

never have intended to deceive his creatures, nor framed them so as to be the victims of delusion; for, at this stage, while we are still enquiring whether the distinction which we think between right and wrong has any reality, we cannot be supposed to know anything respecting the Divine character, nor can we be entitled to assume that deception is worse than truth. What view, then is to be taken of the conception of right, and how can the sceptical cavil, which has just been referred to, be evaded? Without dogmatism, in great humility, stretching out lame hands for the truth, and groping if haply I may feel after and find it, I suggest the following answer. May not our conception of the rightness or wrongness of what we are doing—in other words, of the moral state in which we are—be just the state of mind revealing itself as in accordance with, or in antagonism to, the nature of God? The nature of God is (as was explained above) the sole ground or basis of the reality of right. Right, therefore, is apprehended by us in its reality, only in so far as a manifestation of the nature of God is made to us. Since the creature cannot exist except in most intimate relation to the Creator, it is not *impossible*, and why (to repeat, *mutatis mutandis*, the question which I put in regard to the power by which we are sustained)—why should it be deemed *incredible*, that we should at each and every moment be capable of realising the absolute and unchanging purity of God, set over against, and in relation to, the moral movements of our own nature?

If the view now stated be correct, and the doctrine formerly delivered regarding the conception of cause be also admitted, it will be seen how Intellectual science and Ethical science together furnish the necessary foundations for a system of natural religion—and (I might add) for that of revealed religion too. All religion supposes the existence of a Divine Being, possessed of moral attributes, in conformity to whom our perfection consists. Now, with respect to the existence of God—if this were not infallibly certified to us by philosophy, it could not be certified to us at all. Revelation even could not certify it to us; because the possibility of revelation, and therefore the possibility of proving the Bible to be a revelation, proceeds upon the assumption that the question of the Divine existence is already settled. In like manner, if philosophy did not infallibly assure us of the moral attributes of God, and of the obligation under which we lie to be conformed to the Divine nature, revelation could not supplement its deficiency; for, a revelation, were its claims to be from God fully established, could not be felt to have authority, unless the perfection of the Being from it emanates were already ascertained. Now how does philosophy fulfil the very high functions which thus fall to it. In the following manner:—and with this sentence, summing up the whole, I conclude. Intellectual science teaches, that, in the universal and necessary conception of cause, we have a direct manifestation of God in the exercise of his Almighty sustaining (virtually, creating) power; and Ethical science teaches, that, in our moral conceptions, properly interpreted, we have a direct manifestation of God in the glory of his eternal and unchangeable moral excellence.

Official Notices.

As has been intimated by circular addressed to the ministers of the church, the Moderator has altered the Day of Thanksgiving from the third Tuesday of November to the first Thursday of December, the day named by Government as a day of public thanksgiving. The Moderator directs attention to the condition of the operatives in the cotton manufacturing districts of Britain, recommending the thanksgiving day as a suitable day for taking up collections for their relief, where this has not been done previously.

As a community we have abundant cause of thanksgiving for the mercies which we enjoy; and of humiliation, too, on account of our unworthiness. May God pour out His Spirit upon us, and grant us in abundance not only temporal comforts, but rich spiritual blessings!