself here. I walked to hell even as the fool goeth to the stocks, or an ox to the slaughter. I sharpened the knife which is now cutting my vitals. I nursed the viper which is now devouring my heart. . . . One of the miseries of hell will be that the sinner will feel that he deserves it all. *Tossed on a wave of fire*, he will see written in every spark that emanates therefrom, 'Thou knewest thy duty, and thou didst it not.' *Tossed back again by another wave of flame*, he hears a voice saying, 'Remember, you were warned.' He is *hurled upon a rock*, and whilst he is being wrecked there, a voice says, 'I told thee it would be better for Tyre and Sydon in the day of judgment than for thee.'

*Again he plunges under another wave of brimstone, and a voice says, 'He that believeth not shall be damned. Thou didst not believe, and thou art here.' And when again he is hurled up and down on some wave of torture, each wave shall bear to him some dreadful sentence which he read in God's word, in a tract, or in a sermon."*

I should myself have been unable to conceive a more dreadful mode of torture than that of being perpetually roasted by a slow fire. The author's ingenuity has refined upon this, by adding the forced perusal of tracts and sermons to the agonies of the damned. And this is the religion of a large portion of the English middling classes in the nineteenth century. This is their idea of a good God! This is the sort of creed, the denouncers of which are stigmatised as seeking to rob mankind of their dearest hopes, &c., &c. Passages quite as bad as the above (nothing indeed could be worse) might be cited from the pages of Anglican and Roman Catholic divines. See especially a pamphlet called "A Sight of Hell," which must be debited to a writer of the last-named Church, quoted by Lecky, "European Morals" ii. 237, and commented on in the *Examiner* of March 30, 1872.

(M) p. 23.—There is, indeed, one end, and one only, which (if we exclude the notion of pure vindictiveness as a quality of the Deity) eternal punishment might be conceived as fulfilling—that of serving as a warning to some sentient beings other than the men of this world. This would be on the principle of hanging men for forging one-pound notes, &c., an arrangement which is not, now-a-days, held to have been a very moral one. One difficulty about this view is, that we must suppose the beings in question to be furnished with some sort of idea of the offences for which this punishment had been decreed. For mere information, or knowledge, that so many people were being tortured everlastingly (for offences of unknown extent) would surely not



answer the object ; which must be to convey that the *slightest* sin will, in the course of things, be visited by eternal wrath. And we can scarcely suppose that if such a knowledge were furnished them, the spectacle of the incongruity between the offences committed and the measure meted out, would raise in their minds a high idea of the Almighty's justice, or tend to their moral improvement. Slavish fear would be the sentiment engendered, and a sense of horror precisely like that caused by the executions of forgers and sheep-stealers, the injurious effects of which to society were found to outweigh their supposed advantages. Moreover, the prospect of their own eternal punishment does not, on the Christian hypothesis, deter the greater part of those who believe in it from incurring it (not to speak of the received fate of devils, which is a case strictly in point).

(N) p. 24.—The doctrine that we are in a state of probation, that this world is a school, dimly seen by some of the heathen, is, we know, clearly brought out by Jesus, who may fairly be said to have been the first to announce it in definite terms. It is, of course, not capable of proof, but it embodies a theory which accounts for a great deal of what is mysterious in this life, and is the only theory which does in any way account for these mysteries. What I am concerned with here is to show that it furnishes a possible solution of some of those so-called anomalies and enigmas of human existence, which are specially brought forward by the upholders of what I am forced to call an immoral Deity, as justifying the most extreme views of his cruelty and ruthlessness to us in another state. "You are dreadfully shocked," say these people, "at any course of action which does not come up to your standard of justice, humanity, mercy, benevolence, being attributed to the Almighty. How, then, do you explain the case of a street arab, a 'gutter child,'

born of a family of criminals in the back slums of a town, set to thieve at an early age, and who goes on from crime to crime, till at last he expiates his offences on the scaffold, without perhaps having ever heard the name of God out of an oath till the last few weeks of his life?" I will throw in, into the bargain, if you please, and if you believe in phrenology, that such a man has been cursed with the most atrocious cerebral development, with the organs of combativeness, destructiveness, &c., inordinately pronounced; nature shall have fitted him out as devoid of benevolent and virtuous instincts as it is possible for a man to be. And, for purposes of comparison, I will take, on the other side, a person born of virtuous parents, tenderly and religiously reared, having enjoyed the best education, living in affluence, gifted by nature with the noblest qualities, deservedly beloved by his fellows, a good son, husband, father, master, landlord, the promoter of every good work, dying finally in the odour of sanctity. Now, are you prepared to affirm that, *looking to a future life*, the murderer has *necessarily* been placed at a disadvantage as compared with the philanthropist? You cannot show this, and the contrary is quite conceivable. The former has had every kind of obstacle, external and internal, to contend against; the latter has had, so to speak, none. The former may have gained the greater number of marks, and have passed, on the whole, the better examination. A ship which makes the port, after a tempestuous voyage, with her masts gone and the crew hard at work at the pumps, is often a better ship than the one which puts in, with her gear untouched, after a smooth sail. It may be a more meritorious act in the eyes of the Supreme for a man of a certain temperament to refrain, at a particular moment, from thrusting a knife into his fellow, than for another man to build a hospital. "To whom much is given, of him much is required," involves the converse; and the parable of the talents is a clear intimation of what

I may, without profanity, call a system of handicapping. And so some slight indication of softening and repentance on the part of your street arab, as he is being led out to the gallows, when perhaps the very existence of virtue has only been recently brought before him (and we have an instance of this very kind in the beautiful story of the penitent thief), may outweigh all the virtuous actions of the other man's life; just as it might be a greater feat of strength for one person to crawl a yard in an hour with several hundredweight attached to him, than for another to run ten miles in the same time; and the relative strength and endurance of the two men might *fairly* be tested in this way by any one who possessed the requisite data for a comparison.

At any rate, here is a *possible* solution (I myself believe it to be the real one) of the inequalities of life, which would leave quite undimmed our conceptions of the justice, mercy, goodness, &c., of God, using those words in a purely human sense. Where, I say, is the solution of this kind which you can postulate as conceivable for eternal punishment?

*N.B.*—I suppose I shall scarcely be met with the silly observation, that if the above view (undoubtedly the view of Jesus) be correct, we should be entitled to leave people alone, and not try to raise their condition. "If every one's probation is perfectly fair, why seek to alter the terms of it?" For many reasons; this among them, that, quite irrespectively of any other world, the duty is put upon us of promoting and increasing virtue generally in this world. The man who, with one talent committed to him, makes another talent, may be neither better nor worse than he who to ten talents adds ten other. But as it is better for the world that for every one talent existing in it there shall be ten, so by putting the former in the way of acquiring nine others, we shall not indeed be altering the character of his probation,

but increasing the sum of the general happiness (as well as the man's own happiness *here*, which counts for something).

Will it be contended, that if a philanthropist had met the penitent thief in the midst of his career, well knowing that if the man were let alone, he would find his way on to a cross by the side of Jesus and, so, through this chance-companionship, to heaven,—that it would not have been equally the duty of that person to turn the thief from his evil ways, if such a result had been possible? To be sure, the latter could not well have had his eternal prospects bettered, but he might have spent a pleasant and honoured evening of life here below into the bargain, and many people would have been spared anxieties and loss of property. And a number of other results might have followed, with which the good man would have had no concern, if he had foreseen them; because, quite irrespectively of them, his duty was clear—to convert, if he was able to do so, a sinner.

(O) p. 24.—I make no apology for adding another note on this subject of eternal punishment. For a chain is never stronger than its weakest link. This doctrine is an integral part of Christianity, announced in unmistakable terms by its founder (Matt. xviii. 8, xxv. 41, 46; Mark iii. 29, ix. 43-48), and preached and taught by the apostles (2 Thess. i. 9; Jude 6, 7; Rev. xx. 10); and if they were mistaken on such a subject, the whole fabric of orthodoxy will be loosened. Now, it has often occurred to me, and seems indeed indisputable, that *no person who holds this view is justified in bringing a child into the world*. Such an act becomes a monstrous crime perpetrated for the gratification of one's own selfishness. And if any men deserved eternal punishment, they would be those who, holding this dogma, did not immediately combine, or take individual action to put an early end, as far as they were able, to the existence of our race on the earth. For, every child



brought into the world is introduced into an existence in which there is a strong chance that he will finally be unutterably miserable. Indeed, this is not an adequate statement of the case with regard to a vast number of Christian parents; since a large proportion of those who procreate children actually believe that the average chance for any given human being of escaping this doom is exceedingly small. What is most remarkable to the philosopher is that one constantly hears of wise and prudent parents forbidding marriages on temporal grounds such as these: "One of the parties comes of a consumptive family. It would be wrong to be the means of bringing into the world children who would be likely to suffer from sickness, to inherit a malady." What more common than to hear something like this? Yet it never seems to occur to any Christian that the same considerations apply with *infinite* force to a future life; that it must be wrong to call into life beings who come into the world inheriting God's curse and who are likely to suffer from hell fire. What can be the defence for such conduct? A religious parent may say, "I will answer for my child's bringing up, and shall take care so to train him that the chances will be great of his being saved." Yes; but how are you going to answer for your grandchildren and great grandchildren and descendants at a remote period, of whom there may be thousands in various walks of life, and who will presumably only enjoy the average small chance of salvation of the bulk of mankind?

Or it may be said, "I am obeying God's orders. He has commanded us to 'be fruitful and multiply.'" I am not so sure about the conclusion that might be drawn on this head from the Bible, for more than one passage in the New Testament might be cited in favour of celibacy. And, in case of doubt, one would think the decision *ought* to be in favour of the course most consistent with humanity. Yet granted that the words "Be fruitful and multiply," addressed to Noah

and to Jacob, entail upon every individual Englishman the obligation of getting a wife as soon as he can afford it, and procreating as many children as possible, the birth of every child ought even then to be looked upon as a very sad event only brought about to obey the command of God. And I do not observe that these events are so regarded by Christians. Again, this command, "Be fruitful and multiply," *i.e.*, "Produce as large a number of victims as you can for hell-fire," was surely a most horrible command of the Deity to people who could not have understood the real force of it; since there was no knowledge of a future state given at the time the words were uttered. A God who could deceive mankind in this way is capable of deceiving them in any other way.

Some people think they have found an argument on behalf of the appalling superstition which we are considering in the statement that "God has surely a *right* to do what he likes with his own." This really means that he has the *power*, which we are not disputing. A moral God could have no such right. "I believe," says Butler, "in the moral fitness and unfitness of actions *prior to all will whatever*, which I apprehend certainly to determine the Divine conduct." This belief (if the word "moral" is used in the only sense in which any one is entitled to use the word at all) is altogether fatal to the dogma in question. This point has been touched upon by an ingenious writer, "Henry Holbeach," who has on some points arrived at conclusions (as many other persons must have done) very like my own, though without my knowledge, as his writings have just now come under my notice for the first time. Cf. Henry Holbeach, *Student in Life and Philosophy*, vol. ii., article "Reason and Faith," and the "Contemporary Review," May, 1871.

(P) p. 25.—It might be argued (probably has been argued) in a like way that the story of Jacob's career

—a career which, as I have said, is one of vice and perfidy and meanness crowned by divine favour—presents no difficulty, *because* in fact we do often see knavish men prospering, and becoming rich and powerful, and founding great families. But this is altogether to misapprehend the difficulty, which consists not in a bad man enjoying material prosperity, but in God miraculously according to the bad man his moral blessing. Imagine God Almighty openly blessing Napoleon I. from heaven after the battle of Austerlitz! Will any one say that this is not altogether a different thing from Napoleon being at that time what he was (by divine permission) arbiter of Europe?

(Q) p. 25.—Unless we suppose a fresh miracle, to preserve his mind from undergoing this process, *e.g.* to enable him to kill a number of people without being the worse for it. But (putting aside the spectators of his deeds and the persons informed of the command given to him, who would require similar miracles for themselves) would not this virtually come to the same thing? For the effect of such a miracle would only be to *blunt his moral sense.*

(R) p. 28.—The present Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford, Mr Mozley, has made this position the theme of his Bampton Lectures in defence of Miracles.

(S) p. 29.—No doubt the statement in the text is open to some criticism. “How,” it may be asked, and has often been asked, “can a desire for a future state be evidence of a future state? May we not be deceived and tortured in this respect, as it is admitted that we are in so many others? And *is* there such a general desire or belief? The Buddhists and Confucians (a large portion of the human race) seem to be entirely without it.” I think these objections might be met, if space permitted. The statement in the text is, however,

to the effect that a belief in a future state, where it exists, is drawn chiefly from within, and rests on much the same basis as the doctrine of God's veracity, &c. Of this I think there can be no doubt.

I must observe further, in anticipation of an objection which may occur further on, that the withholding from man of any proof positive of a future state, of which I speak elsewhere as in a certain sense a pain to which we are subjected and which might have been expected, is altogether different from endowing man with an instinct, without anything objective to satisfy it. To the latter mode of proceeding we might, without violence, apply the terms "mocking and deceiving us:" not so, to the former.

(T) p. 29.—Butler's first chapter "Of a future Life" is the weakest chapter in his book. It must suffice here to say that all the reasons given by the author in Sections i., ii. for a belief in the existence of living beings after death are as applicable to brutes as to men. And though he himself notices the difficulty, he does not fairly meet it. Immortality, he says, does not necessarily imply a capacity for eternal happiness, or that the immortal being should ever become a rational and moral agent. Yet, even if it did, this would offer no difficulty, since we do not know what latent powers and capacities brutes may be endowed with. But in fact it does not imply any such thing, it does not imply any such latent powers. And the economy of the Universe might require that there should be living creatures without any capacities of this kind (*i.e.* that every flea that we crack and oyster that we eat should exist to all eternity in the character of a flea and an oyster) and, after all—he ends by saying—the ultimate disposal of brutes is a great mystery of which we, who are not acquainted with the whole system of things, must be profoundly ignorant. This is quite true, but can scarcely be thought satisfactory by those who take the



liberty of observing that all the Bishop's previous presumptions in favour of death not being the destruction of living beings are either valueless, or must extend to animals. Either he has shown strong reasons for supposing every cow and sheep to be immortal, or he has shown nothing at all. The argument goes the length of asserting that sentience in whatever form awakened will probably never be extinguished. Our sponges may meet us in another world. Butler, however, goes on to state grounds for a belief in the immortality of man as distinguished from that of the brutes. He distinguishes between the capacities of reason, memory, and affection on the one hand, and perceptions by our organs of sense on the other: and adds that the former do not depend upon our gross body in the same manner as the latter do. It has been well observed that no one in the present day will surmise that though sensation and perception are dependent on the organism, reason, reflection, &c., may not be. And I must add that even if the above distinction could be established, yet to draw an arbitrary line including beings possessing a certain amount of memory, reason, and affection (of which capacities the beasts certainly have two, and we cannot be sure that they are altogether destitute of the third) and to place outside the line beings falling below a certain standard in these respects: to say that here is a reason for supposing that the former class is immortal and the second class not so, is altogether as gratuitous an assumption as any that can be made.

(U) p. 31.—Butler's chief argument in favour of miracles (Pt. ii. ch. 2, sec. 3) or, to speak with precision, his statement of the case as regards the presumption against miracles, is pronounced by one of the ablest living believers in these phenomena to be "not an adequate representation of the presumption against a miracle;" as one which "does not carry our common sense along with it." (Mozley, Bampton Lectures. Lect. V., note

2). Bishop Fitzgerald speaks of it as "a passage in which we may perhaps detect a misconception of the subject in the pages even of this great writer." (Dictionary of the Bible, Article "Miracles.") The Rt. Hon. Joseph Napier, who has published a volume of Lectures on the Analogy, styles the argument in this place "at first subtle, if not obscure," and the whole chapter "somewhat difficult," admitting that the author "is generally supposed to have lapsed into fallacy:" while Dean Mansel, who like Mr Napier and Archdeacon Lees maintains the soundness of Butler's reasoning, confesses that his arrangement of heads is "a little awkward."

The fact is that there is not a more obscure passage than this in the whole of Butler's writings. The reader who wishes to learn what can be said on both sides of the question and to arrive at a conclusion for himself as to whether the author has or has not "confounded improbability before the fact and improbability after" must refer to the above works. I think that Mr Mozley has well said all that there is to be said on the subject.

While on the subject of this chapter, I may remark that few scientific men in the present day would accept the distinction which Butler, in accordance with the state of knowledge in his time, draws between the course of nature "at the beginning of the world," "upon the first peopling of worlds" &c., and the present settled course of nature. Science shows us processes in operation in this planet, ages before the appearance of man, precisely similar to those which we observe at this day. And if the introduction of man, and of life generally, into the world be an effect incapable of being referred to any known causes, we are no more entitled to postulate a miracle on its behalf than in the case of rain and fine weather.

(V)p. 35.—I am far from saying that prayers for a sick person put up by himself or by others, may not some-

times be of great physical service to the sufferer. They may act on his imagination and so on his body. In the same way bread-pills have often been of great use.

(W) p. 35.—See some striking remarks on this miracle in Professor Tyndall's "Fragments of Science," 2d edit., pp. 446-447.

"There is a scientific imagination as well as a historic imagination, and when by the exercise of the former the stoppage of the earth's rotation is clearly realised, the event assumes proportions so vast in comparison with the result to be obtained by it that belief reels under the reflection. The energy here involved is equal to six trillions of horses working for the whole of the time employed by Joshua in the destruction of his foes. The amount of power thus expended would be sufficient to supply every individual of an army a thousand times the strength of that of Joshua with a thousand times the fighting power of each of Joshua's soldiers, not for the few hours necessary to the extinction of a handful of Amorites, but for millions of years. All this wonder is silently passed over by the sacred historian, confessedly because he knew nothing about it. Whether, therefore, we consider the miracle as purely evidential, or as a practical means of vengeance, the same lavish squandering of energy stares the scientific man in the face. If evidential, the energy was wasted, because the Israelites knew nothing of the amount; if simply destructive, then the ratio of the quantity lost to that employed may be inferred from the foregoing figures."

(X) p. 36.—This was the view held by nearly all the early fathers. I believe that there is not a single passage in the New Testament in which  $\gamma\eta$  occurs, where it may not be translated by our "earth," in the sense of the whole earth; and that nowhere can it be made to bear the sense of a region of the earth, such as

Judæa. There are of course passages where it might be rendered by "the ground," "he went and digged in the ground" (ἐν τῇ γῆ) Matt. xxv. 18. "Saul falling upon the ground" (πεσὼν ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν) Acts ix. 4, &c., where we should similarly use "earth," and indeed that word is used in the authorized version. But there would not be the slightest doubt about the meaning of an English author who spoke of "darkness covering the whole earth," nor can there be the least doubt about ἐπὶ πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν, Matt. xxvii. 45; ἐφ' ὅλην τὴν γῆν, Mark xv. 33, Luke xxiii. 44. The last named evangelist adds that the sun was darkened.

Dean Alford has a singular note here. "Of course the whole globe cannot be meant, as it would be night naturally over half of it!" Why could there not be darkness over the *whole* globe, because *half* of it was already dark? But the Dean is doubtless laying stress on the supernatural character of the event. "The whole world could not be made *miraculously* dark, inasmuch as a portion of it was already *naturally* in that state." Very true; but who does not see that this is a reason, founded on our present additional knowledge, against the whole miracle, which, as conceived by the evangelists, is shown to have been impossible!

(Y) p. 39.—Passages have been adduced from the Apocalypse in which the author speaks of himself as "in the spirit." This is a natural introduction to a *divine message* which he supposes to have been (or, if the expression be preferred, which actually was) communicated to him by afflatus of the Spirit for transmission to the churches, as also to the narrative of the wonderful *visions* subsequently vouchsafed to him. No argument can be drawn from these expressions for the Inspiration of Matthew, Mark, &c., writing accounts of what they had seen and heard, and heard of, with their fleshly eyes and ears. If anything, the inference would be rather the other way: that Inspiration was a condition of which the



subject was distinctly conscious, and the absence of all mention of so remarkable an experience in the pages of a writer, would be some presumption against his having been inspired.

(Z) p. 40.—Bishop Harold Browne in "Aids to Faith," Essay vii., on Inspiration.

(AA) p. 41.—I am of course supposing myself to be addressing Protestants here and elsewhere. The Roman Catholics hold a much more formidable position in respect to Inspiration.

(BB) p. 41.—The allusion is, I need hardly say, to 1st John v. 7, 8, where the best orthodox scholars candidly admit an interpolation of the words within brackets. "For there are three that bear record [in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth] the spirit and the water and the blood, and these three agree in one." Dean Alford says, "*There is not the shadow of a reason for supposing them genuine.*"

(CC) p. 42. There is no difficulty in supposing that the Arians may have occupied a position, in the Divine scheme, analogous to that which the orthodox Protestant assigns to the Waldenses, Albigenses, &c. Their belief, though stamped out by violence in part, and in part fallen to decay, may have been the true belief, and may be destined to revive at the appointed time, after a long period of darkness.

(DD) p. 43.—Butler admits, in this passage, that we have no ground for expecting beforehand an Inspired record of a Divine Revelation. He goes on thus:

"But it may be said 'that a revelation in some of the above-mentioned circumstances—one, for instance,

which was not committed to writing, and thus secured against danger of corruption—would not have answered its purpose. I ask, what purpose? It would not have answered all the purposes which it has now answered, and in the same degree, but it would have answered others, or the same in different degrees. And which of these were the purposes of God, and best fell in with his general government, we could not at all have determined beforehand.

“Now since it has been shown beforehand that we have no principles of reason upon which to judge beforehand how it were to be expected revelation should have been left, or what was most suitable to the divine plan of government in any of the forementioned respects, it must be quite frivolous to object afterwards as to any of them against its being left in one way rather than another, for this would be to object against things upon account of their being different from expectations which have been shown to be without reason. And thus we see that the only question concerning the truth of Christianity is whether it be a real revelation, not whether it be attended with every circumstance which we should have looked for; and concerning the authority of scripture, whether it be *what it claims to be* (surely, rather, what it is claimed for it by Theologians that it is)—not whether it be a book of such sort and so promulged as weak men are apt to fancy a book containing a divine revelation should. And, therefore, neither obscurity nor seeming inaccuracy of style, nor various readings, *nor early disputes about the authors of particular parts*, nor any other things of the like kind (how about manifest contradictions?) though they had been much more considerable in degree than they are, could overthrow the authority of the Scripture, *unless the Prophets, Apostles, or our Lord had promised that the book containing the divine revelation should be secure from those things.*”

As to the last sentence, I would venture to observe

(1.) That it certainly cannot be meant here to imply that disputes (*i.e.* doubtfulness) about the authors of parts of Scripture ought not to *weaken* the authority of Scripture. They must of course weaken it very materially as to those particular parts, and in some degree as a whole. What are the New Testament Scriptures? That collection of works about which the early Christians agreed in the main that they were inspired. This is the external "Evidence" we have for them—positively there is no other—else why not admit the Gospel of Nicodemus into the canon? Now disputes about the second Epistle of Peter (doubts generally felt as to whether it was the work of an Apostle at all) weaken the evidence for that part of Scripture and its consequent authority for Protestants. At the same time they weaken the authority of Scripture in general to this extent, that the bare suspicion of a mistake having been made in the composition of the canon in one case, engenders the further suspicion that a mistake may have been made in the case of other books. (2.) Butler has with candour added, *unless the Lord, &c., had promised that the book should be secure from those things.* But the modern Theologian, arguing on Butler's lines, would probably think this quite an unnecessary limitation. For we surely must have heard of the promise through the Book itself. And (it might fairly be argued) as we are no judges beforehand how far God would permit this record to be corrupted by verbal traditions, this alleged promise might be one of them; and, practically, the whole thing would be explained away in a hundred easy fashions, like the distinct promises of the Lord's early reappearance.

Before leaving this subject of Inspiration, I must glance at Coleridge's argument, for it is a common one. "The Bible *finds* me, finds me more than all the other books in the world, finds me at greater depths of my being." No doubt. But how can the statement of

this fact (true enough, I am ready to admit with regard to parts of the Bible) be taken for a valid argument in favour of the Inspiration—I mean the inspiration of the writer—even of those parts? The sermon on the mount, taken down roughly, or even summarized by a newspaper reporter, would *find* most people. Much less can it stand as an argument for the inspiration of the whole Bible. For there are large portions of it which, whatever might be the pretensions or claims to inspiration of the writer, would certainly *find* no one. As to these, the test fails. On Coleridge's principle, we should have to pick and choose, each for himself, according to his inner light (which would lead to curious results) or else to accept a great part of Scripture as inspired, on the ground of its being unlikely that God should have allowed dross to be mixed up with the gold; an assumption which, we have seen, is repugnant to analogy and disproved by experience.

(EE) p. 44.—According to the *Times'* report, this is the precise expression used by Canon Liddon in one of the series of discourses on Christianity, delivered at St Paul's towards the end of last year (1871).

(FF) p. 47.—The theory of the "Fall," viewed as a general dislocation of nature, is intelligible, and this is of course the theory which underlies the old legend. Then, it was supposed, death and suffering were introduced, the earth was cursed and brought forth thorns and thistles, in the sweat of his brow man was made to eat bread. Before that time earth was a paradise, &c. But, as we now know, the world was not a paradise before that time. Very much the same conditions prevailed as prevail now. Carnivorous animals preyed upon the weaker species; crops fit for human food required labour to produce them in any quantity that would be sufficient for a growing human population (happily for mankind, for the idea of a



garden with people in it who should have nothing to do but walk about and pluck delicious fruits and bask in the sunshine and go to sleep, is clearly quite alien to all that we can gather of the Creator's purposes in placing man here below, and a mere dream of early humanity) and these and other considerations show the mythical character of the narrative. Yet writers of Mr Henry Rogers' ability go on harping about "man not being in his original state," "the religious constitution of his nature having received a shock," &c.

(GG) p. 50.—Mr Henry Rogers calls attention to the profound immorality which would have to be ascribed to a God who left his creatures without a miraculous revelation, "remorselessly exposing them;" "chucking his human offspring into the world;" "suffering them to make their appearance under the benediction of an infinitely beneficent Creator in the condition of one of the aborigines of Australia," "allowing them to grope their way during unnumbered ages," &c., &c. Indeed this is a point which the ingenious writer constantly reverts to. See his "Eclipse of Faith," 4th Ed., p. 162. "A Defence of the Eclipse of Faith," 3d Ed., pp. 45, 47, 48. "Greyson Correspondence," vol. ii., p. 221. It does not seem to him in the least shocking that the same beneficent and omnipotent Creator should introduce into his revelation, when made, an announcement of eternal damnation to a large part of the human race.

(HH) p. 53. Nothing in the above paragraph is intended by the author to be hostile to the opinion (which he himself holds) that in the Bible is to be found a valuable system of religious teaching expressly designed by God for man, and nowhere else accessible. That the *disjecta membra* of this system are to be found elsewhere does not in the slightest degree detract from the value of the service rendered to mankind by him who co-ordinated them into a whole.

(II) p. 55.—Modern research has established, almost beyond the possibility of cavil, that a belief in one Supreme Being was conveyed to the Hebrew race by natural and gradual means. Cf. *Revue des Deux Mondes*, September 1, 1869 for a succinct account of Professor Kuenen's inquiries in this direction; and another article in the same review of February 1, 1872, bearing the title "La Bible et l'Archéologie" which contains a good deal of information, very loosely put together, on the subject. That it was *gradually* conveyed is patent on an examination of the Bible itself.

