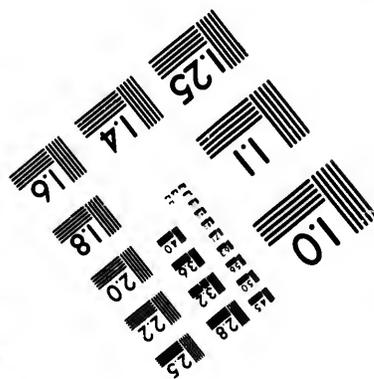
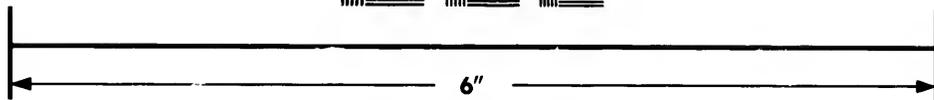
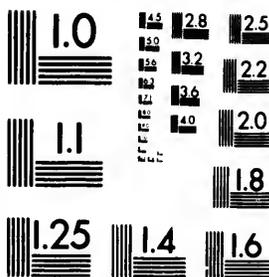


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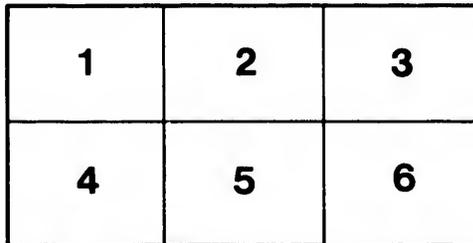
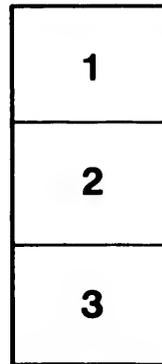
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ELEMENTS

OF

NATURAL THEOLOGY.

BY

JAMES BEAVEN, D.D.

PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY IN KING'S COLLEGE, TORONTO.

“ Operibus præscripsit Deus antequam litteris: viribus prædicavit antequam viris: præmisit tibi naturam magistram, submissurus et prophetiam; quo facilius credas prophetiæ, discipulus naturæ; quo statim admittas, quum audieris quod ubique jam videris.”

TERTULLIAN, *De Resurrect. Carnis*, 12.

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ELEMENTS
OF
NATURAL THEOLOGY.

CHAPTER I.

ON THE UTILITY OF THE STUDY OF NATURAL
THEOLOGY.

THEOLOGY is the science or doctrine concerning God. It is divided into Natural Theology and Revealed Theology: by the former we mean such knowledge of God, and of the things which regard Him, as we *might* gain by the right use of our natural powers (although it may be true that we cannot point out any who have fully obtained this knowledge by these means); by the latter we mean such knowledge of these subjects, as we have attained by the revelations which He has been pleased to make to mankind.

A distinction is to be drawn between Theology and Religion. Theology is, as we have stated, the doctrine or science concerning God.

But all our knowledge respecting Him, as respecting every thing whatever, ought to have an end—a practical object; and that end in this case is Religion. Religion is the recognition and practical application of the truths which Theology teaches; the believing and acting out of those truths in our character and conduct.

Now Religion cannot exist at all without some knowledge of the truths which Theology teaches. It may not be a regular, well-digested, systematic knowledge; but it must be some knowledge. For all religion is built upon faith: and faith implies the belief of something; and that something, to be the foundation of religion, must be some theological truth. Persons may not be aware that they believe theological truths; they may never have considered whether they believe any truths or not: but still they do believe them, otherwise they have no religion. For there is no true religion which does not bring the heart of man to God in prayer and adoration: and “he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” These two points, that God exists, and that He rewards those who diligently seek Him, are two doctrines of Natural Theology; and without them there can be no religion.

These and kindred truths, however, we, as Christians, are all taught from our childhood;

and we find them acknowledged by the great body of persons amongst whom we live: and therefore it may not at first sight appear evident why we should make them special subjects of inquiry and study. It may therefore be proper briefly to enter into the reasons for the study of Natural Theology.

Religious truth finds man already predisposed against the ends of it, at least by the corruption of his nature, and in many cases, by the inveterate ignorance and superstition of ages. There are, moreover, many who have chosen habits of evil, and have a strong repugnance to being controlled or amended. They therefore resist religious truth, and speak against it, and appear to take a pleasure in either assailing or undermining the faith of others; especially when they find it stand in the way of their own views or wishes. Now the system of Christian doctrine in which we are instructed, together with the sacred books which are the inspired record of it, presuppose natural religion, and take its truths for granted. The Holy Scriptures, in particular, state, illustrate, and enforce the unity and supremacy and various attributes of the Creator: but they do not attempt to prove them; and his existence and providence they entirely take for granted: they suppose them capable of sufficient evidence to the mind of man by the exercise of his natural powers.

This has, however, been denied by Mr. Ellis, (the author of "The Knowledge of Divine Things from Revelation, not from Reason or Nature,") who attempts to prove that no part of our knowledge of Divine things is derived by man from reason or the observations of nature. It should be observed, however, that he, and others of his period, were arguing against the Deists, who imagined that we could establish the whole system of necessary truth, both theological and moral, and that with absolute correctness, by reason *alone*, without revelation; and that they are not arguing so much against believers, who held that natural religion is the substratum of revelation. It was, therefore, only indirectly, and in pushing their arguments to extremes, that they came to question the possibility of *some* truth being ascertainable by natural reason. This Ellis does chiefly upon the ground of the passage, Rom. x. 17, in which St. Paul, speaking of the Divine intention that the Gentiles should come to the knowledge of the Gospel, and the consequent necessity of preaching to them, says, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God:" which he understands to assert, that no person can believe religious truth without having it communicated to him; and that the only way in which man can have it communicated to him is by Divine revelation. It appears evident that this is to press the words

of the Apostle beyond their proper meaning, and to change a particular assertion into a general principle. St. Paul is here speaking of faith *in the Gospel*; and his words cannot be fairly quoted as applying to any thing else.

Moreover, there is another passage in this same Epistle (ch. i. 19, 20,) in which, according to the obvious meaning of the words, St. Paul teaches that natural reason *might* lead men to the knowledge of God, and that they were inexcusable if it did not so lead them. In that well-known passage, the Apostle affirms that "the invisible things of God, his eternal power and Godhead, are clearly seen from the creation of the world, being understood by the things that are seen;" and this he asserts in order to show, that "that which may be known of God" was manifested to the Gentiles, "so that they are without excuse." St. Paul here is referring to facts; and, as we shall see afterwards, the facts were, that by the Gentiles, both Greeks and Romans, the existence of God and his providence were "understood by the things which were seen;" and the reason why they were not fully acknowledged by those who thus understood them was, that they did not choose to oppose and desert the established idolatry. Ellis endeavours, indeed, to set aside this text, by saying that it refers, not to the existence, but to the attributes of God. But this is very short-sighted reasoning; for in what way could

man infer, or has man ever inferred the existence of God, unless by the working of his attributes? What did man understand by his existence, except that there is a Being, possessed of *eternal* power and *eternal* Godhead, as distinguished from the partial and temporary power and supernatural existence (Godhead) of other beings and creatures, which men have supposed to be gods? For, with few and trifling exceptions, men have always acknowledged some Godhead; but the difficulty has always been, first to prevail upon them to contemplate the evidence of One *eternal* power and Godhead; and, after they have come to understand it, to induce them to act up to their conviction. And thence some in all ages have endeavoured to weaken the force of this evidence, or have set themselves to deny the fact of the very existence of this power and Godhead.

When therefore, from whatever causes, the fundamental doctrines of all religion are assailed, it becomes necessary to have recourse to the means of establishing those doctrines which are supposed capable of satisfying the mind, anterior to revelation; namely, observation and reflection. True it is, that after the traditions derived from the original progenitors of the human race had become darkened, and men were left more entirely to their own understandings, we have no evidence that any man, without the aid of revelation, did arrive at a

correct knowledge of God. Equally true is it, that only those who have been favoured with Divine revelation, have been able to appreciate *duly* the phenomena of nature and providence, and to reason *correctly* from them. But still, where the human understanding itself has not become utterly debased and degraded, there has been enough to convince the body of mankind that there is some moral Power governing the world; and to lead individuals to the conclusion, that that Power is the Author of the present state of things, and superior in nature to all other things. And, in the case of those who do actually receive Divine revelation, man's intellectual vision has been so cleared, and his judgment and reason so strengthened, that, wherever the arguments of believers have reached, Atheism has been constrained to shrink and retire, or assume some other form. It is therefore important that the minds of the young should be instructed in the evidences and doctrines of Natural Theology, that they may not be at a loss for suitable arguments to repel and silence gainsayers.

Nor are there wanting other grounds to authorize such a course. The young Christian, whose mind is of an active and speculative turn, will be apt at times to look back and search into the principles and hidden sources of things; and, if he is left to himself, his speculations may lead him into depths in which painful

doubt and fear may agitate his soul, as to the grounds and foundations of all religious truth. His case, however, is not new: others before him, and some with stronger and better balanced minds than most men possess, have fallen upon the same or similar doubts and inquiries; and, by the blessing of God, have, by the use of their natural reasoning powers, either cleared up their doubts and removed their difficulties, or have found abundant reason to satisfy them to remain with some doubts and difficulties still unremoved. Under such circumstances, it must be of incalculable benefit to be furnished with the arguments and conclusions which have been the refuge and safeguard of others in circumstances exactly similar.

There is yet another reason which would be valid (at least as to the direct portions of the argument), even if the others had no existence. Revelation itself (as I have already said) presupposes natural religion, and avails itself of its lights. Not only so, but it prompts to some of the duties which are parts of natural religion, and founded upon its evidence. It teaches us to contemplate the great Workmaster in his works, and thus to deepen and strengthen our impressions of Him. It leads us to see and feel Him in every thing; that so all things may discourse to us of Him, and in and through us his intelligent creatures, things unintelligent may praise, and bless, and magnify Him. With-

out any reference, therefore, to direct unbelief, but simply with a view to strengthen our faith, making it more habitual, and grafting it into our very nature, it is right for us to be able to trace the Divine Artificer and Preserver in every thing which He has made.

And the same must be said of the course of his natural providence. It is possible to regard it as a mere system of events, brought about by secondary causes. But revelation takes for granted that it is something more than this; that there is one Sovereign Director of all the affairs of this world, great and small. And to have our minds fully imbued with the evidence of this truth, such as enlightened reason furnishes, has a tendency to deepen its impression, and to render it more habitually influential.

Similar remarks may be applied to the natural evidences of God's moral government, and of a future state, and the immortality of the soul. For, at least to those who think much, it deepens the impression of these facts, to perceive how widely spread their evidence is, and how it meets us continually when we should never have expected it,—even without the direct evidence for them furnished by Divine revelation.

For these last-mentioned ends, if there were no other, it would be our duty to instruct our youth in this science.

CHAPTER II.

ON THE NATURAL THEOLOGY OF THE GREEKS AND ROMANS.

THE first object in Natural Theology must be to prove *that God exists*; that every thing derives its origin from one First Cause, and that Cause, an intelligent, self-existent Being, the Upholder and Governor of all things. It will assist us materially in understanding the nature of this subject, if we make an historical survey of the state of Natural Theology amongst the Greeks and Romans, anterior to the coming of Christ.

According to the belief of the mass of the people, there were a number of supernatural beings, whom they denominated gods, of whom some were descendants of more ancient gods, some were the heavenly bodies, some were deified mortals. It is evident that the first origin of their gods was utterly unaccounted for; and that, amongst those whom they denominated gods, not one answered to our idea of the Supreme Eternal Being, the Author and

Ruler of all things. They did, indeed, regard one as supreme, namely Jupiter; but they did not regard him as having possessed an eternal supremacy, but as having obtained it by deposing his parent Saturn.

But along with this mythology, and apparently independent of it, there was a dim, indistinct idea of some power, as God or Deity, different from all the other deities. I do not allude at present to the ideas entertained by philosophers, to which I shall advert afterwards; but to the language of common life, in which the expressions τὸ θεῖον, ὁ θεός, and *deus* in the singular, are of not infrequent occurrence. Thus Herodotus (iii. 40) represents Amasis as writing to Polycrates, and saying, "I am not gratified at thy great successes, knowing that the deity is jealous" (τὸ θεῖον ἐπισταμένῳ ὡς ἔστι φθονερόν); and again (vii. 10), he represents Artabanus as dissuading Darius from invading the Scythians by similar considerations: "Thou seest that the deity (ὁ θεός) strikes with lightning the larger animals, and does not suffer them to be vain-glorious; but the smaller ones do not annoy him: for the deity loves to cut down all lofty things. And so, upon the same principle, a large army is destroyed by a small one, when the deity, being jealous of them, strikes them with panic or with lightning:

for the deity permits no other being to lift himself up, besides himself." So again, if it rains or thunders, it is the deity who is the agent (ii. 13, iii. 119, iv. 79, and vii. 10, above quoted).

I have quoted from Herodotus, because his style is eminently colloquial and popular, and his tone of mind the reverse of philosophical; on which account, he seems a most suitable witness to the popular mind of his day. It is well known that similar phraseology occurs in the tragic poets of Greece; but I do not quote them, because it may be said that they were all, more or less, tinctured with philosophy. Having, therefore, quoted from one of the earliest Greek writers, I will pass over the intermediate period, and descend to the time of Tertullian; when we shall find the same habit still prevailing, not amongst Jews or Christians, but amongst the heathen common people of Roman Africa. The collection which this writer has made (*de Anima*, § 2) of phrases and expressions recognising the existence, personality, and providence of God, is curious and instructive. "What God has given; If God will; God is good; God does good; God bless you; God sees every thing; I commend to God; God will recompense; God will judge between us:"—these are all expressions recorded by this writer as in use amongst the pagans,

and constituting the involuntary testimony of the soul to the being, unity, and providence of God.

Whether, however, those who employed this phraseology really believed in one Supreme Eternal God, is very questionable. It appears probable that they used the term *god* as we do the term *man*, as an aggregate name for a whole class of beings; that they conceived a uniform nature and disposition to pertain to them all; and that just as *man*, as a class, acts in such and such a way, or has such and such dispositions, so likewise does *deity*. It will be difficult, at first, to familiarize ourselves with this view of the matter; but I am strongly inclined to think that reflection and observation will show that it offers a complete solution of the difficulty we feel, when we find men strenuously contending for polytheism, and refusing to believe in one only self-existent personal Deity, and yet habitually employing language such as Tertullian has preserved to us.

From the common people we will now pass to the philosophers. We have no account of the grounds of the belief of any, anterior to Socrates. Pythagoras, indeed, we are told, held that God is an all-pervading mind, the ruler of all things, one, eternal, permanent, immovable, resembling Himself, and unlike all other beings; and that every human soul is a portion of God (Cic. *de Nat. Deor.* i. 11; Phi-

lolaus *de Mundi Opific.* p. 24). This evidently is not religious truth, but only a portion of the natural history of the universe; and we have no record of the grounds upon which it was adopted. It is equally evident that it is pure Pantheism; that the personal unity and moral government of God form no part of the system. It is, as I have said, with Socrates, that we first begin to see the grounds of belief, and to recognise at the same time a moral Deity.

His views and opinions are learnt with most certainty from the *Memorabilia* of Xenophon, in which he introduces him as discussing various points with his auditors. It is true that Plato, likewise, introduces Socrates into his own dialogues; but we cannot on that account conclude, that the opinions he puts into the mouth of Socrates were actually enunciated by him. Probably they were for the most part such as he held: but the dialogues are evidently not constructed for the direct purpose of giving the opinions of the speakers, but simply of discussing the subject in hand in all its bearings; and the speakers are chosen whose views most nearly agreed with those to be expressed on any side. The object of Xenophon was different; viz. to record the *actual* opinions of Socrates, and to make as close an approximation as possible to his manner of enunciating them; and, although we cannot conclude that Socrates used every expression there attributed

to him, we may place great reliance upon the testimony given to his doctrines.

The evidence to be brought forward on the subject will be derived chiefly from the first and fourth books of the *Memorabilia*. In the former of these (c. iv.) Xenophon records a conversation which he asserts that he himself heard between Socrates and a young man named Aristodemus, whom he understood to neglect and deride religion altogether. In the latter (c. iii.) he records a similar conversation with Euthydemus, at which he alleges that he was present, on the subject of Divine providence.

From these conversations we learn that he attributed to all the gods intelligence, providence over all things, omniscience, omnipotence, and benevolence; but, at the same time, he believed in one God, distinct from the other gods, whom he regarded as the Being who arranges and holds together the whole world, in whom are all good and noble things, who is the Maker of mankind and the wisdom which pervades all things. He, moreover, attributes to Him, in a special manner, the eye which can see all things, and the understanding which can care for all things, and affirms that He supplies our needs quicker than thought.

From the same source we learn the arguments upon which he depended to prove the existence and providence of the gods. And

here we must observe, that all his arguments apply to these supposed gods in a body, equally with the one God, the Maker of men.

He argued their existence *positively* from the evidences of design in the structure of man, and in particular from the desire of progeny, and the corresponding love of offspring; and *negatively*, from the incredibility of the supposition, that, whilst the material frame of a single class of beings, such as mankind, is directed by mind, the material frame of the universe should be left undirected by mind.

He supported the view, that the gods exercise a providential care of the universe for the benefit of mankind, by the following considerations:—1. that certain peculiarities in the physical structure and constitution of mankind prove that such care has been exercised; 2. that the Deity has given man an excellent soul, by which he alone perceives the existence of gods, provides for his own sustenance, and wards off or remedies evils, and labours to obtain instruction, and remembers it when obtained; 3. that the gods have given him a body suited to his soul; 4. that they have carefully provided for all his wants; 5. that they have given him, by means of omens, &c., the knowledge of future events; 6. that they have implanted in the very nature of man a belief in their power to benefit and hurt him; 7. that communities and the wisest of men

show, by the reverence they pay the gods, their belief in their providence; and lastly, that those who serve the gods are sure to have their belief in their providential care augmented by experience.

He therefore taught his hearers to reverence the gods; partly from gratitude for benefits received, partly through fear of losing their future favours. This reverence was to be shown by cherishing the feeling of gratitude, by acts of devotion according to the laws; by consulting them, by obeying their directions, by praying to them for success in their undertakings, and by asking their forgiveness when we have done any thing likely to offend them. The obedience, however, which Socrates would inculcate, is not to any general laws of the gods, but merely to their direction, given by oracle, omen, or in any other specific manner; and although he reckons disobedience to parents a thing with which the gods were likely to be offended, it was not because it was any part of our duty to them to obey our parents, but because they would conclude us to be ungrateful, and therefore withhold their favours for the future.

Plato, the great disciple of Socrates, was of a much less practical turn of mind than his master; or else, as Justin Martyr suggests, was alarmed by his violent death, and therefore did not so clearly reveal his own sen-

timents. They are to be gained, however, in a considerable degree from his *Timæus* and *Philœbus*; and in a slighter degree from his *Politics*, *Theætetus*, *Symposium*, and *Phædo*. The *Timæus* is a discussion on the origin of all things, and the *Philœbus* on the nature of the real good of man. From these we learn, according to Plato, that Jupiter is the author, in some sense, both of the other gods and of the universe, and all that it contains, and that he possesses a governing soul and governing mind; that the universe is a living, intelligent being, and a god, and contains all other living beings in it, both mortal and immortal; that the heavenly bodies are gods; that the mortal portion of created things was made by the inferior gods by the command of Jupiter, and that he infused into some of them the immortal portion.

He taught, however, that Jupiter the Creator was not the First Cause; that the First Cause is of the nature of mind, spiritual, and without beginning; that the Creator, in reducing all things from order to disorder, made every thing after a self-existent model, rendering the universe a perceptible image of the spiritual Deity: that it is difficult to discover the Maker of all things, and impossible to make him known to all men.

Of this system there are but few points which Plato endeavours to establish by proof.

These are, chiefly, 1. that the world must have had a beginning, because it is visible and tangible, and possessed of form; 2. that there must be a First Cause; for something must always have existed, otherwise nothing could have begun to exist, and every thing which begins to exist, must have a previously existing Cause; therefore, there must be some Cause which never began to exist; 3. that the First Cause must be self-existent by the force of the terms; 4. that the First Cause is intellectual or spiritual; because mind is the only cause of motion, whether to itself or to matter. It is evident from this, that his proofs are entirely metaphysical.

He taught likewise in regard to Deity generally, that it is good, and the Author of good only; that it is perfectly just; that it cannot deceive; that it alone is always the same; that it has one form and is indivisible, and consequently immortal. It is evident from this sketch how little practical his theology was, and how remote from the apprehension of ordinary men.

The disciples of Plato appear to have had a more distinct and positive doctrine than their master. (*Cic. Quæst. Acad. i. 7.*) They held that the universe is occupied by an intelligent nature, possessed of perfect reason, and eternal; that this nature is the soul of the world, and is variously denominated, god, providence, neces-

sity, and chance. This, it is clear, is a scarcely disguised Pantheism.

Respecting the views of Aristotle, one of his immediate successors, although his writings are voluminous, we know but little in relation to this particular subject. He has, indeed, a treatise, commonly called his *Metaphysics*, whose object is to discover the First Cause of all things. In this treatise he arrives by cautious steps at the conclusion, that the necessary qualifications of a First Cause are the same as the ordinary attributes of Deity; namely, the most excellent kind of life, and that without intermission or cessation: and that the most excellent kind of life is the operation of the intellect. (*Metaphys.* xi. 7.) But whether he believed in a Personal Deity, and a Providential and Moral Governor of the world, scarcely appears. Indeed, from his *Ethics*, it would almost appear that he denied a moral character to the gods; for he conceives that the highest kind of life is the intellectual, and that that is the life of the gods (*Ethic. Nicom.* x. 7): and he conceives the necessity for moral virtues to arise solely from our condition in this state of existence (ch. 8). His testimony, therefore, only goes to the point, that there was an established notion of deity as distinct from humanity, and that the First Cause in his opinion was of the nature of deity.

We do not encounter another positive doctrine, until we come to Zeno and the Stoics; and we have no earlier or more trustworthy account of their tenets than that given by Cicero, in the second book of his Treatise, *On the Nature of the Gods*. Their notions are evidently derived from those of Socrates, of which in some respects they are an exact transcript. They believed, however, in the divinity of the universe, which they conceived to be an intelligent, reasoning Being, and of a globular form. They believed the soul of the world to be fire; and that it is a voluntary, deliberative, creative agent, possessed of desires and impulses; that it is employed in rendering the universe permanent, in supplying the wants of every part of it, and in consulting its order and beauty; that this soul of the universe is identical with providence, and is itself virtuous, wise, and perfect. They conceived that the divinity of the universe extended to the heavenly bodies, to the various beneficent agencies of nature, moral and physical, and to great men who were deified after death; that they were all voluntary, intelligent agents, and (so far as we can understand) being formed into a society, took each his part in the providential administration of the world; which is not merely general, but extends to individual persons, although not to every particular circumstance.

They appear, moreover, to have believed in two other governing powers, namely, nature and fate. By nature they understood that moving, regulating power, which causes every thing to act and grow in its own proper manner; but whether this proceeds from the soul of the universe, or whether it regulates deity as well as humanity and other lower natures, does not distinctly appear. By fate they understood the whole chain of causes (Plutarch, *de Plat. Philos.* i. 27, 28,) governing the general movements and action of the universe, and of all its parts: but they seem to have thought that these causes did not depend upon one primary cause, but upon an eternal sequence or chain of causes; and whether the deified universe was subject to fate or not, does not appear. They thought, however, that the gods knew the effects of existing causes with sufficient certainty to predict events.

It would appear, then, that their system, as compared with that of Socrates, was retrograde. They arrived at the notion of a power pervading the whole universe, but they identified it with the universe itself; and they did not arrive at the one supreme God in whom he believed: in short, they were Pantheists.

The arguments by which they supported their system, are a singular mixture of truth and error.

They proved the existence of the gods in

general, from the evidences of intelligence in the creative and governing powers of nature, and the regularity of the heavenly motions; from the fulfilment of oracular predictions, from the benefits they confer, and the terrible examples of power they have exhibited; and from their having manifested themselves on various occasions. They proved that they are intelligent, from the regularity of the works and motions of all nature, particularly those of the heavenly bodies; and from the circumstance that man, their creature, is possessed of reason.

They proved that the universe is an intelligent, living creature, by arguments of the following description, which are in fact those of Zeno.

1. That which exercises reason must be superior to that which does not; nothing is superior to the universe, therefore the universe is a reasoning being.

2. That which has thought cannot be a part of that which is destitute of thought; but parts of the universe think, therefore the universe thinks.

3. That which is void of life and reason cannot produce a rational, living being; but the universe does produce such beings, therefore the universe is such itself.

These arguments all assume that nothing is superior to the material universe, and that it comprises all being.

Their argument to prove the universe perfect was, that there is a continual ascending series of beings upon the universe, increasing gradually in perfection; and that as there is nothing above the universe to hinder it from being perfect, therefore it must be so: and, if perfect, it must be wise and virtuous. But they believed these latter qualities to exist in the gods generally, as being the creators of man, and consequently possessing in themselves whatever excellencies they have imparted to him.

These, then, were the opinions, and the grounds of opinion, of those amongst the heathen Greeks and Romans, who may be regarded as in some sense or other believing in the unity of God: but there were two philosophical sects who did not ascend above the prevailing polytheism; viz. the Academy, and the followers of Epicurus. Both these parties were content to take the established belief upon authority, viz. that of their forefathers; which they maintained was quite sufficient for the purpose; but after this agreement they diverged widely from each other.

The Epicurean opinion may also be learned, sufficiently for our present purpose, from the first book of the treatise of Cicero, already cited. He agreed with those we have previously mentioned, in teaching a definite system of opinion in regard to the gods. Whilst he denied that they had any concern

with this world, or with the material universe, either as creators or as governors, and maintained that its origin and its present state were equally fortuitous; he yet taught that the gods were beings having a positive existence, gifted with supreme felicity, and deriving an unalloyed pleasure from being the passive recipients of ideas or images from all material things, and from the contemplation of their own unchangeable condition. He attributed to them human form, indeed; but he conceived them to be perceivable only by the eye of the mind. He taught that they neither conferred benefits nor inflicted punishments upon mankind; but still he maintained that they were to be worshipped for their own inherent excellency.

The Academic rejected the Epicurean theory, because he rejected every philosophical system whatever. He thought human reason entirely unequal to establishing the being of gods, because he thought it a subject incapable of absolute proof. For this reason he deprecated all argument on the subject, and thought such reasonings as those of the philosophers calculated only to engender doubt. He, for his part, was contented with the authority of his forefathers, and desired nothing beyond. (*Cic. Nat. Deor.* lib. iii. 2—4.)

It will be seen that all these different sects agreed in the existence of some beings superior to men, and acquainted with the concerns of

men ; and that they agreed in representing them as perfect in benevolence and intelligence : but they differed in the grounds of their belief. The Epicureans and Academicians rested on authority ; a ground to which there is nothing to object, if it had not been maintained to the exclusion of all other ground. It would be idle to deny that the authority of our forefathers is a strong reason for belief. They must have had some cause for it ; and in this case it might well be said that, for aught we know, they *may* have had evidence of what they believed, which has been denied to their successors. We know that many generations of Jews must have believed in Moses on mere tradition ; and yet the facts they received were true. We know that in all ages there have been Christian communities who were perfectly illiterate, and received Christianity simply because they had learnt it : and yet we know that it had the most abundant evidence to those who first believed it, and handed it down to their descendants. There is therefore no reason, *à priori*, why the knowledge of superior supernatural beings should not have possessed abundant evidence to an early generation, who yet were unable to transmit that evidence to their posterity. The appeal to authority would therefore have been perfectly legitimate, if it had not been exclusive. It is true that many things false may be transmitted by tradition ;

but still the argument holds good, until the opinions or practices are shaken by some stronger argument.

The other philosophers, therefore, did not reject the argument from tradition, but they did not rest upon it; the more especially as they endeavoured to attain portions of truth, to which tradition did not testify, and understood portions of the popular creed in a sense very different from that in which it had come down to them.

We shall have future opportunities of examining some of their opinions and modes of reasoning more in detail; at present we will enter more briefly into their leading arguments, and state those portions of their conclusions, in which they appear, with our present knowledge, to have attained more or less of truth.

The Stoics argued, from the *general prevalence* of the belief in gods, the fact of their existence. This argument, until set aside by other evidence, is evidently worthy of attention, because there must be some reason for the general prevalence of opinions; and until the contrary is shown, we are right to presume that this reason is their actual truth.

Socrates set the first recorded example of arguing from the *evidence of design* in nature, that all material things are the works of some intelligent being; from the *connexion* between all material things, that there is one pervading

intelligence; and from the intelligence and virtue of the *human soul*, that its author is intelligent and virtuous. It is evident that this reasoning is good, although the Stoics and Plato conceived the universe to be an intelligent being, and that these arguments proved it.

The Roman Stoics observed, or at least supposed that they observed, that national reverence for the gods was rewarded, and national neglect of them punished; nor is there any sufficient reason for doubting the correctness of their observation. Some persons may be disposed to doubt, whether the true God would permit polytheism to have such evidence in its support; but it must be remembered that the thing supported was, not belief in polytheism as such, in opposition to a purer faith; but the belief in a supernatural providence exercised by what was regarded as god, in opposition to total unbelief in providential government: and it may well be believed, that our heavenly Father would support faith in opposition to unbelief, even though scarcely any rose to the knowledge of one Universal Governor.

It is remarkable that the truth of divination, or at least of omens, which are one class of divination, was relied upon by Socrates, as well as the reality of warnings to guard against dangers, which was a portion of the *prophecies* to which the Roman Stoics appealed. This is a subject with which it is difficult to deal; be-

cause there can be no doubt that much, both of prophecy and of divination, was pure imposture. Yet we must be careful how we reject them altogether; most impostures rest upon some portion of truth. Socrates, in particular, appealed with confidence, and with every appearance of sincerity, to the warning which he habitually received from a spirit (*δαίμων*) conversing with his mind; and such warnings would undoubtedly serve to keep up the idea of some invisible control and direction of human affairs. There seems, therefore, no reason why they may not have been really permitted and afforded, especially to individuals and communities, who were just and pious according to their lights, as Socrates was, and as the Roman people were on the whole for many generations.

The statements respecting the appearances of gods are so few in number, that they need not detain us. It is no doubt certain, that such appearances were believed by the whole people; even by those who lived at the time, and many of whom were present: but a superstitious age is always credulous.

We turn, therefore, from the arguments of the ancients, to the portions of truth they appear to have elicited.

There appears to have been a general belief in the Socratic school, that one of the invisible supernatural beings was superior to the rest;

and that he was the Fashioner of all material things, either directly or indirectly, and the Author of the whole being of man. But this truth was clouded, in the minds of most, by the notion that this Being was identical with heat, was clothed with a form, or intimately united with all matter; that he was not its author or creator, and that he was the author of other spirits only, inasmuch as they were emanations from him.

There appears to have been a general agreement in a Divine Providence, and in its being retributory; but they do not appear to have seen that the supreme and universal control of all things rested in one governing mind, or that that mind has chiefly in view the moral well-being of mankind.

They appear to have well understood that there must have been one Cause of the universal harmony of nature, and that that Cause must be intelligent; but they do not appear to have seen that it must be one Being.

Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, seem to have seen that there must be one First Cause of life and motion; that that Cause must be intelligent, reasoning, without beginning and without change or end: but they do not appear to have seen that this First Cause must be the Author of all being, the Creator and Fashioner of all things, the Author of the harmony of nature, and the universal Providence.

The Epicureans alone seem to have asserted the absolute incorporeality of Deity; but they still believed in polytheism, and thought that gods were clothed in human form.

The Socratic school asserted the general and particular providence of Deity in the affairs of men, and for their benefit: but the Stoics still affirmed, that this providence did not descend to minutiae. The Academics saw, that if there be a particular providence, it must descend to minutiae, but they, therefore, denied it altogether.

The Socratic school saw that Deity must be pure and holy in itself, and the author of purity and virtue in man; but they did not therefore see that man must seek from Deity his further improvements in moral excellence.

The Stoic school, the Peripatetic and older Academic schools, were right in believing that there must be some certain truth, but wrong in binding their followers to their own systems as whole, and allowing no further inquiry. The more recent Academy was right in refusing to be bound by mere human systems, and in searching for truth in every quarter, but wrong in denying certainty of moral truth, and in reasoning as though they disbelieved many truths which they actually received. But their plan of searching for truth every where was useful in preparing men's minds for the reception of Christianity.

CHAPTER III.

ON THE BEST MODE OF PROOF OF THE BEING OF GOD. •

IT will be seen from this historical sketch, that from the very first record of any discussion of the evidences of Natural Theology, there were different kinds of proof adduced.

The first was necessarily that from *authority* or *prescription*; and I have already given reasons for asserting that such an argument possesses an undoubted weight and cogency, until disturbed or set aside by some stronger argument. That it may be set aside is evident; because the forms of opinion handed down by authority vary in every country.

The next argument, therefore, in order, will be *prevalent opinion*. This is sometimes stated as *universal opinion*; and in that form it is met (as by the Academics of Cicero's time), by the objection, that there is no universal persuasion of the being of God; that in fact some nations have no notion at all upon the subject. It may be questioned whether we have sufficient data

for determining that any specified nation has no idea of supernatural spiritual beings : for it does not appear by any means certain that we have sufficient acquaintance with the languages and habits of thought and feeling of the Esquimaux (for instance) and the Caffres, to determine whether we have an accurate understanding of what they say. But, on the other hand, it is certain, that we have no sufficient evidencē of the *universal* prevalence of any such belief; and therefore if any thing really depended on that word, we must resign the argument as inconclusive. But when we find an opinion or feeling *generally* prevalent,—when we find it most fully entertained when man arrives at his greatest excellence, and more and more strengthened by time and inquiry; then this general and permanent prevalence of any such opinion or feeling, is a strong argument in favour of its truth. For (in addition to what has been urged in the previous chapter), it is fair to argue, that an opinion so received is either so well-founded upon reason (whether we know or can appreciate the reasons or not), that it unavoidably approves itself to the reason of most men; or that it has been handed down generally from some one original and central source of information, from which it has been dispersed throughout the world; or that there has been some one primary cause or ground of opinion and feeling, which has acted on the majority

of mankind all along, and determined the human mind to that opinion and feeling. In either of these cases, we must believe the opinion or feeling to be correct and well-founded; because if it is not, nothing else is: no ground of opinion can be higher than either of these three.

These two grounds of opinion, then, authority and general prevalence, will carry us some steps on our road in the evidences of Natural Theology. The first, in every case with which we are positively acquainted, will teach man that there is some spiritual influence, some being or beings superior to man, and exercising an influence over his conduct; and that this being or beings, can know his actions without being visible to him, and can do him good or evil at pleasure.

This, however, is but a step; and general opinion will carry him further. It will teach him that these beings are in some sense one; *i. e.* either that they have one uniform character and act uniformly in concert; or that there is one of them who is superior to all, and governs all the rest: and, judging by popular language, the latter would appear to be the case. Indeed, in some extremely ancient nations, such as the aborigines of North America, the supremacy of one Great Spirit is clearly held. But it must be confessed, that in most nations not directed by revelation, the

actual belief scarcely reaches so far as this; and that the supposed inferior spiritual beings occupy so large a portion of the mental field of vision, that the one supreme is well-nigh forgotten.

It is true that we ourselves are not in that predicament, with us both authority and general opinion go much further. They not only decide the existence of one supreme God,—not merely superior in authority to all others, but actually alone of a higher nature than all;—but they also decide that He alone is perfect, and the First Cause and origin of all other beings; and that He is the moral Governor of the universe, and a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. We have, therefore, but little inducement to doubt, much less to deny, that which all around us admit.

But we have already shown the necessity of proofs upon this subject; and, even supposing our proofs were, up to this point, ever so complete, they do not go to the full extent of showing that there is one God, the Creator and Governor of all things. It becomes requisite, therefore, that we should have actual proofs of his existence, sufficient to render definite and clear, that which is as yet, regarded in that point of view, indefinite and obscure. For this purpose men have had recourse to two additional kinds of proof; one more abstract, the other more practical.

The first (which is that of Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics) begins with noticing, that certain things or beings exist in a certain state; and that most of them have been brought into their present state from a state previously existing, and will again change to another state; that their composition is continually undergoing modification, and that some appear to be continually, as individual beings, brought into existence. They notice that some things or beings appear to be the causes of the being or state of others, and that we are naturally led, by an involuntary process of the mind, to look for the causes of whatever we see or know; that therefore causes are really so. They notice, that the idea that we are to go on to infinity discovering causes of subsequent things is unsatisfactory to the mind; that it is evident that there must always have been some existing being or beings, otherwise nothing could ever have existed; that every thing which begins to exist must have had a previously existing cause; that therefore there must have been some cause which never began to exist,—in short, a First Cause. They observe that some existing beings are incapable of voluntary motion, and that others are capable of it, and of impressing motion upon those which are by nature inert. That which is incapable of voluntary motion they call *matter*; and they think it reasonable to believe, that the cause of motion

to matter must, in all cases, have come from that portion of being which has the power of voluntary motion. But they observe that the beings capable of voluntary motion, at least those whom they can see, are compound; *i. e.* that they are themselves composed of matter and of something different in its properties from matter, and which appears to put matter in motion. This something is called *mind*. It would therefore appear, that mind is probably that which brought matter into its existing state, and is the cause of its continual changes.

But, in the case of the compound beings which actually come under their observation, men for instance, it is observed that they are sometimes moved against their will, and that they are even affected by matter, although the latter be incapable of voluntary motion. They therefore conceive that there must be some moving power which moves other substances, and is not moved itself; and that this moving power must be similar in its nature and mode of operation to mind, if not identical with it. But, to carry on the motions which are ever proceeding, whether on the earth's surface or amongst the heavenly bodies, there must be some permanent moving power. Now, man cannot be this moving power, although his governing influence is mind, because men are continually perishing. There must, then, be some being, whose very life is action; so that

it may itself always act and cause motion to all other things: and the only thing whose life is action, is that which desires and thinks, *i. e.* mind. It seems, therefore, that the First Cause of all life and motion, must be of the nature of mind; and, consequently, that there is a mind which never had a beginning, and will never perish: which is self-existent, and the cause of all other existence.

This is a sketch of the kind of argument contained in the *Timæus* of Plato, and in the *Metaphysics* of Aristotle. The Stoics adopted a similar argument. Taking for granted the doctrine of causes, they argued that, as man is possessed of life and reason, the cause of his existence must be possessed of life and reason, otherwise the effect would be superior to the cause; but they did not ascend to the idea that this cause must be pure mind.

The argument for a First Cause, above stated, is sometimes called an argument *à priori*; as though it proved the existence of God by pure argument, antecedently to facts. But Lord Brougham has well shown, (*Discourse on Natural Theology*, Part i. § 4,) more particularly in reference to the form of it adopted by Dr. Clarke in his treatise *On the Being and Attributes of God*, that it is really an argument *à posteriori*, only resting on a more limited number of facts than the more popular arguments.

There are other arguments of a similar description. For instance; every thing we see appears to be made for the use of some other thing higher than itself, and of these the highest species is man. It seems reasonable that there should be an ascending series, until we come to some being who exists for himself and not for any other: and if there be such a being, he must have all perfection in himself; because all things exist for him.

This argument resembles one advanced by the Stoics to prove the perfection of the universe, which they identified with God.

Moreover, there seems to be throughout nature an ascending series of being. Whether there be any unorganized being may be doubted; but, at all events, some beings are less perfectly organized than others. Minerals and earths are incapable of propagation and multiplication in the same manner as vegetables; but they are comprehended with men and other animals, as well as vegetables, in the scale of organized substances. Vegetables, again, are incapable of voluntary motion; but they rank with animals as possessed of life, and capable of nutrition and propagation. Brute animals, if possessed of reason at all, are not capable of the uses and improvements of it of which men are capable. In general, they are incapable of speech; and those which do attain it, are extremely limited in their power

of exercising it. They are all totally incapable of writing books, of executing paintings, of managing farms, of constructing machines: they know nothing of virtue and vice. But they are classed with men, as possessed of similar bodies, as being united in pairs, as having a life connected with the blood.

All these are ascending classes; and the numerical limits of the class narrow as they ascend. Why, then, should there not be a race of beings possessed of the same mind and soul as man, but without his body, and not liable to his imperfections? That there must be something superior to man, appears evident from the fact, that there are many existing things which the reason and other powers of man cannot accomplish. (*Cic. Nat. Deor.* ii. 6.) Supposing such, and capable of governing matter and other souls, many existing phenomena are accounted for, and the principle of ascending series is kept up. These beings may have a derived life, as man has; but, unless we are to go on to infinity, we require some being or beings self-existent, having no beginning nor any end. And as, in ascending to the higher classes, we narrow the numbers contained in each class, it is probable that we shall at last arrive at some one Being, who has an existence different in some respect from all other beings.

This is the Stoical argument, recounted by

Cicero (*Nat. Deor.* ii. 12); only that it is carried out to its legitimate results, instead of resting in the deification of the universe, as theirs did.

The existence of such a being seems necessary on other accounts; for how is harmony to be preserved amongst all beings? We know that even amongst men it requires government; and unity of action is seldom secured, unless there is one head. Even a herd of oxen, or a hive of bees, has a head. Every family has a head. The solar system has one governing body. By analogy, the universe ought to have a head; and that head, to exercise efficient control over all other things, must be self-existent, free from evil of every kind, having all power and all knowledge, without beginning and without end.

Some such principle seems to be involved in the question, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" as though there must be a judge of all the earth; and assuming that in order to be this judge, he must be himself perfect.

It will be seen that every one of these arguments rests upon some assumption, which will be more or less evident to different minds; and, standing by themselves, these arguments certainly could not be expected to convince an unbeliever. That they are not self-evident appears from these remarkable facts;—that

some of them required the most minute metaphysical examination of preliminary matter, before they convinced in any degree those who advanced them;—that several of the arguments we have adduced only led those who originated them a portion of the way to their just and legitimate conclusions, or led them to conclusions actually incorrect;—that these are the arguments of the most eminent and cultivated men in various succeeding ages, during which these subjects were sifted;—that not a single individual appears to have reached so near to any intelligible, consistent truth as Socrates;—and, that all these men, without exception, rendered their worship and homage, not to the great First Cause, but to the host of inferior supernatural beings, whom they supposed to be subordinate to the First Cause, and to be the actual governors of this lower world.

Without attempting, therefore, to decide what human reason *can* attain without revelation, we have, at least, ample evidence *how* short a distance it *did* reach, by its own unaided efforts, in ascertaining the first great fact in the history of the universe.

It will appear likewise, I think, that these arguments, even when correctly drawn out, are of too abstract a nature, and assume too much, to be very convincing to the greater portion of men; and hence men have sought for some

arguments which shall be more level to the apprehensions of ordinary men; and which, by assuming nothing which the understanding does not intuitively acknowledge, shall carry conviction even to the unwilling.

Such an argument is that for the evidences of adaptation and design, observable throughout nature. It is best known in the present day by the popular work of Paley; but the argument is not a new one. It is recorded as having been employed by Socrates: it is drawn out at considerable length by Cicero, as an argument of the Stoics: and it is alluded to by St. Paul, as at once the readiest and the most convincing,—in that passage (Heb. xi.) where he speaks of our learning the eternal power and Godhead of the Creator, from the visible works of his hands.

CHAPTER IV.

ON THE BEST MODE OF USING THE ARGUMENT FROM DESIGN.

THE argument from design is not recorded to have been suggested, until brought forward by Socrates; and yet it seems altogether incredible, that it should not have occurred to any person previously to him. As, however, his

use of it is the earliest recorded, it will be interesting to see in what form it then appeared; especially as thousands of persons, I doubt not, are not aware of its having been employed, until drawn out in the admirable work of Paley.

According to Xenophon, the discussion arose from his learning that one of his auditors, Aristodemus by name, neither sacrificed to the gods, nor used divination; but ridiculed those who did so.

“ Tell me (said he), Aristodemus, are there any persons whom you admire for their ability? He said, Certainly, there are. And he said, Tell us their names? Well: in Epic poetry, I most admire Homer; in sacred lyrics, Melanippides; in tragedy, Sophocles; in sculpture, Polyclitus; and in painting, Zeuxis. *S.* Do those who make figures without sense or motion, or those who make living creatures endowed with sense and motion, appear to you most worthy of admiration? *A.* By Jupiter, those who make living creatures, by far; for such things are not made by chance, but by *design*. *S.* And if the object and intention of some things cannot be guessed at, and other things are evidently made for some useful purpose, which do you judge works of chance, and which works of design? *A.* It seems reasonable to consider those which have some useful end to be works of design. *S.* Then does He who

originally made men, seem to you to have given them all their senses for any useful purpose, or not? For instance, their eyes, by which they see visible objects; and their ears, by which they hear things audible? Indeed, what would have been the advantage of smell, if noses had not been given them? And what perception would they have had of sweets and bitters, and of all the pleasures of the palate, if they had not been gifted with tongues which could distinguish them? In addition to this, does it not appear to you a work of forethought, that, the eye being weak, it has been fenced in the eyelids, which open when it has to be used, and close in sleep? and, in order that even the wind might not injure it, the eyelashes act the part of a sieve? and that the eyebrows partition off the part above the eyes, so that the perspiration from the head may not injure them? and that the hearing admits all sounds, and is never filled too full? and that the front teeth of all animals are adapted for cutting the food, and the jaw teeth for receiving it from them, and grinding it down? and that the mouth, by which animals admit what they relish, is placed near the eyes and nose? and that the excrements being unpleasant, the passages which carry them off are turned in such a direction as to convey them as far as possible from the organs of sense? Are you in doubt, whether these things, effected with so

much forethought, are effects of chance or of design? *A.* No; by Jupiter. On the contrary, looking at the subject in this point of view, these things appear like the contrivance of some wise and beneficent Artificer."

This, then, is the earliest recorded statement of the argument: and it is evident that Socrates has here mingled together the proof of two points; that the human body is the work of an *intelligent* agent, and that it is the work of a *beneficent* agent. These points he has not distinguished one from the other; or rather, perhaps, he has thrown in the second without giving any notice of his intention so to do. And the reason is evident. His object is a particular one, viz. to convince an individual; and he knew intuitively how to produce his practical effect upon the mind of the person he was addressing, without stopping to go through all the steps of an argument. *Our* object, on the other hand, is to convince *all* minds; and, therefore, we divide the several portions of the argument, and establish them one after the other, that no one may fail of being convinced.

The existence of design being proved in any one existing being, may be reasonably inferred respecting all others of a similar character; and, at all events, the person who sees that he himself has been the work of a wise and beneficent Artificer, may reasonably be expected to

desire to know more of him. But it has been long ago remarked (Cic. *Nat. Deor.* ii. 38), that men appear insensible to the facts; and hence writers have employed themselves in going into details, in order to show that the principle of design pervades all nature. This Cicero has done (ii. 39—53); and it has been accomplished in a much more systematic and logical manner by modern writers, and by none better than by Paley. It must, however, be observed, in regard to this popular writer, that, whilst he has done such ample justice to this branch of the subject of Natural Theology, he has left others equally important entirely untouched.

Socrates has been followed by most other writers, in drawing the first illustration from our own bodily system: but it has been strongly urged by Lord Brougham, in his *Discourse on Natural Theology* (Part i. § 1), that we ought to employ the phenomena of the mind equally with those of the body; and that they afford as decisive proofs of design as do the phenomena of matter. And he has censured Paley and other writers for acting as though they had been materialists, in deriving their argument solely from material objects. Whether or not the phenomena of the mind afford as decisive proofs of design as those of matter, will be seen presently; but the reason why popular writers have not drawn their proofs from the human

mind may be found, without resorting to the supposition that those writers were insensible of their force. The object of such writers was not speculative, but practical; viz. to check a tendency to unbelief, or to foster faith, in the minds of the mass of the people. No one can be unaware that it is the small minority of men, who are capable of abstract reasoning: and Lord Brougham himself sees that, if we are to argue from the nature of the mind, we must "arrest and examine our thoughts," and have the power of "turning those thoughts into courses not natural to them, and of watching the results." Persons must be able to distinguish and appreciate the faculties and operations of reasoning, of attention, of curiosity, of memory, of habit, and of the various passions and affections, before they can perceive that they are means to certain ends, and thence be convinced that they afford evidence of design and construction, and therefore of an intelligent maker. This circumstance, therefore, that such observations and arguments (however correct and however conclusive to the philosophical inquirer), would not be intelligible to the ordinary reader, is the one sufficient reason why they would not be adduced in works intended to convince the generality of mankind. Even the most philosophical of the ancients, I mean Aristotle, the clearest and most logical reasoner Greece ever saw, and to whom Rome affords no

approach, saw that arguments, like all other means of accomplishing ends, are only relatively effectual; and that what ought abstractedly to carry most weight, may relatively, from the peculiarity of our circumstances or tone of mind, have the least influence upon us.

But the argument from the phenomena of the mind is not only less available for ordinary purposes than that from the phenomena of external nature; it is also less convincing. Lord Brougham assumes, that "the structure of the mind affords evidences of the most skilful contrivance;" or at most, his argument is to this effect: "Certain effects are produced by an agency calculated to produce them. Aware that, if we desired to produce them, and had the power to employ this agency, we should resort to it for accomplishing our purpose, we infer, both that some being exists capable of creating this agency, and that he employs it for this end." But in this argument the very point necessary to be proved is assumed; viz. that the mind is "calculated" to produce these effects; that there is evidence of construction and adaptation in it. Now with regard to material substances, we argue from our own experience of our own designs and constructions, or those of others which we know to be such, that the works of nature are constructions designed for certain ends. But with the mind it is very different. We have no expe-

rience whatever of the construction of any such instrument, and therefore cannot judge whether it affords any proofs of design or not. We therefore cannot employ it, as the ground of an independent argument, to prove the existence of an intelligent designer.

Our popular writers, therefore, have acted wisely in reasoning only from things which come under the observation of the senses. But that is no reason why such works, from their very object imperfect, should continue to furnish the only instruction to our youth. Paley, the most popular of them, confines himself almost entirely to the proof of the being of a God, and of some of his attributes, together with the removal of some prominent difficulties; so that, as a system of Natural Theology, his work is manifestly imperfect. On the other hand, it is redundantly copious in the proofs and illustrations of the principal point; and more recent English writers (I mean particularly the authors of the Bridgewater Treatises), have added to this redundancy. As aids to devotion, by leading the mind into the habit of contemplating in detail many diversified instances of the wisdom, skill, and goodness of the Creator, their works, as well as his, are very valuable; and Dr. Whewell has given the whole argument for the being and unity of God, a higher character than most previous writers, and added that for his moral govern-

ment; but still even he leaves a considerable portion of the ground entirely untouched.

To fill up, therefore, a system of Natural Theology, it will be requisite not only (with Whewell) to consider God as a moral Governor, but also to add a class of arguments he has not adduced; and besides this, to consider the evidence for a future state, and rewards and punishments in that state, as well as for the immortality of the soul. These subjects engaged the attention of the heathen philosophers, and have been well treated by Bishop Butler, especially in his *Analogy*; and much of my matter will therefore be derived from both these sources. I make no pretension to originality, but only desire to render the treatment of the subject complete for its own proper ends, and then to pave the way for the better consideration of the evidences of revealed religion, and of the philosophy of morals, by whomsoever treated of.

CHAPTER V.

STATEMENT OF THE ARGUMENT FROM DESIGN, WITH THE ANTAGONIST THEORIES AND THEIR REFUTATIONS.

To prove the existence of God, Paley looks abroad upon external nature, and perceives in

it every where the adaptation of means to the accomplishment of ends, and the adaptation of one thing in nature to another. This adaptation, he argues, by itself proves design and contrivance. Contrivance shows that there was one to contrive, that is an intelligent Creator. This is the first principal step in the proof; and now let us see how this author manages his argument.

“In crossing a heath,” he says, “suppose I pitched my foot against a stone, and were asked how the stone came to be there: I might possibly answer,” (that is, a person might do so who was not a believer in the creation of the world,) “that for any thing I know to the contrary it had lain there for ever; nor would it perhaps be very easy to show the absurdity of this answer.

“But suppose I had found a *watch* upon the ground, and it should be inquired how the watch happened to be in that place, I should hardly think of the answer I had before given; that for any thing I know, the watch might always have been there. Yet why should not this answer serve for the watch as well as the stone? Why is it not as admissible in the second case as in the first? For this reason, and for no other; viz. that when we come to inspect the watch, we perceive (what we could not discover in the stone) that its several parts are framed and put together for a purpose: *e. g.*

that they are so formed and adjusted as to produce motion; and that motion so regulated as to point out the hour of the day: that, if the different parts had been differently shaped from what they are, of a different size from what they are, or placed after any other manner, or in any other order than that in which they are placed; either no motion at all would have been carried on in the machine, or none which would have answered the use that is now served by it.

“To reckon up a few of the plainest of these parts, and of their offices, all tending to one result: we see a cylindrical box, containing a coiled elastic spring, which by its endeavour to relax itself, turns round the box. We next observe a flexible chain (artificially wrought for the sake of flexure), communicating the action of the spring from the box to the fusee. We then find a series of wheels, the teeth of which catch in and apply to each other, conducting the motion from the fusee to the balance, and from the balance to the pointer; and at the same time, by the size and shape of those wheels, so regulating that motion, as to terminate in causing an index, by an equable and measured progression, to pass over a given space in a given time. This mechanism being observed the inference we think is inevitable, that the watch must have had a maker; that there must have existed at some time, and at

some place or other, an artificer or artificers, who formed it for the purpose we find it actually to answer, who comprehended its construction and designed its use."

* * * * *

"Suppose in the next place, that the person who found the watch should after some time discover that, in addition to all the properties which he had hitherto observed in it, it possessed the unexpected property of producing in the course of its movement another watch like itself; that it contained within it a mechanism, a mould, for instance, or a complex adjustment of lathes, files, and other tools, evidently and separately calculated for this purpose; let us inquire what effect ought such a discovery to have upon his former conclusion?

"The first effect would be to increase his admiration of the contrivance, and his conviction of the consummate skill of the contriver. . . . If that construction without this property, or before this property has been noticed, proved intuition and art to have been employed about it; still more strong would the proof appear, when he came to the knowledge of this further property, the crown and perfection of all the rest.

"Though it might be no longer certain that the individual watch which our observer had found was made immediately by the hand of an

artificer, yet this alteration does not at all affect the inference that an artificer had been originally employed and concerned in the production. There cannot be a design without a designer; contrivance without a contriver; order without choice; arrangement without any thing capable of arranging; subserviency and relation to a purpose; means suitable to an end, and executing their office in accomplishing that end, without the end ever having been contemplated, or the means accommodated to it. We cannot in such a case go back to infinity, by supposing the watch before us to have been produced by another watch, and that from a former, and so on indefinitely. A chain composed of an infinite number of links can no more support itself, than a chain composed of a limited number of links. Contrivance must have had a contriver; design a designer."

This is Paley's famous illustration of the first step in Natural Theology: now let us come to his application of it.

Let us take the human eye, and suppose for a while that we know nothing respecting it, but its existence and properties; and let us compare it with a similar instrument, the telescope, of which we know the origin and construction. We are aware that the telescope is an instrument, consisting mainly of glasses ground into a particular shape, and arranged in a particular order and at particular distances,

with the view of enabling us to see distant objects. Now when the eye is examined, it is found to be an instrument of precisely the same character. It does not indeed consist of glasses, but of a collection of membranes, filled with a clear fluid, and resembling in shape the glasses of the telescope. These lenses, as they are called both in the eye and in the telescope, are arranged in exactly the same order in every eye of the same species. But as the telescope is for seeing objects clearly at great distances, whilst the eye is not intended for clear vision except at moderate distances, the lenses of the eye are packed in a smaller compass than those of the telescope. Moreover, whilst the telescope requires a special adjustment for various degrees of distance, the eye is so constructed, that by means of its muscular organization it adjusts itself at the moment when the adjustment is required.

“To some it may appear a difference sufficient to destroy all similitude between the eye and the telescope, that the one is a perceiving organ, and the other an unperceiving instrument. The fact is, that the eye is just as much an instrument as the telescope.” If you stop up all the windows in a room, leaving in one a hole just large enough to admit a telescope, and then passing the latter through the hole, hold a piece of darkened paper near the small end of it, you may see on the paper a miniature

picture of the objects out of doors which come within the range of the telescope. Just in the same manner, if you take the eye of a slaughtered bullock, and insert it in the place of the telescope, you will find a miniature picture of external objects on a membrane at the back of the eye, called the retina. The eye does not perceive objects any more than the telescope: it is merely the instrument by which the mind is enabled to perceive them.

To show more perfectly the real character of the eye, and its perfection as an instrument; the more ordinary telescopes have this imperfection, that light, in passing through their lenses, is partially separated into different colours, thereby tinging the object, and especially the edge of it, with colours foreign to it. To correct this inconvenience had long been desired; and at length it occurred to a sagacious optician to inquire how the difficulty was surmounted in the eye, how it was that the eye did not tinge objects with false colours. His observation taught him, that in the eye the evil was avoided by a combination of lenses having different effects upon light as it passed through them; so that the imperfection caused by one might be corrected by another. Our artist adopted the idea, and corrected the defect in telescopes by making his glasses of different materials, so that one might correct another. Is it possible that this method, which cost the

optician so much thought and management, should exist in the eye without either?

The eye exhibits several additional examples of means adopted in its construction to attain certain ends or obviate certain inconveniences. The whole human body is full of such contrivances and adaptations. Nay, all animated bodies, all vegetables, the whole planetary system are full of them; as may be seen more at length in the elements of Paley, and still more fully in the Bridgewater Treatises. And the contrivances of nature surpass those of art in the complexity, the subtilty, and the curious structure of the mechanism; and still more in their number and variety. And again we say, that contrivance must have had a contriver; design must have had a designer.

But those who are unwilling to admit the force of this argument evade it in various ways.

First they say, We have no evidence that things were made at all; since no human being ever saw them in the course of construction, and we are not aware of any means by which they could be made. These are precisely the objections attributed by Xenophon to Aristodemus, and by Cicero to the Epicureans. (*Xen. Mem.* I. iv. 9. *Cic. Nat. Deor.* ii. 8.) The answer given by Socrates to the first is, that it might be as well objected that all our own acts are purely accidental, because we do not see

the soul which designs or intends them. It is true that we have intuitive evidence of the connexion between our own intuition and the acts we do ; and that is not the case with regard to the acts of others. But our intuitive knowledge with regard to ourselves enables us to judge with regard to the acts of others, whether they are designed or accidental; and that equally whether we see the agents or not: and therefore (to go back to the case of the watch) what should we think of the folly of the person who should say that he did not believe that it was the work of any person, because he had never seen such a thing constructed. And so it is not a rational reply to the argument we have stated, to say that we never saw an eye made; or even that we cannot conceive any means whereby it could be made. In regard to works of human art, it only exalts our opinion of the skill of the artist or mechanic, if we perceive that he has accomplished ends, respecting which we can form no idea whatever how they could be accomplished; and it will be so with any person who has not been pre-occupied by evil prejudice in regard to the works of nature.

Again, unbelievers sometimes complain of the imperfection, inaccuracy, liability to disorder, or occasional irregularities of animal bodies and other works of nature; and would argue that their occurrence is repugnant to the idea of an intelligent Creator. This is a very

early objection. But (to go back to the watch), suppose it sometimes went wrong, or even never went exactly right, yet the purpose of the machinery, the object intended to be attained, are so evident, that we could never doubt that it had an intelligent maker, whether we could account for its defects or not. And so, in regard to the works of nature, whether they are perfect or imperfect, still such evident marks of design pervade the whole, that we can have no doubt that each of them derives its existence from some being of skill beyond any thing we can conceive.

Again, men have raised cavils from the circumstance that there are things, the use or benefit of which we cannot specify, or concerning which we cannot say whether they have any use or not, and which they therefore choose to characterize as useless. But how void of reason such objections are we may distinctly see, by considering how few of us have any distinct idea of the use of the various parts of a watch, or of any other piece of machinery.

Another atheistic way of replying to the proofs of design drawn from nature, is to say, that all we see must necessarily have had some form; and that in all the possible combinations of material forms there is no assignable reason why it might not be the present form; that, in short, the present form is purely accidental. But would it be a rational way of accounting

for the existence of a watch, to say that it was only one of the possible combinations of material forms? That whatever was found in the place of the watch must have had some internal configuration or another, and that it happened to be this complex machinery? We see the absurdity of the answer in this case; and the absurdity is still greater in the case of the eye, the ear, or any other complete natural object we may examine.

So when infidels say that "every organized body we see is only one out of all the possible varieties and combinations of being, which the lapse of infinite ages has brought into existence; that the present world is the relic of that variety, millions of other bodily forms having perished from some defect which rendered them incapable of permanence:" our reply is, that there is not the slightest evidence that things have in this way been left to chance; or, that any such experiment has been going on; that all the evidence is diametrically the other way. We might just as well say that a machine was the accidental product of a mass of metals, which being melted had run into all possible figures, and combined themselves into an indefinite variety of forms and proportions, of which this is one of the most perfect.

These theories are only varieties of the original theory of Democritus, adopted by Epicurus and expounded by Lucretius; viz. that matter

existed originally in the form of indivisible particles, moving in space either downwards or in a curvilinear direction; and that all forms have arisen from the accidental agglomeration of these particles. It would seem to common sense as though such a theory had only to be stated to refute itself. Certainly it is entirely contrary to all our experience that regular forms and regular motion should be brought about by accidental motion, let its duration be what it may. But the theory of Epicurus has another radical defect, viz. that it does not inform us how these particles came to have a *tendency* to perpendicular and curvilinear motion. It is not voluntary; how then did it originate? Why were there these two precise modes of motion and no other? It requires as much a determining will, anterior to these motions, to fix them in direction and number, as it does to devise and settle all the various forms which we believe to have been the work of a creator.

An attempt has been made to account for the peculiar adaptations of one thing in nature to another, or to a certain end, by the supposition of *conatus* or *appetencies*: i. e. by imagining that an animal of some particular kind, feeling a desire for some particular object, or of the attainment of a particular end, the feeling itself constantly acting on some portion of his frame, produced the organ or construction by which the deficiency was to be supplied or

the end attained. The very statement of such an hypothesis would appear almost sufficient to explode it; but, supposing it gravely alleged, the simple answer is,—that if it may possibly account for here and there an insulated case, there are thousands of others to which it would be the extreme of absurdity to apply it; *e. g.* the hunch of the camel, the trunk of the elephant, the web feet of water-fowl, the bag of the kangaroo. No appetency or conatus will account for these.

A similar attempt has been made to account for the appearances of order and regularity in natural objects, by reference to some supposed principle of order resident in nature, or to some laws of nature, which have been spoken of as though they possessed an active power of regulation and direction. This is the theory attributed by Cicero to the Academics. And in their own day, they certainly had an advantage in advancing it; inasmuch, as their opponents the Stoics admitted nature, as we have already shown, as a substantive power, giving its manner of life and action to every thing. And this was, indeed, the opinion of the Platonic school likewise; with the exception that the latter was more distinct in its statements; and if it had not made nature the soul of the universe, might have been regarded as almost teaching the one true God. That, however, was not the case with the Academics,

whose notions in regard to nature were extremely vague and indistinct, and apparently taken up only on the view of setting aside the doctrine, that the universe itself is the universal producer and creator.

But, whatever may have been the grounds for the adoption of this theory by the Academics, the absurdity of endeavouring to get rid of the idea of an intelligent creator, by reference to the laws of nature, appears extremely great. For, if nature were not an intelligent power, we have still unaccounted for all those phenomena, which, if we are not to reject all our experience, prove that design and contrivance have been applied to certain objects which have come under our notice. And if nature be an intelligent power, we have conceded all that we at present contend for. Moreover, the very notion of law, implies some person having authority over the things made subject to the law, and power to enforce obedience to it; and the ability to conceive such a law, and especially laws of such extensive application as those of nature, not only necessarily presupposes intelligence in that person, but also intelligence in a degree vastly surpassing all our conceptions. So that to admit that there are laws of nature,—and especially laws for classes of objects,—as laws of *animated* nature, and laws of *vegetable* nature, is, in fact, to grant the whole matter in dispute; for if

there is a being, who has impressed laws upon large classes of natural objects, and if those laws harmonize with each other; it is but a step to believe, that the being who gave laws to this vast machinery, must be the very being who devised and constructed the machinery itself.

What can be meant by a principle of order as an efficient cause of order, is very difficult to say. The Stoics thought that the existence of order was a mark of the co-existence of intelligence (Cic. *Nat. Deor.* ii. 16); insomuch that they concluded intelligence to exist in the heavenly bodies, on account of the order and regularity of their motions. As Paley has well observed, "Order itself is only the adaptation of means to an end;" it is but the arrangement and proportioning of different things with a view to the better accomplishment of some end. The only intelligible meaning of a *principle* of order is, a *tendency* to order. Now that tendency is either voluntary, or involuntary; if voluntary, it of course implies, that it exists in some intelligent being capable of controlling the things or beings on which it operates; and, since it operates throughout all nature, that being can scarcely be any other than the Author of nature. If, on the other hand, the tendency is involuntary,—being a tendency towards a definite and uniform end,—it must evidently be (like all other involuntary

tendencies) the work of some intelligent agent, having in view the end, viz. order, which the tendency is calculated to effect. So that, in short, the various evasions to which men have recourse, for the purpose of escaping the conviction that there exists an intelligent Creator, do but the more completely enforce the conviction that such a being does exist.

“Furthermore,” to use the words of Paley, “a principle of order, acting blindly and without choice, is negatived by the observation, that order is not universal, which it would be if it issued from a constant and necessary principle; nor indiscriminate, which it would be if it issued from an unintelligent principle. Where order is wanted, there we find it; where order is not wanted, *i. e.* where, if it prevailed, it would be useless, we do not find it In the forms of rocks and mountains, in the lines which bound the coasts of continents and islands, in the shape of bays and promontories, no order whatever is perceived, because it would have been superfluous.”

The modern atheist has, however, still a refuge, which is by no means a new one. He points to the fact, that generation is constantly going on in animal and vegetable nature, without any apparent purpose or design on the part of any being whatever. Innate tendencies in individual beings do, in point of fact, produce new beings, by certain existing laws of their

being. Pre-existing causes, without any evidence of volition, produce actual effects; and these causes are but the effects of previous causes. They inquire—What is to limit this series of causes? Why should it not have existed from eternity? Granted, that the effects are produced by bringing many things into combination; granted, that one effect is to adapt things to each other, and that these adaptations are indefinite in extent; we see such adaptations daily produced by previous causes without intelligence. Who shall put a limit to the necessary inherent power of nature? Why may not all have arisen from an infinite variety of causes, existing in various combinations from all eternity, and ever producing combinations both old and new?

To render this theory probable, however, two things are necessary:—1. That so far as we can trace back the history of the globe, there should appear no sign of a commencement of the present order of things, or of the establishment of the present laws of nature on our globe; and, 2. That during the same period the advocates of it should be able to show, with some degree of probability, that the causes which combine to produce the adaptations which the experience or observation of most men have always traced to design, were brought into combination either by something in themselves, or by some previous cause, producing

the combination or adaptation. If that cannot be done, the theory rests on no foundation whatever; and if the contrary can be shown to be the case, so far as human observation can reach, the theory becomes not only baseless, but deserving the reprobation of every intelligent inquirer after truth. Now not only can it not be shown that there is any such foundation for this theory, which is, in fact, the old Stoic theory of an "innate eternal necessity;" but in order completely to refute it, an able writer of the present day (the Rev. G. Crabbe, in his "Outline of a System of Natural Theology") establishes two facts, 1. that the present order of nature on our globe had a beginning, from a state which, in itself, could not have produced that order; 2. that the adaptations in nature arise (so far as natural causes are concerned) from such as (so far as we can trace them) are completely independent of each other. If these two facts be established, this theory is entirely subverted: for, if the present order of things had a beginning, in a state of things not naturally competent to produce it, it could not have arisen from pre-existing natural causes; and if the causes of existing phenomena were naturally independent, they must have been brought to co-operate by some external intelligent agent. —I subjoin an abridgment of his argument on both heads.

I. That the order of nature on this planet had a beginning, in a state of things not competent to produce it, is presumed from the fact that its present form, that of an oblate spheroid, is just such as would be produced by its having, at one time, revolved on its axis in a fluid or semi-fluid state; and could not have been produced by known physical causes in any other way. If, then, this fluid state was once the condition of the globe, the race of terrestrial animals and vegetables must have commenced since that period, because they could not have existed when the globe was in the state in question; and cannot be supposed to have sprung from that state of the globe by the mere force of natural agency, because it has never been shown that there is any thing in a fluid or semi-fluid mass of matter, competent by itself to produce the phenomena we at present see on the face of the globe.

Again, Professor Buckland, in his *Bridge-water Treatise*, has established the same conclusion by the following series of facts:—

“ 1. Many different kinds of substances, some in the form of unstratified rocks, some in the form of strata, the deposits of water, envelope this globe, or form its crusts; and being inclined in various angles to the horizon, successively appear on the surface of the earth.

“ 2. In their natural positions or order, the

unstratified rocks lie the lowest, or form the internal crusts of the earth; the watery deposits, in their natural order, lie upon the former. Of these strata there are twenty-eight well-defined divisions, classed as four series; those which lie immediately upon the crystalline, or unstratified rocks, are called the primary series; the next the transition; the next the secondary; and the upper the tertiary.

“ 3. In the unstratified rocks there are no animal or vegetable remains of any description; nor are any found in the primary series, or first deposits of water. In the transition series, we first discern fossils of some of the lower grades of animals only; some peculiar and extinct species of plants and fishes, a few hundred species of shells, and many zoophytes. In the secondary series, other kinds of vegetables and other animals are found, with numerous extinct reptiles; in the middle of this series begin also to appear the most ancient remains of mammalia; viz. two marsupian animals. The tertiary series is divided into four classes, or periods, of which the lowest contain only three and a half, the next eighteen, the next fifty-two, and the highest, ninety-five per cent. of the existing species.

“ Each decisive stratum has some fossils peculiar to itself, and there are none of the existing species of organic creatures (*i.e.* animals or vegetables) in any but the tertiary series.

“ 4. If these twenty-eight divisions be numbered in the ascending order, a higher numbered stratum is never found under a lower numbered stratum; nor are the unstratified, or crystalline rocks, ever found above these deposits of water, except when certain portions of the former have been introduced between the clefts or fissures of the latter.

* * * * *

“ I have stated that underneath all these fossiliferous strata lie the primary strata, not having the traces of a single organic being. Now these strata, extending to the depth of many hundred feet, are also the deposits of water. But if any animals or vegetables were created when these primary strata were deposited, it is perfectly unaccountable that, extending more or less continuously round the globe, they should not contain a single specimen of organic remains. If no such creatures were then in existence, our position is verified; there was a beginning of organic existence.

“ There appears to the writer, moreover, an important inference from the beginning in the order of the matter of this globe. If there have been a beginning of the present state and system, the laws or powers of terrestrial nature must also have had a beginning; for, if the same laws and power which now actuate it had always existed, it is impossible they should not have carried on the same routine from all eter-

nity, as they exhibit now; for as by the atheistic hypothesis matter is eternal, and matter and its laws constitute the whole of nature, if the laws of matter had been also eternal, no possible reason can be assigned, either for their former quiescence, or for a different action of those powers at the present period.

“ I do not mean that nature might not have exhibited infinite variety ; but it is the beginning and variations of those diversities at different epochs, which is so entirely inconsistent with any atheistic hypothesis. Either of these two facts, a beginning of the present order of nature, or an alteration from some former state, is a sufficient proof that the present laws of nature were imparted by a supernatural cause.

“ It is evident, likewise, that the differences have been gradational or progressive, from a state when there were no organized beings to the present highly-organized and orderly system. The comparatively simple state in which we first trace organization, till the climax of organic formation, man,—and the corresponding progress of the crust of the earth, from a mere confused and molten mass to the present state, so highly adapted to organic life ; these are alone sufficient proofs of this gradation ; and that gradation of a beginning of the present course of nature : and both are proofs of a beginning of nature’s laws, and consequently of the existence of a supernatural power who imparted them.

“To this objection to any atheistic hypothesis, it may, perhaps, be replied, that nature’s powers are of such a constitution as to evolve one state of matter out of another. This we deny. There are no natural causes but must spring from matter and matter’s powers or laws; and we know no law or power in matter which has any other action than *one that is uniform under the same circumstances*. If, indeed, we could detect in any law of nature a progressing and not a uniform power;—that is, if any known law, acting by itself upon matter, ever exhibited gradation of effect *under the same circumstances*, instead of uniformity, then there might be some plea to ascribe progressive action to the combination of laws: but we witness nothing but uniformity in all her laws. Gravity always acts at the same rate under the same conditions; crystallization always exhibits the same figures on the same substance; chemical affinity always associates the same substances; parents always produce the same species. None of these laws are subject to alteration; nor could they alter, under any circumstances, that they themselves created: and it is perfectly unphilosophical to ascribe to the united powers a different action from that which they manifest singly, and for which there is not a shadow of evidence.”

The position, therefore, is fully established, that the present order of things on our globe

had a beginning from a state which, in itself, could not have produced that order.

II. But Mr. Crabbe goes further than this. He produces evidence, both negative and positive, to sustain the following position; that there are various phenomena in nature, associated in one place, which, if produced by physical causes, were produced by causes which are naturally completely independent of each other; and which, therefore, could not have been brought to act together without the guidance of an external and intelligent power.

1. His negative evidence lies in the refutation of several theories, which are supposed to indicate how mere physical causes may, from the simplest forms of matter, have evolved the present highly-organized system.

a. The theory of La Place is built upon certain astronomical observations, which are due to the improved state of modern instruments. It has been discovered, or supposed to be discovered, that phosphorescent or self-luminous matter exists, disseminated through extensive regions of space; in the first place, dispersed in patches in different parts of the sky. In some of these patches the matter is feebly condensed round one or more faint nuclei; in others, these nuclei were brighter in proportion. When, by condensation, the atmosphere of each nucleus becomes separated from the others, the result is multiple nebulous

stars, formed by brilliant nuclei very near each other, and each surrounded by an atmosphere. Sometimes the nebulous matter condensing in a uniform state, has produced nebulous systems, which are called planetary. Finally, a still greater condensation forms all these nebulous systems into stars.

Now La Place builds upon these phenomena the hypothesis, that the solar system was formed from one of these nebulous stars, revolving on its axis, gradually cooling, and in that process detaching portions of its external zone of vapour, which formed the planets, with their satellites and rings. The theory is a very ingenious one, and accounts for most of the phenomena of the solar system; but it has this radical defect, that the state of things from which the theory starts is not accounted for. Dr. Whewell (*Bridgewater Treatise*, ch. vii.) very justly says: "Let us suppose nebulosity diffused throughout all space, so that its course of running into patches is not yet begun; how are we to suppose it distributed? Is it equally diffused in every part? Clearly not: for if it were, what should cause it to form into masses so various in size, form, and arrangement? Why should not the nebulous matter be equally diffused throughout space, and continue forever in a state of equable diffusion; as it must do from the absence of all cause, to determine the time and manner of its separation?"

Again; "Why should this nebulous matter grow cooler; as, by the hypothesis of La Place, it does to produce solidity?" Again; "How came the parent vapour to be neither too fluid nor too tenacious; to contract neither too quickly nor too slowly, for the successive formation of the several planetary bodies?"

I will add, that La Place supposes (like Epicurus) an existing tendency to gravitation, an existing centrifugal force, existing laws of motion; and, we may ask, What gave to this phosphorescent matter these tendencies, and placed them under these laws?

Now these are primary questions; but the secondary ones are innumerable: and these primary questions are manifestly incapable of solution upon any hypothesis which leaves out an intelligent First Cause.

b. It is really instructive to observe how impossible it is to arrive at any consistent or intelligible theory of creation which has this omission. I therefore proceed to another form of the atomic theory, stated in the *Bridgewater Treatise* of Dr. Prout. It proposes to account for the different states of the same substance,—the gaseous, the fluid, and the solid, by supposing them to be produced by the electric and magnetic poles of the axes of supposed ultimate or primary particles of these substances: that is, by the number of ways in which, under the influence of magnetism and electricity, the

various axes of ultimate particles would combine, cohere, or separate from each other. The same principle, under essential differences of structure in the original particle, is said to be capable of accounting for the chemical affinities, and even for the different elementary substances.

But this hypothesis begins by supposing the existence of particles of some definite size, however small;—of the electric and magnetic forces or fluids, with certain definite properties, and of specific differences in the structure of the original particles. And how are we to account for this *determinate* state of things, out of all possible states, if we acknowledge nothing higher or earlier than matter?

c. We shall come to the same result, if we take up the theory that organized beings are formed spontaneously from unorganized matter. Dean Buckland (*Bridgewater Treatise*, ch. xvii. § 2) has given abundant evidence to show, that organized beings exist in an undeveloped state throughout the atmosphere, and throughout all fluids; and that they require various concurrences of circumstances to develope them, as is notoriously the case with regard to seeds, and the eggs of birds and insects: and it therefore appears, that all existing phenomena may be explained without having recourse at all to the theory of spontaneous generation.

Some, however, who advocate this theory,

suppose that it is capable of being applied to explain the existence of all the larger animals, and even of man himself: since, as they argue, if any organized being may be generated spontaneously, there seems no sufficient reason why all animals may not be generated in the same manner. This, it is evident, is only another form of the Stoic theory of an eternal chain of causes and effects.

The reply is, that the formation of any one animal or vegetable, by causes purely natural, requires the co-operation of three independent principles;—the elementary materials, the chemical powers, and the mechanical powers. We have then to explain, how these three elements came originally to co-operate, so as to form such infinite varieties of organized beings; and, moreover, how it is that they do not now continue to co-operate to produce new results of the same description. If we believe in a creator, we may believe that he may lay a train, whereby, to a limited extent, certain independent principles shall be brought together, and produce, apparently, spontaneous formations of some very low grades of organized beings: but all experience is against the probability that such formations ever took place in regard to creatures of very complex mechanism; and even in regard to those which do not appear totally improbable, we are constrained to suppose an intelligent director to arrange

the train by which certain independent causes may occasionally produce this apparently spontaneous organization.

d. Still there is a theory, that of Lamarke, which attempts to explain how all creatures whatever may have been evolved, gradually and spontaneously, from one extremely simple type. It cannot be denied that the gradations from one state of animal life to another are in many cases very minute; that the species branch off occasionally from one common type, some preserving one characteristic and some another; that the human embryo springs from a condition apparently devoid of all organization, and begins its organized existence in a condition and with a structure resembling that of fishes, passes to that of reptiles, acquires some of the attributes of the bird and the quadruped, and changes its structure gradually to suit the condition in which it is finally to appear on its birth. These facts are unquestionable; (see Roget's *Bridgewater Treatise*, vol. ii. p. 626, &c.) and they would, to a certain extent, agree with such a theory; but they do not require it. Supposing the present gradation of animals to be formed by secondary causes, under the operation of general laws laid down by an intelligent creator,—these affinities would naturally occur: but there are other facts, entirely opposed to the theory of spontaneous evolution of species.

In order to the correctness of this theory, there must be a gradation without material chasms, and there must be an uninterrupted connexion or derivation between the grades. It is not my intention to go into a detailed proof of the absence of the first of these necessary conditions. It is sufficient that the observation of the most experienced geologists, expressed by Dean Buckland, (ch. xiv. § 13,) is totally adverse to it. "It appears," he states, "that the character of fossil fishes does not change insensibly from one formation to another; but these changes take place abruptly at certain definite periods, in the succession of strata." There is a chasm between the shells and corals of the earlier transition series of rocks, and the land vegetables, luxuriant pines, and perfect fishes of the carboniferous series; and between the fossils of the transition series and those of the secondary series: the latter containing the first specimens of the turtles, ichthyosauri, plesiosauri, diadelphian, and pterodactyli; which complex forms make their appearance abruptly, without a fossil of an intervening or transitionary structure. Again; there is an abrupt hiatus in structure and organization between these of the secondary, and the new forms of the tertiary series, which (as Dr. Buckland shows) are more simple than their predecessors: a direct contradiction of the theory of gradual evolution.

The supposition of uninterrupted connexion or derivation is likewise disproved by these facts, which geology has established; that there have been several entire disruptions of the crust of the globe since the first organic creatures; that in each of these disruptions certain species become suddenly extinct, and have no successors of any kind; and that, on the other hand, certain genera, instead of gradually developing into new ones, continue unchanged through the whole of these disruptions.

Indeed, the two single existing facts, 1. That most genera and species always remain separate, and cannot be brought to breed into each other; and 2. That in the largest classes of animated beings, there are invariably males and females, in certain proportion, and with invariable characteristics: these two facts are completely destructive of the theory of gradual evolution of species.

There are other and fuller details of proof into which I do not enter, conceiving these to be abundantly convincing.

2. Mr. Crabbe having thus disposed of the negative argument, by bringing together the refutation of opposing theories, comes to the direct proof, that the physical causes of existing phenomena were originally independent of each other, and consequently could not have been

brought into combination, in the manner and to the extent which now appears through the operation of unintelligent causes alone, unaided by an intelligent directing power.

“Previously to the production of examples, it is right to obviate one objection. If, it may be said, nature has the power to form one of the corresponding parts, there appears no reason why she may not have the power to construct another; and if so, the inference derived from the combination, seems to be invalidated. The reply to this objection is obvious; we do not admit that nature has the power to construct any thing. We deny that she could form one of the corresponding phenomena. But we prove her total incapability to create them by the *correspondence* of different objects, because the proof is more easy and clear, when it is derived from the correspondence of parts manifestly independent.”

(1.) There is no original inherent necessary existence in organized creatures; much less any necessity that they should exist under the most salutary circumstances. There is no necessity that a globe, revolving round another globe, should have organic creatures on its surface. We detect a time when there were none on our globe; and neither the condition of the earth as a planet, nor the physical cause assigned by atheism for its existence, would

require any thing further than that it should exhibit the appearance of a great meteoric stone. If then there are *certain astronomical* conditions, independent of each other, which jointly contribute to the continuance and perfection of *organized creatures* on this globe, and yet *did not cause their existence*, there is an independent relation in every instance in which this connexion is demonstrable.

Now there are four instances in which this astronomical condition of the earth is essential to the continuation of the organized creatures it sustains, and yet could not have caused their existence.

First, that the central body should be the source of light and heat. It was necessary that the largest body should be central, to preserve the equilibrium of the system, but not that it should be the source of light: for some of the planets are central bodies, having their satellites; and yet only one body is luminous. One or more of the planets might have been luminous, and the sun opaque, or all of them uninhabitable globes of fire, or all of them bodies without any light or heat. We can assign no physical cause whatever for the existence of a luminous sun.

But the organized beings on the earth could not long exist without this light and heat: and unless this light and heat caused these existences (of which there is not the slightest evi-

dence), this is a perfectly independent correspondence.

Secondly, that our earth has an atmosphere.

The atmosphere is necessary to the existence of all animal life, as a means of breathing: and yet the lungs, by which we breathe, are a machine, which not only resists, but decomposes the air; and it is utterly inconceivable that the air should cause an organization constructed on a principle of resistance or decomposition of itself.

Thirdly, the existence of water and its fluidity.

The existence of water is entirely independent of any known natural cause: and although necessary to animal life, it was never suspected of causing the structure of a lion or an elephant. But every living creature would perish without it. The independence of the two is too palpable to require any comment.

But this substance could not preserve these creatures, were it not in a fluid state; which again arises from the peculiar distance of the earth from the sun. The position of this earth, a little nearer or more remote from the sun, would have effectually precluded the fluid state of water. But there could be no possible connexion of origin between the cause of our peculiar planetary position, and the cause of water; so as to make the precise distance of the earth the cause of the existence of water, or the cause of the natural limits of the fluidity of water:

still less could the position of the earth, or the fluidity of water, be the cause of the existence of living creatures.

Fourthly, the inclination of the axis of the earth to its orbit, and its parallelism to itself, by means of which, independently of the revolution on its axis, the portion of its surface presented to the sun is continually changing.

There is no assignable reason why the earth might not always have presented the same half to the sun, as the moon does to us; or why the axis was not perpendicular to its orbit, or in the plane of it. Had either of these circumstances occurred, most of the *existing* race of animals and vegetables must, if produced, soon have perished. But the peculiar position of the earth's axis, so far from causing, could not even modify the existing race of creatures, so as to fit them for continued existence in the present position of the globe. The utmost powers of climate, and heat, and cold, over the constitution of the animal frame, are clearly ascertained. They can darken the complexion, or alter the integuments; but they cannot modify a single internal portion of an animal structure.

Fifthly, the connexion of the moon with our planet.

The benefit this satellite confers is threefold: it gives light, and that just sufficient for a time of general repose; it preserves the ocean from

putrefaction, and thus prevents it from becoming destructive of animal life; and it keeps it in a fluid and wholesome condition, and thus in a state fitted for navigation. Granting that the moon itself is a consequence of known natural causes, those causes were perfectly unconnected with the existence of man, and his use of the tides; of our necessity for sleep, and our convenience in a nocturnal lamp.

Sixthly, the adaptation of organic creatures to the annual and diurnal revolutions of the earth, in their times of fruitfulness and decay, and of their periodical rest.

To show that there is no *necessary* connexion between these things, many flowers blow in early spring, and some in winter, instead of following the ordinary course; many vegetables lose their leaves in summer instead of in autumn; and to show that sleep is not caused by darkness alone, many animals sleep in the day, and some through half a year; and man sleeps once in every twenty-four hours, even in the glare of the polar sun.

(2.) There are instances in which the conditions of elementary or unorganized substances are essential to the continuance and perfection of organic existence: and yet they neither produced organic creatures, nor each other; nor is there the slightest evidence that they have sprung from a common natural cause.

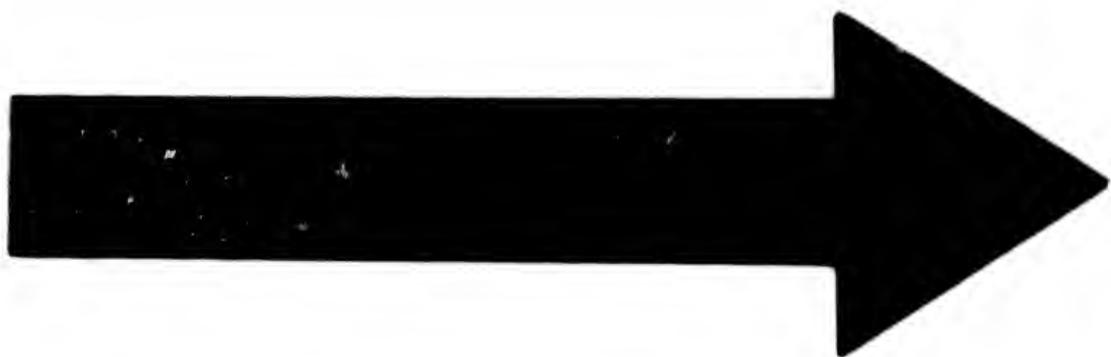
First,—heat, independent of the sun and

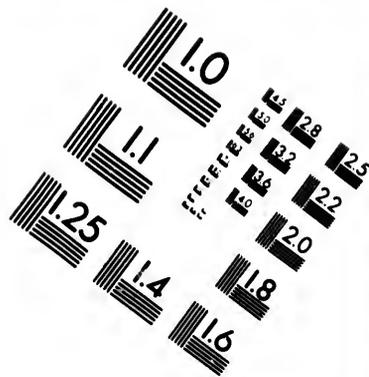
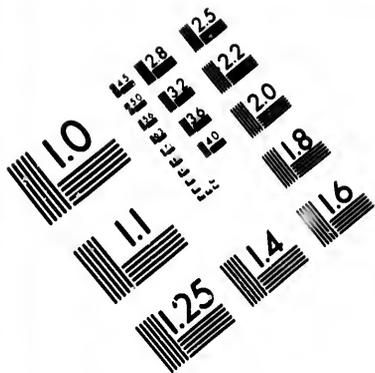
of light, is essential to the continuance of organic life. But a homogeneous substance, independent of the laws of gravity, such as heat is, and which influences all substances according to the nature of the substance itself, can in no sense be called the constructing cause of a variety of mechanism, subject to the laws of gravity, much less did they produce heat.

Secondly, the relative quantity and disposition of the land and the ocean.

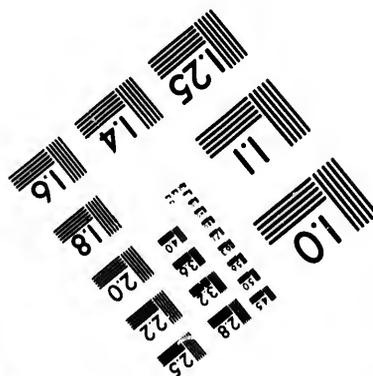
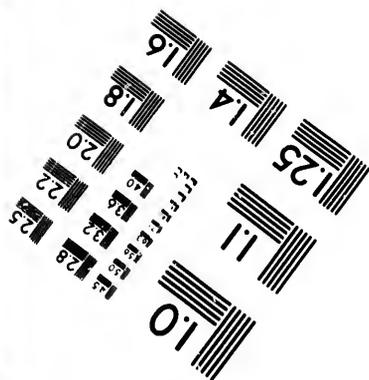
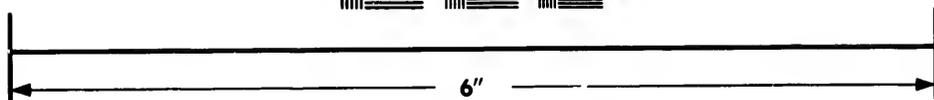
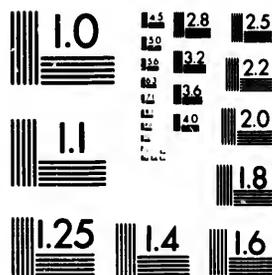
No ultimate physical cause can be assigned for the existing proportion; but if the water had prevailed in a much greater proportion than at present, and the existing laws of evaporation and electricity had continued, the moisture of the whole globe would have been so augmented, that multitudes of existing genera and species could never have had a being. On the other hand, if the land had prevailed inordinately, the ocean would not have supplied water enough for the springs and rivers, and organic life would have failed from that cause; the effects of which state of things are partially seen in the deserts of Africa.

Again the peculiar *disposition* of land and water, is another independent and very important concurrence. It is true that we can assign the proximate physical causes for this disposition; viz. the agency of air, heat, and water, which, by breaking up the crust of the earth at





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different periods, have produced the present condition of it. But can it be supposed for a moment, that ten or twelve violent subversions of the crust of the earth could have each contributed in a progressive ratio, to bring the earth into a condition so entirely suitable to the organic creatures existing upon it, by mere chance, and without design? If these causes had not been under direction, water and land might have existed over the whole globe in the form of an uninhabitable swamp, or of a vast continent spotted with millions of lakes. In the former case, where would have been the whole race of land-animals and vegetables? And even in the latter case, how could that trade and commerce, which is so promoted by the present arrangement of ocean, seas, and rivers, have been carried on? Where would have been the civilization which these have contributed to generate? Nor can it be supposed for a moment, that it was either the proportion of land and water, or the disposition of it, which either caused or modified the existing terrestrial vegetables or animals; yet this proportion is necessary to their existence, and the disposition the most beneficial that could be imagined.

Thirdly; the phenomena of rain (not only fluid water, but water in the form of rain,) is another indispensable necessary to all terrestrial organic existence. Without rain almost all

vegetables would perish, and almost all races of land animals would soon become extinct; yet no one supposes that water in that particular form caused the existence of these creatures.

Moreover, in the production of rain itself, there is a series of independent concurrences:—

1. The evaporation of water, and in sufficient quantity to form clouds at the ordinary temperature of the atmosphere; 2. the peculiar nature of the atmosphere to suspend water in a state of vapour; 3. the agency of electricity, an irriponderable substance, in producing rain; 4. the tendency of vapour to form into clouds, and thus to be carried about where wanted, and again to condense in the form of drops; 5. the phenomenon of wind, by which the vapour is raised and the clouds are carried about; 6. the existence of mountains, produced by volcanic agency, and contributing to the descent of rain; 7. the internal structure of the crust of the earth, by which the rain when fallen is absorbed, and then collected in springs, so as to form heads of rivers; 8. the furrowing of the surface of the earth, by the agency of violent waters, into millions of channels, for the fertilizing of the earth and the reconveyance of the water to the ocean.

All these concurrences are independent of each other, and neither of them can either in

itself, or in its causes, have constructed the organic beings to whose welfare it ministers.

These proofs are abundantly sufficient to establish the fact of the natural independence of those concurrent causes, which produce the adaptations which we observe throughout nature: but Mr. Crabbe has entered into the subject much more fully than is necessary for the establishment of his position; and those who desire to see how unlimited is the collection of facts which can be brought to bear upon this point, are referred to the fourth chapter of his work, from which the previous argument is abridged.

The inference, then, from all these instances appears inevitable, that there must have been from the beginning some intelligent cause or causes of all existing beings, to produce the co-operation of causes so complex, and so entirely independent of each other, or of any common natural cause.

The only possible opening for evasion of this conclusion now left is, to admit that there are independent causes, and that they do concur to the production of new effects, but to assert that these causes exist from eternity, and concur from a fitness in themselves to produce such correspondencies.

This evasion is however met by the facts which we have already established in this chapter,—1. that the operation of the present

laws of nature is uniform; 2. that this operation had a beginning, and that in regard to portions of those laws, the commencement of their operation was at various epochs. To suppose laws not in operation, whilst the matter upon which they tend to work was in existence, is a contradiction. To suppose a certain set of laws to have existed from eternity, and that these laws should develop other laws successively, and that the developed laws should again *not* develop other laws, but be uniform and unchanging in their operation, is again a contradiction. And yet these are the contradictions which must be accepted, if we suppose that the present order of things was caused by a set of independent, co-eternal, unintelligent laws, or properties of matter.

Moreover, to resume Mr. Crabbe's reasoning, we meet this evasion by other facts; facts which would of themselves authorize us in saying, that matter could never manifest such phenomena undirected by intelligence.

For what must the objector necessarily maintain respecting the origin of the present order of nature? He must, on his principles, maintain that during the chaotic state, nebular or fused, to one of which we can with certainty trace all the materials of the crust of this globe to a depth surpassing human measurement, the particles of matter were surcharged with all the properties and relations with which they have

since been found; that, although the matter was either a burning gas or a molten mineral, yet the particles did not lose one single property which they have since manifested in combination; not even the particles now composing the finest down of a feather being deprived of their nature as parts of a feather. It must be maintained, that these particles might possess not only the properties by which they might (if adjacent) unite chemically; but also the capabilities of all the mechanical unions in which they have since been found in organic and inorganic structures.

But this was not enough. To have constituted the various detached substances which those particles of molten fluid have since formed, it was necessary that particles of dissimilar nature should, by some means, be brought together; and that, just in such quantities and in such places as was required by the relation of each separate structure to the whole great scheme. These particles must then have had self-organizing and self-collocating properties, such as nothing in nature at present possesses.

The laws or properties then by which these particles resolved themselves into various genera and species, animal, vegetable, and mineral, must have been entirely different from the present laws or properties of matter; and, consequently (as nothing of the kind is proceeding

at present), those original laws are either suspended or annulled. But laws which can be suspended or become extinct cannot have possessed an eternal existence.

Nor could the present laws of nature have wrought all these changes, because they all act uniformly under the same circumstances: and as, by the atheistic hypothesis, the laws would make all the circumstances, they could not have been changed by the circumstances which they themselves had made.

We are, therefore, driven back on all hands to the natural conclusion, to which we were long ago brought, that the present state of existing beings has been brought about by supernatural intelligence, giving laws to matter, and superintending the operation of those laws.

CHAPTER VI.

ON THE EVIDENCE OF DESIGN THROUGHOUT CREATION.

It being now fully established that the adaptations and correspondencies in nature, are such as cannot be accounted for in any other supposition than the natural and obvious one, so many ages ago stated by Socrates, viz. that they proceeded from design; I proceed to show

that these evidences of design pervade all nature; or, in other words, that they extend to all objects whose phenomena we have been able to examine. This statement, it will be remembered, is not new. It was made by Socrates; it was maintained by the Stoics and Peripatetics; it is entered into at considerable length by Cicero. (*Nat. Deor.* ii. 39—64.) My business will be simply to render the proof more complete than it has yet appeared in any single treatise with which I am acquainted.

It is natural to extend our field of observation by considering our own structure. Take then the hand. (See Kidd's *Bridgewater Treatise*, ch. iii., and the eloquent and forcible extracts from Galen, there quoted.) We find one of its most frequent uses is to grasp some object, or to hold it fast. It is necessary, for this purpose, that it should have the power of closing itself and compressing the object; and that power we know it has; and examination shows a peculiar mechanism of joints to enable it to bend, and of tendons to cause it to bend. But as it is likewise necessary that it should relax its hold, it has additionally an opposite set of tendons for that purpose. There are many objects of which it could not retain its hold, if its surface were smooth and hard, like that of bone or horn: but its hard substructure is covered over with flesh, which yields to pres-

sure, and yet is sufficiently elastic to close round the object it holds. Its divided structure, broken up into fingers, especially qualifies it for firmness of grasp, and holding objects of various forms. If all objects to be held had been of one shape and size, then an undivided hand might have held them; but as they are of unequal thicknesses and forms, it is necessary that the hand should be of such a conformation as to be able to vary its own shape, to suit the object.

Again, supposing the thumb were not placed as it is in a kind of opposition to the other fingers; but that they were all ranged in the same line and moved the same way, how imperfect in its application the hand would have been! For in order to have a firm hold of an object it is requisite to grasp it all round, or at least in two opposite points. Moreover, to accommodate the hand to the dimensions of the object, we have the power of using the thumb with one, two, or all of the fingers.

I noticed that the soft fleshy texture of the hand was necessary for its having a firm grasp of objects with uneven surfaces; and yet, as strength is likewise necessary, it is furnished with bones underneath. But for various ends, which reflection will readily suggest, it is requisite that the extremities of the fingers should be more elastic than the other parts of the hand, and that they should be protected from

injury. How remarkably are these two ends provided for by the nail!

In short, to bring home to our minds the wonderful adaptation of the hand to all possible ends, we can hardly reflect on any of its ordinary uses,—such as holding a knife and fork, or a spoon, or pen, or playing upon a musical instrument, or turning over the leaves of a book,—without observing that it appears almost constructed purposely for each and all of these uses.

We might carry on the investigation through our whole frame. We might notice the teeth and saliva, admirably adapted for preparing the food before it enters the stomach; the gastric juice contrived to dissolve it into a soft pulp; the organs beyond the stomach, to separate a portion of the food and distribute it through the body, and to carry the rest through various channels until it is finally rejected from the system: the wonderful machinery by which the food is manufactured into a red fluid, the greatest support of vitality, carried to every, the remotest and most minute part of the frame, even through the solid bones, and then brought back again to obtain from the air we breathe fresh principles of life. All this is a combination of contrivances so complicated and so wonderful, and so manifestly invented and intended to answer the end of giving gradual, unceasing, and imperceptible support to our

bodily frame, that the natural expression of our feelings must be in the words of the Holy Psalmist, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made."

From men we carry our attention to other creatures; and first to quadrupeds, of whom let us consider the horse, and the adaptation of his structure to his own wants and to the use of men. He has no hands to convey his food to his mouth, and is constrained to employ his lip. But how beautifully flexible is that organ! How rapid is its motion! Into what infinite variety of form does it mould itself! With what accuracy can it pick up so small a thing as a single grain of oats. And how is this accomplished? The member itself is composed entirely of muscular fibre, interlacing and crossing, so as to pull in every conceivable direction. Nor can we say that the organ acquires this dexterity by long practice; for, as soon as he begins to eat, we may observe the same thing.

Again, it is necessary for him to lie down to rest himself; and we find in him, as in most other quadrupeds, a special provision made for that purpose, as well as for that of rising rapidly upon any alarm. For the hind leg is made to bend in a different way from the corresponding member in the human body. Observe him again, eating in the field. How accurately are the length of his head and neck

proportioned to that of his legs, to enable him to stoop and crop the herbage, and yet remain entirely at ease! Again, what a wonderful contrivance of rings and muscular fibre in the throat, to enable him to transmit his food upwards into his stomach, even whilst he continues eating.

The situation of his eye is likewise very noticeable, so placed on the side of his head, and projecting to such a degree, as to enable him to see all around him. His ears are likewise so placed at the top of the head, and so hollowed, as to enable him to catch distant sounds with ease; and rendered so delicately flexible as to turn with the greatest rapidity and ease in whatever direction the slightest sound may proceed from. Nor is the fence of hairs less admirable, projecting inwards and meeting in the centre, to prevent any improper substance from entering, and yet not close enough to impede the passage of sound.

We pass on from quadrupeds to birds. They have a peculiar member of their own,—the wing; and yet not so peculiar, but that it resembles in its bony structure the arm of man, or the fore leg of quadrupeds. But how curiously is it formed for the use for which it is designed, that of raising the bird into the air, and sustaining him and propelling him in it! The body of the bird being heavier than the air, it is necessary that some force should

be applied to enable it to rise; and that this force should be applied downwards upon the air, and upwards upon the body of the bird at the same time: let us see how this is accomplished. The wing itself is expressly constructed in such a way as to render a considerable portion of it less dense than any other solid body possessing the power of resistance; with the exception of the bones and muscles, there seems to be scarcely a particle of moisture in the whole composition. The peculiar substance which forms the pith of each feather, the thin and hollow quill, the feather, divided into minute laminae,—all seem expressly constructed for occupying space without adding to density. This might, no doubt, have been carried to a greater extent, if there had been no other use of the wing; but it is intended to be fixed at an end to the body of the bird, and to be made use of as a lever, for raising it in the air; and it is to use, as its fulcrum and moving power for raising the bird through the upper air, the under air upon which it rests. It is necessary, therefore, that it should be perfectly air-tight, in order that the air may not pass through it, and in that way be useless as a fulcrum and moving power; and the curious interlacing of the laminae of the feathers, and overlapping of the feathers themselves, are evidently calculated for that end.

The manner in which the air is made to act,

is likewise worthy of observation ; for it is not merely by its resistance to pressure, but also by its elasticity. The wing, therefore, is not a mere flat surface, but hollow underneath, and made to contract as it presses downwards, in order to compress the air upon which it rests into a smaller compass, and thus obtain the benefit of the additional force arising from its tendency to expand again after compression. In that manner the resistance of the lower air is made to more than counterbalance the resistance of that above. And how is this engine of compression worked? By its muscles, a set of cordage, which requires no external force to bring it into action, but by its own internal power of contraction, at the will of the animal, accomplishes all that is required. The upward progression of the bird is still further provided for, by the circumstance that the whole of its upper form,—its head, its neck, the upper part of its body,—is made to slope away gradually from a point, and thus to find a passage through the air with the least possible resistance.

Still the bird, if placed in the air with its wings outspread, would only rise a short distance with the first stroke, and would sink again when it attempted to raise its wings for a second stroke, by the resistance of the upper air to the outspread wing, if no further provision were made to meet the difficulty. The wing is, therefore, so constructed, that the very

act of attempting to ascend closes it slightly, and thus diminishes the resistance. But that is not sufficient: a person in rowing finds it expedient, in putting back his oar for a second stroke, to give it a turn, so as to present its edge to the water; and if the wind be high and adverse, he finds it desirable to retain it in the same position, when out of the water, to enable it to pass without resistance through the air. Now that is exactly what the bird is enabled to do; the wing is so constructed that he can turn it in raising it, so as to present the edge to the air.

In the structure of the bird, then, we have seen numerous inventions to accomplish a specific purpose.

From birds let us go to fish. They possess an organ, bearing a close affinity to the wing of the bird; viz. the front pair of fins. These are constructed upon the same principle as the wing, excepting so far as that water requires a substance of a different nature from air, and that most of the motions of fish do not require so much force as those of birds, because they do not need to traverse an equal space in search of their food; and, indeed, a fin so large as the wing of a bird, would not be easily worked under water. For rising in his element, therefore, the fish does not depend so entirely on his fins, as the bird on his wings; but that function is provided for in another manner.

In the greater number of fishes, whose habits require them to rise to the surface of the water, the means of so doing are provided by an air-bladder, the coat of which has the power of contracting and dilating itself, so as to allow the air within it to occupy a greater or smaller space, and thus to make the creature lighter or heavier in water. When the coat of the bladder relaxes, the air expands, and the fish rises; when it contracts, the air within is reduced to a smaller compass, and the fish sinks.

The number of fins differs in different descriptions of fishes; but there are two which appertain to most species, I mean, those on the back and belly. In order to understand the object of these, the experiment has been made of amputating them from the living fish, and turning him again into the water. It was thus discovered that the use of the two conjointly was to steady the fish in the water, and to prevent him from rolling from side to side. It has likewise been ascertained by observation, that these fins are capable of assisting, in a slight degree, in progression; that the lower aids in ascending; and that, if that on the back is cut off, the creature floats with its belly upwards.

All these instruments, again, are devices and adaptations, each made with a definite end, and extending the evidence, that there is design throughout the universe.

We will go a little lower down in the scale of creation, and come to reptiles, which have none of the ordinary instruments of motion,—neither legs, wings, nor fins, and yet move with as much ease as those who possess them. Their means of locomotion are various. The snail is all muscle, and therefore can push himself along, provided he has any thing by which to adhere; and the means of adhesion are provided in the glutinous liquor which issues from his body. The common earthworm is not all muscle; but his body is covered with a series of elastic rings, composed of muscular fibre, and connected in the length of the animal by other muscular fibres; and by the alternate contraction and relaxation of these longitudinal fibres, the successive portions of the body are moved along. He, too, has his provision to enable him to adhere to the surface of the substance on which he is moving; but it consists not in a glutinous fluid, but in hairs on his rings on the side which he keeps towards the ground. His rings become still more serviceable, when he has to bore through the soil in which he finds his sustenance. For when his conical head (shaped like the instrument with which agriculturists form cylindrical drains beneath the soil) has effected an entrance, the rings preserve the tube open and round, for the passage of the remainder of the body; and thus afford him the means of re-

turning, after he has taken in a sufficiency of the vegetable matter which forms his sustenance. Again; some of the serpent tribe possess neither fluid nor bristles to enable them to adhere; but the want is compensated by the power of downward pressure in the tail, which enables them with that part of the body to rest upon the ground, whilst they thrust themselves forward by the simple operation of alternately straightening themselves, and then drawing on their tails, and arching their bodies, in order to fix the tail upon the ground to take a fresh hold. Here, again, are difficulties overcome, and problems solved, by direct and specific inventions.

We will proceed from reptiles to insects, which appear more astonishing even than larger creatures.

Take a common fly, and you find that the little thread which he thrusts forth from his head is a pump, to draw up the juices upon which he lives; and not only a pump, but a self-acting pump, which is never out of repair. Examine his eye; the microscope informs you that it is composed of innumerable smaller eyes. And why is this arrangement? He cannot move his eye, and turn it towards objects; and, therefore, his eyes are multiplied, and turned in every direction. Put a butterfly's wing into the microscope, and you discover that it is covered over with minute feathers;

and each of these feathers as perfectly made as those in the wing of a turkey. Take a spider, who is destined to obtain his food by laying snares for other insects. But whence is he to obtain his snares? He actually possesses, in his diminutive frame, a machinery for making threads out of the juice of his body. They issue from openings prepared for that purpose, and for no other; and are twisted together afterwards, as a ropemaker twists his twine into cordage. But the spider does not know what he is doing. Every spider of the same species makes his diminutive rope in the same way. He is but a machine; yet such a machine must have had an intelligent maker. Look, again, at a honeycomb; observe the exact shape of its cells; each in the form of a hexagon, and never varying from that shape, except round the margin of each comb. Now this is made, not once only, but every year. Scores of insects are banded together to make it. A fresh set comes on every year, who has never seen a comb made before, and yet they all make it in the same manner as their predecessors have done for thousands of years. Where, then, shall we ever find the marks of intelligent design, if not here?

We have now traversed the whole of the animal kingdom; but to carry on our proof, we must come to that class which has a kind of life of a lower description; I mean, the vegetable

part of creation. Our attention has hitherto been directed, principally, to locomotion, and the means of accomplishing it; but here the scene changes, and we find ourselves in the midst of a class of beings which never change their place of abode, from their birth to their death. And now let us trace a plant of one of the ordinary kinds, from the time that it issues from the seed. When it has begun to decay, it puts forth a filament from each end. The sprout which issues from one extremity strikes down into the ground, that which issues from the other makes its way upwards into the air; and it is remarkable, that it is invariably the same part of the seed which sends forth the root. So much is this the case, that if the seed is dropped into the ground, with the root end uppermost, that part which yields the root will make a bend, in order to strike downwards, whilst the part which yields the stem and leaves will make a bend likewise to strike upwards. This, evidently, is not chance.

All plants derive a considerable portion of their nourishment from some substance upon which they grow, and most of them from the earth. It is necessary that they should be able to penetrate into the earth, to obtain this nourishment, as well as for other purposes; and as fast as they exhaust the nutritive matter in that part of the soil upon which they first settled, it is requisite that they should be able

to obtain it from a greater distance. But, as they have no locomotive faculty, how is this to be accomplished? The answer is, that the roots are continually, but imperceptibly, pushing on with the growth of the plant, and emitting new roots from their sides, which repeat the same process to an indefinite extent. But how does the root push on? It has no muscular power. There is nothing behind to thrust it on. It simply thrusts forth another and another particle from its extremity, which particles it elaborates silently and imperceptibly within itself, by means which no examination has yet adequately traced.

But the roots have to answer another purpose. In order that the plant may obtain its sustenance, and fulfil its functions, it is necessary that this process should go on without interruption, and consequently that the plant should not be liable to be removed, irregularly and capriciously, from place to place, by the force of the elements or the movements of animals. Each of the roots, therefore, becomes a cord to steady it. It is not, however, bound round any thing, but is itself covered with inequalities, and the whole mass of roots branches out in different directions; so that it resists any endeavour to remove it. And we have only to attempt to pull up a plant of any kind, to discover that we cannot accomplish it, with-

out either loosening the soil in which it grows, or breaking its roots.

Moreover, the plant does not live in the ground, but upon it; and, consequently, its nourishment has to be carried upwards: and accordingly we know that the sap does rise into the plant, and diffuse itself throughout it. Still the sap is not the whole of the nutriment which the plant receives; for when it reaches the leaves, they have an important function to perform. They absorb from the atmosphere a considerable quantity of carbonic acid gas; the carbon of which is retained in the plant, and serves to convert the sap into the various substances of gum, starch, woody matter, and even silex, which are needed for the structure of its various parts.

The most curious thing, however, about a plant, is the production of the seed. The greater part of seeds are produced by the flowers of the plant, in which the most important functions are sustained, not by the gay ornamental portions which more directly meet the eye, but by the little threads and atoms which we discover by examining the centre. These are divided into two portions, denominated stamens and pistils; the former of which produce a kind of dust, which is quite essential to the production of the future seed. This dust, when produced, is discharged upon the pistils, and

grows, in the tly, its s: and es rise hout it. triment reaches etion to here a as; the nt, and us sub- ad even e of its about a greater vers of func- mental e eye, ch we se are amens a kind oduc- n pro- and

makes them fruitful; for these last are connected with the future seed-vessel: and, as soon as the dust has been discharged upon them, the seed begins to be formed in the seed-vessel below, and it then gradually more and more develops itself, until it arrives at its perfect formation. In most plants the stamens and pistils grow together in the same flower; but in some, as in the cucumber and melon, they grow in separate flowers on the same plant; in others on separate plants. How then is the dust to find its way from one to the other? It is generally carried by bees or other insects, as they pass from flower to flower in search of food. And if a plant of that kind is kept covered, so that insects can have no access to it, it will bear no fruit whatever, unless some person gathers the flowers which produce the dust, and shakes it from them over those which are destined to produce the seed.

The whole of these apparatus, and especially the last-mentioned arrangement, are so evidently devised with a definite end and purpose, that I will not dwell further upon them.

We have now to consider the last remaining portion of our terrestrial fabric; I mean, that contained within the earth itself.

In order to enter upon this, let us come back to the stone of which Paley spoke, against which we might strike in walking across the field, and which he thinks a person might say,

for all he knew to the contrary, had lain there for ever. This stone has neither motion nor growth of any kind; but still, rude and irregular as it may appear, it has a regular structure. Let us look at any of the stones we find lying about in the forests or upon the open plains. The first thing which strikes us is, that generally its edges are all worn off, which must have arisen (if we may judge from observation in other cases), by rubbing against other stones in moving water. The stone, therefore, cannot have remained for ever where it is; but must have been rolled about at some ancient period, before it was deposited where we now find it.

But let us break up this stone, and twenty others, and we shall find that they differ in their internal structure; and, although not so regular as animals or plants, yet that there is a sort of regularity in them, and a resemblance of some to others, in regard to their internal colours, surfaces, and arrangements. A mineralogist will inform us, that one is conglomerate, another contains fossil remains, a third is a fragment of granite; and he may, perhaps, further inform us, that vast strata of these and of many other kinds of rock, are spread over and through the surfaces of the earth, in regular and ascertainable order: so regular, that, in many cases, if a person conversant with the subject finds one particular kind of rock near the surface of

the earth, he can affirm with certainty what you will next arrive at, if you should choose to dig through it. Now this regularity and order in itself proves design.

Let us, however, recur to our stones, and take the conglomerate, which is composed of fragments of other stones. There must therefore have been a time, when those various descriptions of stone were broken up and mingled together, and then cemented together into a new kind of stone. Consequently a stone of this species proves, that even before it was composed there existed other stones which had not remained untouched in their existing condition.

We will examine a second. We find in it perhaps a shell, or a back bone of a fish, or a leaf of fern, turned into stone. Some of these shall resemble those which live and grow at the present day; others will differ more or less from any at present known to exist. If we inquire further, we learn that specimens of this kind are innumerable, and that some of them contain whole skeletons of animals, of species believed to be extinct. This again proves past doubt that, hard as the stone now is, it must once have been soft, to enclose these animal and vegetable substances. And these substances themselves, in their exact regularity, and the undoubted proof that they once lived and grew like those we now witness, afford the

same evidences of design, which we have already seen in those now existing in the world.

But let us leave these and take the granite, which contains no fossils and no fragments of other stone. It is not, however, a perfectly simple substance, but consists of three substances more simple; viz. quartz, felspar, and mica. Now it is extremely remarkable, that by a series of accidents the chemists of the present day have discovered, that these are likewise compound substances, and have even been taught the process by which they may be made. The conclusion is undeniable, that granite is not the result of accident, but has been produced by a contriving mind, combining its elementary materials in certain proportions and by certain chemical means.

We will now quit the substance of the earth and its inhabitants, and ascend into the atmosphere which surrounds it; the most important use of which is, that it is the breath of life. It was long supposed to be an uncompounded fluid; but chemistry at length discovered that it is composed of three descriptions of air, which are technically called *gases*; oxygen, nitrogen, and carbonic acid gas. The latter exists in so small a proportion in the atmosphere, that to us it is of very little importance, unless indirectly: but (as we have seen) to plants it is what the whole atmosphere is to us. The nitrogen, on the other hand, is not only in

itself positively poisonous, but exists in such a quantity in the atmosphere, that if the proportion of it were materially increased, it would render every act of breathing a suffering, and ensure death to us, with greater or less rapidity, according to the proportion which it bore to the whole bulk of the atmosphere. The third of the components of the atmosphere, viz. the oxygen gas, is the vital part; that which, by being admitted into the lungs, and becoming mixed with the blood, restores to it that nutritive quality, which it had lost in circulating through the system.

It may be inquired, If the nitrogen gas be so pernicious, why should any portion of it enter into the atmosphere? The reply is this:—Oxygen, it is true, is vital air; but there is such a thing as exciting the vital powers too much. If the quantity of oxygen gas in the atmosphere were materially increased, our nervous system would be so excited, and the tension of the muscles become so increased, that we should live in a continual fever. Our sight and hearing would be distressingly acute, and we should wear out our whole frame with over exertion, and become old men before we had reached the years we now reckon our prime. The use of the nitrogen then is, to temper and moderate the effects of the oxygen; and the two are mingled in such proportions, that life and health are sustained in that mode-

rate degree, which is most for our happiness, and ensures to us such a duration of existence, as gives time for the discharge of the duties which the Creator has appointed for us. Can there be any doubt that a fluid, so admirably calculated to answer its ends, was devised and commingled by an all-wise Being?

The earth and its appendages furnish an inexhaustible fund for observations of the same kind: but it is desirable to show that the evidences of intelligence extend every where; and, therefore, we will pass on to the system or combination of worlds, of which we know that they form a part.

Every one is now aware that the earth moves round the sun, or rather a point which lies within the extent of the body of the sun; and that the length of the year and the variations of the seasons, are regulated by that motion. We have then a vast ball revolving round a central point. Now supposing we had to accomplish such a motion, how should we effect it? Something of the kind is done in slinging a stone. In giving it a circular motion before discharging it, it is evident that there are two forces at work; one which impels the stone onwards in its course, the other which prevents it from going more than a certain distance from the centre of the circle in which it moves. And it is evident that the force which impels it onward could not convey it in a circle; because the

moment the other force is removed, it flies off in a line nearly at right angles with the radius of the circle; and it is equally evident that the force which keeps it near the centre, would draw it nearer to the centre, were it not for the contrary force drawing it away.

The two requisites, then, for moving in a circle are,—a force impelling the body onwards, and a force drawing it towards the centre. They are commonly called the centrifugal and centripetal forces; but the former denomination is clearly incorrect; for it is evidently nothing but a force impelling the body in a straight line. For the present let us look at the latter. In the sling the centripetal force is the string: but in the motion of the earth round the sun it is accomplished by that invisible power called the attraction of gravitation, by virtue of which all bodies universally have a tendency towards each other, in a proportion compounded of the relative size of the bodies, and the distance from each other.

In order, however, that this motion should be in a circle, it is requisite that the impelling force should be exactly balanced against the gravitating force; and that the impulse should be in a direction at right angles to the radius of the circle in which the body is to move. These conditions then have been considered in constructing the vast machine called the solar system, of which this world, with all its men,

and beasts, and birds, and fishes, and reptiles, and insects, with all its minerals, and rocks, and atmosphere, are but a part, and a small part. The motion of the earth itself is only one element of the problem. There is the motion of the moon round the earth, and that of the fourteen planets, with the moons or satellites of three of them, and the ring of one. There is likewise the elliptical motion of the comets, of the laws of which we have but an indistinct conception. Here again we have the same evidence of a contriving mind, which we have found in the smallest insects.

So strongly indeed were the ancient Greeks impressed with the evidence which regular motion affords of intelligence residing somewhere, that they not only (as we have said) conceived each star of the solar system to be an intelligent being, but imagined the whole system to be a society of such beings, voluntarily combining to form an orderly whole.

But this vast system of worlds, called the solar system, is only a small portion of the universe. There are the fixed stars, of which 3000 are visible to the naked eye. The telescope has discovered, and is continually discovering, multitudes more; so many, that in some parts of the sky, the moon alone will hide 2000 from view; and still as we improve our telescopes, we discover more. Nor is this vast field without its evidence of design. Some of

these stars, which to the naked eye are single, are found to be double, performing regular revolutions round each other: others are found to be centres of systems like our sun; and systems of revolving stars require, as we have seen, a creating intelligence. And thus we perceive that, into whatever field of nature we extend our researches, we can go no where without discovering evidence of some intelligent being employed in devising the various portions of the vast machine.

CHAPTER VII.

THAT THE DESIGN EVIDENT THROUGHOUT
CREATION PROCEEDS FROM ONLY ONE
BEING.

IN the course of our inquiries we have been brought to the conclusion, that we have throughout the universe traces of some intelligent contriver or contrivers. As Christians, we of course know that there is but One; but our mere evidence from nature, whilst it must have impressed upon the mind more and more the feeling of the oneness of the creating power, has not actually been shown to prove it. So far as our argument has yet carried us, it is quite possible that all the various portions of

the universe may have been designed by a multitude of intelligent beings; just as all the houses, and ships, and articles of furniture, and implements, and tools, and machines, have been designed by thousands of mankind. If, therefore, we could proceed no further than this, we should still be far from proving from the works of nature (as the Scriptures teach us we can prove) the existence of one God; for, in the very idea of God, we require a first and final cause of all we see. In order, therefore, that we may be able to evince that there is such a being, we must be able to connect together the scattered indications of design, and we must be able to show that one chain passes through the whole. We must prove that they are all parts of one great plan, proceeding from one master mind.

In order to establish this point, let us go back to the solar system. We have seen that the fourteen planets move round the sun. Now this connexion of all these bodies with the sun, and their dependence upon him, of course connects them with each other; and thus proves, that the whole system, so far as it is a piece of machinery, was contrived by one governing mind.

There is, however, a remarkable set of facts in connexion with this subject, which places the argument in a point of view so irresistibly convincing, that the statement cannot be com-

plete without them. (See Paley, XXII. iii. 2, and Whewell's *Bridgewater Treatise*, Book II., ch. 3.)

If each planet were to revolve round the sun without being affected by the other planets, there would be a complete regularity in its motion; and this regularity might continue for ever. But it is discovered (as I have already stated) that the law of gravitation is universal. The planets, therefore, do not execute their movements unaffected by each other: each of these is acted upon by the attraction of all the rest; and this produces a derangement of the regularity of their motion. All the planets indeed are very small, compared with the sun; and, therefore, the derangement they can all together produce upon any one will be extremely small in the course of one revolution. But this gives no security that it may not become very large in the course of many revolutions; the cause is perpetually acting, and it has the whole extent of time to act in. Is it not then quite conceivable, that in the lapse of ages the derangements of the motions of the planets may accumulate; the orbits may change their form; their mutual distances may be much increased, or much diminished? Is it not possible that these changes may go on without limit, and end in the complete subversion of the system? If, for instance, the result of this mutual gravitation should be that the earth's

orbit should become less and less circular, its course might lead it by degrees to interfere with the motions of some other planet. Or if it were to cause the moon to approach nearer and nearer to the earth, it might finally fall to the earth's surface. In either case the result must be an awful catastrophe. We should have "years of unequal length, and seasons of capricious temperature; planets and moons of portentous size and aspect, glaring and disappearing at uncertain intervals; tides like deluges, sweeping over whole continents; and perhaps the collision of two planets, and the consequent destruction of all organization on both of them."

On a common examination of the solar system, it is not at all clear that there is not a tendency to this ultimate disarrangement. Changes are continually taking place in the motions of the heavenly bodies, and have been taking place since the first dawn of science. The earth's orbit has been becoming more and more round, from the earliest observations to our own times. The moon has been moving quicker and quicker from the time of the first recorded eclipses. Will these and similar changes go on without limit or reaction? If so, we tend by natural causes to a termination and breaking up of the present state of things; if not, by what adjustment or compensation are we secured from such a tendency?

The answer to these questions is far from easy; and it belongs to mathematics to give a complete reply. (See La Place, *Expos. du Système du Monde*, p. 441.) But the question has undergone a regular and close mathematical investigation, and it has been proved, by a process completely satisfactory, that we have nothing whatever to fear. The orbits of all the planets deviate from regularity to a certain extent; they continue to deviate more and more until they reach a certain point, and then they begin to return; they reach a maximum height of deviation and then diminish. The periods which this restoration requires are enormous; reaching to thousands of years, and, in some instances, even millions: and hence it is that some of these apparent derangements have been going on ever since the beginning of the history of the world. But, if the world shall endure sufficiently long, the restoration will be in the sequel as complete as the derangement: and meanwhile, the disturbance never attains a sufficient amount seriously to alter the adaptations of the system.

There exists, therefore, in the solar system, a provision for the permanent regularity of its motions, arising out of the dependence of every one of the globes which compose it upon every other: which proves still more completely, the unity of design in the system; and

consequently the unity of the mind which at first devised and created it.

If we go beyond our system, amongst the fixed stars, we ascertain that, wherever we can discover motion at all, the same rules of motion are adopted; and thence, by an inevitable inference, we conclude that the same mind devised them which devised the more limited system of which we ourselves form a part.

But it might have so happened (so far as natural reason could enable us to judge *à priori*), that our Creator may have devised the magnificent and grand in the universe, and others the smaller details. This indeed was in a degree the theory of Plato, who taught that the inferior parts of creation were performed by the gods, in subordination to the supreme Intelligence. (See Chap. II. p. 10.) Let us, therefore, examine what evidence we have that the same mind appears throughout.

It is well known that the changes of the seasons and the alternate succession of day and night are caused by the motion of the earth, either around the sun or on its own axis. It is likewise well known that the constitutions of man, of animals, of birds, of insects, and of plants, are connected more or less with the interchange of day and night, and of the seasons. For instance, night is the period of rest for man, and for most animals and birds:

and if with some that is not the case, it is with equal regularity the time of motion. The owl and the bat as regularly come abroad by night and withdraw by day, as the other creatures come abroad by day and rest by night. Plants again disengage oxygen gas by day, and carbonic acid gas by night; whilst some of them mark the change more strongly, by closing their flowers in the evening and re-opening them in the morning. Connecting these facts with the circumstance that day and night are caused by the alternate presenting to the action of the sun, and withdrawal from it of the various portions of the earth's surface, we perceive an intimate connexion between every thing which lives and grows upon the earth with the sun, the centre of the system. Here then is another link in the chain.

Let us now contemplate the relations which things on the earth bear to each other. We have already noticed how exactly the wings of birds and the fins of fish, are suited to the elements in which they move. Put the bird into the water, or bring the fish into the air, and (with a few remarkable exceptions) their organs of motion are useless. If we compare the greater part of animals together, we shall find that their structure bears a mutual resemblance, (see Paley's chapter on *Comparative Anatomy*,) which shows a comparison in the mind of the Designer, and a variation of one

idea to suit different circumstances. Man, quadrupeds, and birds, all have four limbs each; and the bony structure of all (as we have already noticed, Chap. VI.) is extremely alike; but varied in relative proportions, and variously clothed, to suit the modes of life to which different classes of creatures are subject. Thus the bat is a mouse, furnished with wings instead of fore legs; the long slender bones, which serve to expand the wings answering exactly to the toes of the fore feet of the mouse; and the claws actually remaining at their extremities, but applied to the use of supporting the bat during his hours of rest, by enabling him to suspend himself against walls, &c. by means of them.

And the mention of the bat leads to the remark, that the gradation from one scale to another in creation is very remarkable. From man we do not pass at once to quadrupeds proper, but first to the orang-outang or chimpanzee (whose structure is almost like our own), and thence to apes and monkeys. From quadrupeds we pass off in various directions to birds and fishes. For instance, there is a quadruped in New Holland which has the beak of a duck, and forms a link between quadrupeds and fowl. The whole tribe of lizards forms a link between quadrupeds and reptiles on the one hand, and quadrupeds and fish on the other; the land lizards connecting the

former, and the water lizards the latter. So again, seals are a link between quadrupeds and whales; and whales themselves, in bringing forth their young alive, and in giving them suck, makes the transition more gradual from quadrupeds to other fish. Lobsters and crabs and other crustaceous fish, form a link between fish and insects; for, like insects, the osseous part of their structure is external, whilst their flesh resembles that of fish. Oysters, polypes, and sponges, adhering to the ground and having no power of locomotion,—and yet having more or less of voluntary motion and of animal fluids,—connect together fish and plants. The sensitive plant and the pitcher plant of Upper Canada connect plants and animals: for their nutriment is composed in part of animal substance (feeding on flies); and the latter shrinks from the touch.

One of the most remarkable signs of this mutual connexion is the resemblance in one branch of creation to another in external form. For instance, the flowers of the orchis tribe frequently resemble some insect, as the bee or fly; and, again, there is an insect in Southern Africa and a caterpillar in Western Canada, either of which is scarcely distinguishable from a leaf.

Take again the structure of the stomachs of animals in regard to their food; and you have

another connexion between animals, plants, and insects: for the stomachs of some animals will digest only vegetable substance, and those of others only insects and animal matter; whilst some are constructed with a view to both. Consider, again, the manner in which plants are nourished, by carrying up mineral substances from the earth, and imbibing other portions from the atmosphere, and you connect together minerals and air; and that mineral substances are carried into the plant is shown by the fact, that the outer coat of straw, and sometimes of a grain of wheat, is as perfectly flint as any flint-stone you can dig out of a bed of chalk.

The more minutely, therefore, we extend our inquiries, the more clearly we perceive that there is a connexion throughout nature,—no one thing stands by itself. Every thing is related or adapted to some other thing; and this relation and adaptation is carried on from the stones in the bowels of the earth, and the scarcely perceptible insects throughout all vegetable and animated nature,—by the air we breathe, and the light by which we see,—up to the planets and stars, and by them to the utmost verge of the universe.

Nay, is there not one thing in nature which is connected with them all? Is there not the intelligent spirit of man, united to an animal

structure, and capable of perceiving, contemplating, and reasoning, upon whatever exists throughout the universe?

Can there remain, therefore, a shadow of a doubt, not only that there are traces of intelligence every where, but that every where we perceive the operation of ONE governing Intelligence, viewing all his work together, and adapting every portion of it, more or less directly, to every other portion?

This doctrine of the unity of God is, moreover, in one way or another, recognised even by pagans.

Thus Philolaus¹, already cited, quotes Pythagoras, as saying, "God is the director and ruler of all things, One, always existing, permanent, immovable, like to Himself and differing from others." And although we learn from Cicero, confirmed by Justin Martyr, (*Cohort. ad Græcos*, 18,) that Pythagoras taught Pantheism, yet these words are direct in their testimony to the unity of Deity. Socrates again, although he believed in a multitude of gods, recognised one as distinct from the others, and as *alone* the Being who arranges and holds together the whole world (*Xen. Mem.* IV. iii. 13), and the wisdom that pervades all things. (I. iv. 17.) Plato believed in one First Cause

¹ Ἐντι γάρ, φησιν, ὁ ἀγεμὼν καὶ ἄρχων πάντων Θεός, εἷς, αἰεὶ ἔων, μόνιμος, ἀκίνατος, αὐτὸς αὐτῷ ὁμοῖος, ἄτερος τῶν ἄλλων.

of motion, whose nature is spiritual. (*Philæbus*, § 56.) The opinion of Aristotle was similar. Zeno and his followers, although they likewise taught polytheism, and maintained that even deity could not exist unless embodied in matter, yet held that there is one supreme God, that is, the universe, the Author of the existence of all other beings (*Cic. Nat. Deor.* II. 8. 11); and he taught (if we may trust Diogenes Laertius, *de Vitis Philosophorum*, vii. 137²), that, as all beings sprung from Him, so they would all again be absorbed into Him, to be again produced in other forms, and again absorbed, to all eternity. Besides this Cicero attributes to him the opinion (II. 32, 33), that there is one moving, regulating power, which he calls nature; which is rational, and proceeds by orderly methods, and causes every thing to act and grow in its proper manner, and connects it with every other thing. Now, although it is not absolutely certain what place he assigns to nature, nor whether he regards it (as he appears to do, ch. 34) as the soul of the universe, yet it is clear that he teaches a unity of causation and action at the head of all existing beings.

To leave the philosophers, Justin Martyr,

² Αὐτόν τε τὸν Θεὸν, τὸν ἐκ τῆς ἀπάσης οὐσίας ἰδίως ποιόν. ὃς δὲ ἀφθαρτός ἐστι καὶ ἀγέννητος, δημιουργός ὢν τῆς διακοσμήσεως κατὰ χρόνων ποίης περιόδους ἀναλίσκων εἰς ἑαυτὸν τὴν ἅπασαν οὐσίαν, καὶ πάλιν ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ γενεῶν.

both in his tract on the Unity of God (*περὶ Μοναρχίας*), and in his *Exhortation to the Greeks*, quotes many passages from the poets, Sophocles, Euripides, Diphilus, Philemon, and Menander, to show that their language recognised one Creator, one God, above the ordinary objects of popular worship; even though they did not know Him as He is. And in this line of quotations he is followed and sustained by Athenagoras and Clement of Alexandria. Indeed it is remarkable that the arguments advanced by the early Christian controversialists to prove the Unity of God, proceed upon the virtual recognition of that doctrine in the popular mind. Thus Athenagoras (*Legatio pro Christianis*, ch. 7) argues that there could not be two gods, because, as we know that One governs the universe, and comprises it within Himself, we must place the other in some other portion of space, which cannot be found, because the Creator of this world *fills all things* and *comprises all things*. Such an idea of God confesses his unity. So again Tertullian, reasoning against the doctrine of two First Principles, goes on the assumption, that God is *the Great Supreme* (*adv. Marcion*, I. 3), and argues that there cannot be two such beings.

CHAPTER VIII.

ON THE OPERATION OF GENERAL LAWS¹;
AND ON THE OMNISCIENCE, INFINITE
WISDOM, AND OMNIPOTENCE OF GOD.

In drawing out the argument, by which we proved that there is one designer and contriver of ourselves, and of all things which come under our knowledge, it was necessary to view Him as acting in a number of isolated cases, selected almost at random from every part of nature to which our observation has extended. In so doing, however, we were led to see that (in some cases, at least) he acts, not only by the exercise of intelligence in particular instances, but also by the establishment of laws, ruling and including an indefinite number of instances. For example, in the solar system, where the twenty or thirty globes of which it is composed are moved, not each by a separate agency, but by general laws of motion, applying to all at once. The same must be the case with regard to all those things, whether animal, vegetable, or mineral,

¹ The former part of this chapter is derived from Dr. Whewell's *Bridgewater Treatise*, Book III. ch. 8.

which the mind is led to form into classes. We can as little doubt that the facts, that ostrich eggs never produce geese, nor the seed of the carrot the plant we call mustard; but that the egg of the ostrich and the seed of the carrot invariably produce bodies resembling the parent, are the results of general laws; as the fact that a printing-press produces books, and does not produce woollen cloth, is the result of general laws.

We may extend the same observation throughout nature. Events are brought about, not by insulated interpositions of Divine power, exerted in each particular case, but by the establishment of general laws. God, therefore, is the Author of the universe as it at present exists, and its Governor and Preserver likewise; through the laws He has given to its parts, the properties which He has impressed upon its constituent elements—through them He shapes, moves, sustains, and guides, the visible creation.

This mode of operation requires, perhaps, some attention on our part to understand it with proper clearness. One reason of this is, that it is a mode of operation altogether different from our own. Man can construct exquisite machines, can call in vast powers, can form extensive combinations, in order to bring about results which he has in view: but in all this he is only taking advantage of laws of nature

which already exist; he is applying to his use properties which matter already possesses: nor can he by any effort do more. He can establish no new law of nature, which is not a result of existing ones. He can invest matter with no new properties, which are not modifications of its present attributes. His greatest advances of skill and power are, when he calls to his aid forces which before existed unemployed; or, when he discovers so much of the habits of some of the elements as to be able to bend them to his purpose. He navigates the elements by the assistance of the waves, which he can neither raise nor still. And even if we suppose him able (at some future day) to control the course of these, it can only be by studying their characters,—by learning more thoroughly the already subsisting laws of air, heat, and moisture. He cannot give the minutest portion of the atmosphere new relations, a new course of expansion, new laws of motion.

But the Divine operations, on the contrary, include something much higher. They take in the *establishment* of the laws of the elements as well as the combination of those laws, and the determination of the distribution and quantity of the materials upon which they shall produce their effect. We conceive that the Supreme Power has ordained that the air shall

be rarefied by heat, and water turned into vapour by it,—no less than that He has combined air and water so as to sprinkle the earth with showers; and determined the quantity of air, and heat, and moisture, so that the showers shall be as beneficial as they are.

And this leads us to a view of some of the *attributes* of God, as they are called, the habitual properties (if I may so speak) of his nature. In all our investigations throughout nature, we find traces of one governing and guiding mind. That mind shows an intimate acquaintance with the materials of every kind with which it has to work, so as to know in what way it may be applied to every conceivable purpose; not only that, but as actually impressing upon matter its properties, it shows a knowledge of all conceivable properties with which it can be impressed. Now of this knowledge we find no limit. Wherever nature is, there is that knowledge; and, therefore, we conclude that God's knowledge is unlimited,—that He is *omniscient*.

So again, we find not only knowledge of all the possible resources of creation, but the most exquisite skill in the use of those resources, in the adaptation of them to the end intended to be answered. Instances of this skill are furnished in abundance in the *Natural Theology* of Paley, and in the *Bridgewater Treatises*, particularly those of Whewell, Kidd, and

Rogee. New skill in the adaptation of means to ends, and in the discernment of the ends to be aimed at, is what we call *wisdom*: and that wisdom we can trace every where; in the smallest insect, imperceptible to the naked eye, and in the arrangements of the vast system of worlds, of which we are a minute portion. We conclude, therefore, that the Being of whose skill we can find no limit, must be possessed of *infinite wisdom*.

So again the utmost knowledge and the most unlimited wisdom would be unavailing, were there not a *power* of using nature and applying it to the ends intended; were there not, in short, an unlimited command of the resources of the universe; and even were there not a power of augmenting these resources at pleasure. But, so far as our observation reaches, we find no limit to the power of God. We find Him not only having an unlimited command of the resources of nature already existing, but even impressing laws and properties upon nature. We conclude, therefore, that his power is unlimited, that He is *omnipotent*.

The idea, however, of these properties as pertaining to Deity was not left to be obtained by the results of modern inquiry. So sensibly is it impressed upon creation, that the ancient Greeks of every theistic school attributed those qualities, or at least the attributes of omnis-

science and omnipotence to the gods in general; not however as supposing that each of them independently possessed these attributes; but that they pertained to their nature, and were possessed by them as a society. (See Chap. II.)

CHAPTER IX.

THAT GOD IS A SPIRIT, AND THAT HE IS THE
AUTHOR OF THE EXISTENCE OF MATTER.

WE have hitherto contemplated God as the former and fashioner of matter, as impressing laws upon it, and using and adapting it in every way to his purposes; but we have not distinctly considered Him as the Author of the existence of every thing. The question then arises, Is God the Author of that matter which He has so wrought and fashioned? And that leads to another question, viz. What is He in Himself? Is his nature different from that matter upon which He has wrought?

Before we answer these questions, let us recall to our remembrance what we mean by matter, and let us consider what evidence we have that there is something besides matter. Matter, then, is that which has length, breadth, and thickness; which can be compressed and extended; which is light and heavy; which has no power of motion in itself, and never does

move (so far as we can trace) except when impelled by some other power. Now what is there besides matter? We know that we ourselves, our inward self, are something different from matter. We are conscious that we perceive, and reflect, and reason,—that we invent, and contrive, and discover,—that we feel hope and fear, desire and aversion, joy and grief. We have abundant proof that some of the creatures around us possess some of these qualities (for example, the dog, elephant, bee, and ant); and that other portions of nature (as plants and minerals) possess no such qualities. We know that the thinking portion cannot be seen or heard; that it is not capable of being measured or weighed; it has no length, breadth, thickness, or gravity. It may be connected with substances which possess these qualities; but it is itself distinct from them, and appears capable of acting without them. Here, then, is another existence besides matter; and that existence, that substance, we call *spirit*. We know, further, that our spirit animates, and impels, and guides the matter of which our body is composed; that something similar happens even to brute animals; and that when the spirit is separated from the body by death, the matter of the body can no longer move. We know that spirit can move the body and matter in general, and modify and change them by its own will and art; but that

if body does act on spirit, it is not by its own will and act, but in such a manner as to show that when a portion of matter acts upon any individual mind, it is only under the influence of general laws, impressed upon matter itself by some unseen controlling intelligence. We have, moreover, strong evidence in the case of dreams, that the mind is capable of being very active, when the body is reduced as nearly as possible to a state of inactivity.

Moreover we have evidence, that the Creator does resemble the intellectual part of ourselves, in the contrivance visible throughout nature, which is analogous to the operations of our own minds; and in the fact, that (like our own minds) He operates upon matter without making Himself visible to the bodily senses: and we have no evidence whatever, that He is, like ourselves, compound; *i. e.* composed of matter and spirit. We therefore conclude that God is, in his nature, a pure spirit.

Some writers, as Lord Brougham (in his *Discourse upon Natural Theology*, Part I. § 4) and Mr. Crabbe (Part I. ch. v. § 2), have entered into the question, whether we can prove the existence of supreme spirit without premising the human mind to be spirit: and others, as Locke (Book IV. ch. iii. § 6), followed by Crabbe, whether it is necessary to assert the absolute spirituality of the human mind. These writers assert, and no doubt justly in a certain

sense, that we should be limiting the omnipotence of the Creator, if we denied his power to communicate to matter the power of thought. But, after all, what do we know of matter, except by its properties? No one has shown better than Locke, that general terms do not represent actual essences, but only aggregation of qualities. And so, with regard to *spirit*, it is merely a general term to describe a distinct aggregation of qualities. To assert, therefore, that matter may have the properties of spirit, is strictly a contradiction in terms. We know nothing of either except by their qualities. We believe intuitively that these qualities are attached to individual beings, and that the individual man is more closely connected with the spiritual qualities than with the material. This belief on our part is altogether involuntary. (See Brougham, Note 4.)

And with regard to the question, whether we could prove the existence of a supreme spirit without premising the human mind to be spirit, the case is simply this:—We discern many effects produced throughout nature by causes, or by one cause, similar in operation to our own minds; and we conclude, upon further examination, that all these effects originate in one Being. We therefore conclude, that there is one Supreme Being, the Author of all nature, whose mode of operation and whose qualities resemble those of our own minds. It

is, therefore, certain, that it was *in point of fact*, by analogy from the operations of our own minds, that the First Cause was at first concluded to be intellectual. And even Crabbe, who contends that we are sure (previously to all inquiry as to the precise nature of our own minds) that a supreme intelligence alone could have caused the phenomena of nature, says, "In calling that cause spirit, we give a name to something above matter, and distinct from matter;" and subjoins, "It is not necessary that we should know any thing positive of the nature of that cause, but that it *contrives*." This, however, is one of the very points of resemblance to the human mind, from which, from the time of Socrates downward, men have argued that the First Cause is of the nature of mind: nor can it be shown that they would ever have had any notion at all of a First Cause, as different from matter, except by analogy from qualities possessed by the human mind, which show it to be "above matter and wholly distinct from matter." It is true that we, having already this notion, can view it apart from ourselves, and argue respecting matter and its Author, without reference to ourselves; but that is only because we have an habitual notion of spirit and matter, and are not constrained to be constantly referring to the source from which we derived this notion.

There remains the question, Whether He who

fashioned and arranged all matter into its present shape, was the Author of matter itself.

To this inquiry Natural Theology cannot return so distinct and positive an answer, as to our former inquiries. We know nothing of matter, in the abstract, as a real existence. We know not whether there is one substance, out of which all material substances are made. All we know of matter is in the individual substances we find subsisting, and the elements into which chemistry has resolved them. But those elements are still so many, that we can form no conclusion whatever, whether there is or is not one substance, out of which they are all made. All the evidence, therefore, which we possess for the existence of any of them, rests in the qualities they exhibit; in the powers they possess of acting upon other substances or beings, or being acted on by them. The feeling of the Platonic school upon this point was so strong, that they actually denominated the various bodily substances by the name of ποιότητες, which in Latin is *qualitates*, the word from which our word *quality* is derived. (Cic. *Quæst. Acad.* I. 6.)

Now all these qualities, of whatever kind, are means prepared to accomplish given ends, or at least adapted so as to produce them. Wherefore the whole of the evidence we have for the existence of matter, resolves itself into the evidence of design or adaptation throughout all material

substances; and all these, as such, must necessarily have sprung from the mind of that great Being, who designed and adapted them. The result then is, that all the phenomena of matter, every mode in which matter makes itself known to us, owes its existence to Him; that in this sense He is the Author of matter, as being the Author of all its phenomena. And thence it is a fair conclusion, that, if any such universal substance exists, it likewise must owe its origin to Him.

This, however, is a conclusion which none of the ancient philosophers reached. Some of them, as the Platonists (Cic. *Qu. Ac.* I. 6), thought it impossible that a spirit should exist without a body to operate with; and thence concluded that matter is the body of the soul of the world; and all without exception regarded matter as equally eternal with its great fashioner and governor. They maintained it as an indubitable truth, that it is impossible to bring any thing into existence out of nothing.

The conclusion at which we have arrived, however, still more clearly follows, from a consideration of the origin of our own being.

We have seen that there must have been a time when the first human being or beings began to exist; and, therefore, there must have been a time beyond which we cannot trace the existence of a single human spirit. Indeed we have no evidence whatever for the existence of the mind of any one of us, beyond the time

when we were born into the world. There is indeed a probability, from the resemblance in character, as well as in person, between parents and ancestors, and their children or descendants, that the mind of the child is in some inconceivable manner derived from the parent, as we know the body is. But there is no proof that this is the case; and the phenomena may be accounted for by supposing that the bodily constitution is capable of moulding the mind to such and such a character. At all events we have not the slightest evidence, that a single human spirit existed in any form or mode of existence before the formation of the first man; and if any such did exist, as its powers and faculties are of the same nature as those which subsist in God Himself, it must either have owed its existence to Him (as Socrates and his followers concluded it did), or have been itself eternal, *i. e.* self-existent, which is the very idea we have of God Himself. Moreover, the very circumstance that every human spirit which ever existed was, by its union with a material body, subject to God, completely negatives the idea that any human spirit can be self-existent. It therefore follows that every human spirit derives its origin from Him.

If, therefore, every human spirit must have its origin from God, it appears to follow, that as all material substance is acted on by spirit, and is consequently inferior to it, matter likewise must derive its origin from Him.

CHAPTER X.

THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD IS A MORAL GOVERNMENT; ON THE JUSTICE, EQUITY, AND GOODNESS OF GOD; AND ON THE ORIGIN OF EVIL.

WE have now established, even by natural reason, that there is a great Being, who existed prior to all other existence, material or spiritual, who is certainly the former and fashioner both of spirit and matter, and who (we have the strongest reason to believe) is their Author and Cause; who is undoubtedly the Author and Cause of all their various developments and combinations, so far as they have come to our knowledge; who likewise fashioned and constructed the universe, and all its parts and inhabitants, and gave them the properties they at present possess. We have seen that this great Being gives evidence of knowledge, wisdom, and power so unlimited, that we may well pronounce them infinite; and as from the nature of the case, He could never have begun to exist, so we conclude that He will never cease to exist.

But the great fundamental truths of natural religion are, not only that there is a God, but

also that "He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

Before, however, the unbeliever can be led to seek Him at all, or the doubting Christian to seek Him effectually, he must become acquainted with his moral attributes, such as his goodness, justice, and holiness; and with his moral connexion with us and claim to our obedience.

For this purpose let us again turn our attention to ourselves, and we shall see "that the Creator and Preserver of the universe is also the Governor and Judge of men; that the Author of the laws of nature is also the Author of the law of duty; that He who regulates corporeal things by properties of attraction and affinity, is the same Being that regulates the actions and conditions of men by the influence of the feeling of responsibility, the perception of right and wrong, the dread of evil, the hope of happiness, the love of good."

Let us consider the manner in which all the parts of the universe, the corporeal and intellectual, the animal and moral, are connected together; and we shall find that we cannot separate in our thoughts the Author of the one from the Author of the other.

Paley has well described (ch. x. § 5) the organs by which voice is produced in ourselves and in other creatures; the curious structure of the windpipe in particular, and that of the

tongue. But all this curious structure would be of no avail without something to work it; and that something is the air. Moreover, though living in an atmosphere capable of producing and transmitting articulate sounds, and though provided with organs fitted to articulate, man would never attain to the use of language, if he were not endued with another set of faculties. The powers of memory, of abstraction, generalization, and classification, of reason and judgment; the tendencies which occasion the inflections and combinations of words, are all necessary to the formation and use of language. These, therefore, are parts of the same scheme, of which the bodily faculties, by which we are enabled to speak, are another part. The mind of man, with all its intellectual endowments, is the work of the same Artificer, by whose hands his bodily frame was fashioned. He is "the Author of those wonderful powers of thinking and judging, discovering and inferring, by which we are able to reason concerning the world in which we are placed, and which aid us in lifting up our thoughts to the source of our being Himself."

Again, we were employed in considering the artificial structure of the human eye. That organ could have no operation without light. But how small a portion does the mere perception of light constitute of the advantages derived from the combination of sight and light!

We possess ulterior faculties, by which sight becomes a source of happiness and good to man. "The sense of beauty, the love of art, the pleasure arising from the contemplation of nature, are all dependent on the eye. The sense of beauty both animates and refines our domestic tendencies. The love of art is a powerful instrument in raising us above the mere cravings and satisfactions of animal nature. The expansion of mind which rises in us at the sight of the starry heavens, the cloudcapped mountain, the boundless ocean, seems intended to direct our thoughts by an indefinite, but most impressive feeling, to the infinite Author of all."

Again, we have noticed the manner in which plants are nourished by various properties in the earth and in the air. But this whole subject is connected with man; and with man in a state of society. Under his hand the earth, by cultivation, not only supplies a sufficiency for the wants of the individual and his family, but also produces a quantity exceeding the wants of the cultivator. Now cultivation leads by degrees to property in land; and the production of a surplus by those who choose to cultivate it, leads to inequalities of property and of rank. By this means some are enabled to employ themselves in other ways, beside the cultivation of the soil; and the accumulation of property beyond the wants of the individual, leads to mental cultivation and improvement,

to arts and accomplishments, and to all the arrangements and refinements of civilized society. These are all developments of the constitution of the earth, as connected with plants and with man ; but they would all remain idle possibilities, if the nature of man had not a corresponding direction. If man had not a social and political tendency, a disposition to congregate and co-operate, to distribute possessions and offices amongst the members of the community, to invent arts and recreations, to make, and obey, and enforce laws, the earth would in vain be ready to respond to the care of the husbandman. "Must we not then believe, that He who created the soil, also inspired man with those social desires and feelings, which produce cities and states, laws and institutions, arts and civilization? and that the apparently inert mass of the earth is a part of the same scheme as those faculties and powers with which man's moral and intellectual progress is most concerned?"

Still further: the Author of the structure of animals is also the Author of their instincts; and these instincts often assume, in a remarkable manner, the character of affections. "The love of offspring, of home, of companions, are often displayed by animals in a way that strikes the most indifferent observer:" and yet those affections are just as much instincts as those by which they seek their food, and provide for

the continuation of the species. Nor, again, can we imagine, that the structure of affections in animals proceeds from any other source than the Author of the corresponding affections in man, connected as they are with his bodily frame in a manner so analogous. And who can place in separate provinces the affection of father and mother, of brothers and sisters? or disjoin man's love of his home, his clan, his tribe, his country, from the affection he bears to his family? Thus the Author of our corporeal frame, is also the Author of our capacity of kindness and resentment; of our love and our wish to be loved; of the desire of esteem, of knowledge, of society, of honour; of all those conditions, in short, of our moral being, which are occasioned by our being placed together in definite relations amongst each other.

But further still, when we consider man in his *relations* to his fellow-men, then comes in the idea of *duty*. We are all sensible that others owe something to us, in consequence of those relations; and we must, consequently, own that we owe something to others; that there is such a thing as *equity* between man and man. And we are continually led (without any previous intuition of our own, and by an involuntary and unavoidable process of our minds) to form judgments concerning the actions of others, and concerning our own actions, as right and wrong; or what we ought or ought not to do or feel in

regard to others. I do not say that that judgment is infallible; but simply that we have such a faculty, such a tendency of mind. And when we apply that judgment to ourselves, to our own actions or emotions, we call it *conscience*. It is an involuntary intuitive decision, which the mind is impelled to make; sometimes wrongly, it is true, according to the more or less correct notions of justice we possess: but which still it will and does make, whether it chooses or not, as to the rightness or wrongness of actions or passions. And when it condemns ourselves, we involuntarily feel shame; as, on the other hand, when it approves us, we involuntarily feel pleasure and satisfaction.

But this conscience does not merely approve or condemn actions in which our fellow-men are concerned; it passes its judgment upon every thing we do or feel. And in every part of the globe, so far as we have information, its condemning power impresses the soul with fear and dread; the dread of some unseen Power, who is Himself just and retributive; whose approbation stamps their value upon actions, and whose vengeance in one shape or another hangs over the transgressor. "Now can we conceive that whilst the other springs of action are balanced against each other by the Creator, this, the most pervading and universal regulator, is no part of the original scheme? that, whilst the love of animal pleasure, of power, of

fame, the regard for friends, the pleasure of bestowing pleasure, were infused into man, as influences by which his course of life was to be carried on, and his capacities and powers developed and exercised; this reverence for a moral law, this obligation of the feeling of duty (a feeling which is every where found in some degree or another), was given for no purpose, and belongs not to the design? Such an opinion would be much as if we should acknowledge the skill and contrivance manifested in the other parts of a ship, but should refuse to recognise the rudder," as proceeding from the mind and intuition of the shipwright.

"If this supposition be too extravagant to be admitted, it remains that man, intended (as we have already seen), from his structure and properties, to be a discoursing, social being, acting under the influence of affections, desires, and purposes, was also intended to act under the influence of a sense of duty; and that the acknowledgment of the obligation of a moral law is as much a part of his nature as hunger and thirst: that, therefore, in conceiving man as the work of a Creator, we must imagine his powers and character given him, with an intention, on the Creator's part, that this sense of duty should occupy its place in his constitution as a thinking and active being; and that this directive and judiciary principle, which we call conscience, is a part of the work of the same Author

who made the elements to minister to the material wants of the creature."

"This principle of conscience, it may be further observed, does not stand upon the same level as the other impulses of our constitution, by which we are prompted or restrained. By its very natural essence it possesses a supremacy over all others." We feel that it is a sufficient and ultimate answer to the question, why we should do an action? that we have an overwhelming conviction that we ought to do it; and a sufficient answer to the question, why we should not do an action? that the judge within forbids it.

"We appear then to be using only language which is well capable of being justified in saying that this irresistible esteem for what is right, this conviction of a rule of action extending beyond the gratification of our irreflective impulses, is an impression stamped upon the mind by the Deity Himself, a trace of his nature, an indication of his will, an announcement of his purpose, a promise of his favour: and, though this faculty may need to be confirmed and unfolded, instructed and assisted by other aids, it still seems to contain within itself sufficient evidence, that the higher objects of man's existence are to be attained by means of a direct and intimate reference of his thoughts and actions to the Divine Author of his being."

The ancients saw with various degrees of

clearness, that man derived from his Maker a moral character. Thus the Stoics inquired, Whence could man obtain prudence, faith, virtue, &c., except from the gods? It is true that they made no distinct reference to conscience; but they clearly believed in the abstract notion of right and wrong (which is the foundation of conscience) as derived from the Author or Authors of man's being. (*Cic. Nat. Deor.* II. 32.)

“Such, then, is the Deity to whom the researches of Natural Theology point. With the material world we cannot stop. If a superior intelligence have ordered and adjusted the succession of seasons and the structure of the plants of the field, we must allow far more than this would seem to imply; we must admit still higher wisdom for the creation of the beasts of the field with their faculties; and higher wisdom and more transcendent attributes for the creation of man. And when we reach this point, we find that it is not knowledge only, not power only, not foresight and wisdom alone, which we must attribute to the Maker of the world, but that we must consider Him as the Author of a reverence for moral purity and rectitude. And if the Author of such emotions in us, how can we conceive of Him otherwise, than that these qualities of purity and rectitude are parts of his own nature;” that He is not only wise and great,—incomparably beyond our highest conceptions,

—but also that He is *pure* and *holy*; that He is strictly *just*, that He is *benevolent*. For the conscience, which is undoubtedly his work, and which is evidently supreme over all our faculties and impulses, gives its verdict with greater uniformity in favour of whatever is pure, and just, and kind, than in favour of any other thing⁴.

It is true that this portion of the subject is not without its difficulties. Conscience is not uniform in its voice. In one person it condemns what in another it approves; and the same may be said of different countries and communities. And no doubt we begin here to find our need of revelation, to instruct us accurately which of all these things are right and which are wrong. But still conscience does speak with sufficient uniformity, to show that there is such a power, and that it works by certain laws, and has a certain standard. It is true, again, that certain impulses of our nature are at times in direct opposition to the law of conscience; and reason cannot prove that these impulses are not imparted by the Creator of the conscience: nay, it would appear as though the passions, which are the source of these impulses, must have come from Him. On the other hand, there are scarcely any of these impulses which are not modifications or exagger-

⁴ The previous portion of this chapter is chiefly derived from Whewell's *Bridgewater Treatise*, Book III. ch. i.

rations of that which is in itself good, or at least not evil; and so there may have been originally no contrariety. But this difficulty will be considered more fully in a future portion of this work.

It is true, again, that the *equity* of God does not appear perfectly free from doubt by our natural light. There are inequalities of our natural endowments, to go no further; whilst there is no evidence whatever that men have done any thing in any previous state of existence, to deserve inequality. It is true that the Egyptians, and the Greek philosophers from them, as Pythagoras and others, have taught that there is a perpetual transition from one state of existence in this world to another: but there is no universal or even general tradition to that effect; nor is there any evidence whatever of any previous state of existence; and the negative evidence of our consciousness is directly against such an idea. We have no recollection whatever of any thing which happened to us before our birth into this world. Plato, indeed, thought, (*Menon*, § 15. 18,) that the rapidity with which children acquire knowledge proves that they are not acquiring it for the first time, but that it is the revival of knowledge obtained in a previous life; but this is altogether theory, and the phenomena do not require it. The opinion that the child is endowed with faculties calculated for the purpose

of the rapid acquisition of knowledge is quite sufficient to account for all the facts. And as there is no evidence that these inequalities of condition are of the nature of records and punishments for acts committed in a previous life, so likewise, it is equally certain that they do not always meet with any compensation in the course of their existence in this world. And hence, and from many other such inequalities, wise men have inferred the probability of another state of existence subsequent to this, in which these inequalities shall be made up for: but we need a Divine revelation to convert this probability into certainty.

So, again, there are abundant reasons in the works of nature, to infer that the Creator is *benevolent*. To use the formula of Paley: "In a vast plurality of instances in which contrivance is perceived, the design of the contrivance is beneficial; and the Deity has super-added pleasure to animal sensations, beyond what was necessary for any other purpose; or when the purpose (so far as it was necessary) might have been effected by the operation of pain." And to adopt his illustration: "The young of all animals" in particular "appear to receive pleasure simply from the exercise of their limbs and bodily faculties, without reference to any end to be attained, or any use to be answered by the exertion." So it may

be said, that a man in the vigour of life is impelled to exertion, whether of body or of mind, by the pleasure he finds in exertion; often without any direct reference to any end to be attained; still more frequently when the end to be attained is nothing but the accomplishment of new results, or the acquisition of increased knowledge, without any reference whatever to their utility.

The Stoics, following Socrates, strongly supported the benevolence of the deity, (or deities, as they supposed,) but principally in regard to man. This they argued, partly from the structure of his body, which is so admirably adapted to the mode of life designed for him; partly from the endowments of his mind, amongst which they principally specified the power of reason, as well as that of knowing deity and our relation to deity and to mankind; partly again from the observation that all natural things are so constructed as to conduce to the benefit of man. (Xenophon, *Mem. Socr.* I. iv. Cic. *Nat. Deor.* II. 54—64.) It was not, however, given to natural reason to discover that this benevolence is not confined to man, but extends to all the works of the Creator.

No doubt there are exceptions and difficulties; and these the unbelievers of all ages have pointed out. (See Cic. *Nat. Deor.* III. 26—36.) In the cases of venomous animals and noxious insects, there is an appearance of

contrivance directed to the infliction of pain; and so with regard to the fact that many animals, not excepting man, procure their subsistence by preying on each other; or even destroy each other without any apparent object. With regard to the noxious animals, however, it may be observed, that the contrivance is conducive to the good of the animal itself, either for self-defence, or for the subduing and killing of its prey; and that these powers are sparingly given; viz. only to one or two species in a whole genus: so that only a few are actually venomous, whilst the whole tribe is guarded by the property possessed by those few. And so with regard to insects,—they are generally noxious either in the pursuit of sustenance, or for the propagation of their species; so that the direct object of the contrivance is good, and the pain occasioned by it merely incidental. And the fact that we have not yet discovered any good to be derived from the pain they inflict, does not prove that no such good does result from it. With regard to the destruction of animals by each other, we may observe that, as all animals are intended to die, it does not appear that any mode of death exists much easier than that of being destroyed by each other. Either disease or gradual decay would, in all probability, produce much more pain, or at least suffering. There is another consideration; viz. that it

seems desirable, for the sake of keeping the world always full, and allowing the proportion of different animals to be modified according to circumstances, to cause animals generally to produce more than the actual occasion requires; so that there may always be a supply ready to fill up any casual deficiency. But, if that be done, there must likewise be a provision for removing such portion of that superfluity as may not be actually required; and no method appears so easy and unexceptionable as that of appointing one species of animals to keep down the superfluous produce of another. (See Paley, ch. 26.)

There is another consideration. We know that pain, applied to ourselves, may be actually beneficial in a moral point of view. It is surprising that, in all the discussions of Cicero's time, of the question whether pain is an evil or not, no party appears to have maintained that it is a positive benefit. The Stoics might have been expected especially to maintain this position; as they above others professed to cultivate a lofty and heroic spirit, which despised the ills of life. It might have been expected that they should perceive that pain calls forth that spirit, and strengthens it by affording materials to work upon. But it was not so. Their fortitude rested, as they said, upon a simple indifference to pain; upon accustoming themselves not to perceive it. Still it is clear,

that, upon principles freely recognised by the ancient heathen philosophers, we may contend, that to many, pain is a positive moral benefit; and that being the case, we have no reason to complain of any particular method in which the Creator may choose to administer pain. Moreover, the cases we sometimes witness, in which animals appear to cause wanton pain to each other (for example, the cat playing with the mouse before killing him), may be intended to exhibit to our eyes, in the inferior creatures, examples of evil qualities, in order to teach us to dislike those evil qualities (just as we are taught to admire diligence and prudence in the ant and bee); whilst at the same time the circumstance, that these creatures are not in a state of moral responsibility, prevents those actions from being morally evil in them which would be so in ourselves.

These appear to be the chief exceptions to the rule of universal benevolence in the Divine contrivances. There remain, however, other difficulties. We have been constrained to admit, that, although it cannot be proved that pain is ever an object of direct contrivance with the Divine Being, yet it is incidentally attached to that which is contrived: and as the whole constitution of nature is in fact, whether directly or indirectly, an emanation from God, we may ask, how it is that pain exists any where in creation? Then, besides bodily pain,

there is likewise a larger portion of mental distress and anxiety entailed upon mankind, which at first sight may appear contrary to the benevolence of the Creator.

There are several solutions of this difficulty. First, pain in some instances acts as a warning, to guard against some greater evil. Fire causes pain as we approach it nearly, and thus prevents our destroying ourselves inadvertently. Certain painful diseases attach to certain transgressions of the law of prudence or conscience; and we know that these do in fact act as warnings to prevent men from committing these transgressions, or as corrections to wean them from them; not in all cases, but in such a number of cases as to make it highly probable that this is one of their ends, if not a principal end. The same may be said of the various kinds of mental pain, which often accompany or follow similar transgressions. The suffering of pain and sorrow likewise calls forth virtues of various kinds; such as fortitude and patience in those who suffer, and compassion and exertion for their alleviation on the part of those who witness their sufferings. And the former class of virtues are observed to form a higher description of character, and are capable of doing much more for the benefit of mankind, than is ever done by those who are not so disciplined; whilst the compassionate virtues cause in their operation degrees of plea-

sure, both in those who exercise them and in those who are the objects of them, much higher and more durable than the pleasures arising from joy. They likewise bind men together in a degree which is not produced by any other cause, and thus conduce to the general benefit and happiness of mankind. Thus they bring a present reward in many cases: and if in the case of the sufferer this does not compensate for the pain and grief sustained (which in many cases it apparently does not), still there is the possibility that there may be a future state, in which a full recompense may be made for the evil sustained in this; and, if so, the goodness of God is fully justified.

Still, it will no doubt be observed, that there are great multitudes who do not appear to derive any benefit from grief and pain,—who are not thereby trained to virtue,—who are not even thereby restrained from transgressions against prudence and conscience. Not only so, but it may even be inquired, Why should there be any such transgressions? Is it not at least a defect of goodness to create beings even capable of bringing evil upon themselves? To these inquiries I am not aware that any reply absolutely satisfactory can be given.

The difficulty has engaged the attention of thinking men from a very early period: but anterior to Christianity no satisfactory elucidation

tion of the subject appeared. The ancient Greek and Roman philosophers for the most part regarded *matter* as the cause of imperfection and evil, and they regarded matter as self-existent. The ancient Persians considered light and darkness as created by the Supreme Being, and the latter as the cause of all evil: in this they were followed by the Marcionites and Manichees. The Gnostics endeavoured to account for it, by supposing the Supreme Being to have produced some spiritual beings, giving them the power of generating others; and imagined that after some generations, imperfection arose, and consequent evil. These, it is clear, are all assumptions, without any ground in reason.

The obscurity of the subject arises in part, if not entirely, from the limited nature of our faculties, and the limited range of our observation. We know that the Almighty does, in point of fact, work by general laws, and that these laws sometimes appear to thwart and cross each other. Thus the irregularities and changes in the earth's orbit are the result of general laws: and if we had not ascertained that in the course of time they will be cured by the operation of the same laws, we might be disposed to impugn the Divine wisdom. And so the apparent evils and imperfections at present existing may be the result of general laws, with which we are unacquainted; and of

which, possibly, we could form no distinct conception, if they were made known to us. There is besides this the consideration, that the present scheme of Divine government may be only a part of a vast plan carried on throughout a period of time inconceivable to us; and if so, we cannot expect by seeing only a part to understand even the bearing of that part upon the whole. And we may be sure that we should look with very different eyes upon the part, if we could but see and comprehend the whole. How perplexed must a child often be at the conduct even of the best of parents! How often must that conduct appear to him the reverse of wise or kind! And yet we see the child, when arrived at the condition of a father himself, so thoroughly satisfied, that he pursues the self-same plans towards his children, which had once appeared to him so unkind and unwise.

These answers, however, rather account for our ignorance, than remove any portion of the difficulty, except, indeed, that which is really most important, viz. the impediment thrown in the way of our feeling towards our Creator as we ought to feel, and as it is for our happiness to feel. But a further reply may be made, which appears to remove a considerable portion of the speculative difficulty.

We know that the condition in which we are placed is one in which we possess a liberty

of moral action; not an absolute and entire liberty, but yet such a one as leaves us the consciousness that we are responsible for our conduct. If, however, we had been so constituted, that we could not commit any transgression of the rules of prudence or conscience, we must either have possessed such an entire knowledge of all the remotest consequences of our minutest feelings and actions, and such a power of regulating them, as would, in reality, have constituted us gods; or we must have been restrained altogether from liberty of moral action, and consequently have been mere machines. If the former be the case contemplated, then there would be no gradation of being whatever; and that may (for aught we know) be impossible; *i. e.* it may be impossible for a created being to be absolutely perfect, as the Creator is perfect. If, then, there are to be imperfect beings, they must be either endued with liberty of moral action, or be mere machines. We have no experience to show us what would be the condition of a being of intellectual powers and affections like our own, but incapable of acting unwisely or viciously; incapable likewise of feeling either pity or gratitude, or of exciting those feelings in others; incapable of the mercy and compassion of God, of the redemption of Christ, and of the everlasting rewards held out in the next world to triumphant virtue. This is the

very view taken by St. Irenæus, perhaps the earliest known writer who has noticed the subject. If that had been our condition, "good could not have afforded pleasure to the mind, nor would the revelation of God have been valued, nor virtue have been an object of desire. . . . For what enjoyment of good could there be in those who did not take pains for it? or what reward to those who had not contended for it?" (*Adv. Heres.* IV. xxxvii. 3.) Is there, indeed, a Christian man, who would exchange his present condition of liberty and hope, with all its awful responsibilities, for the condition of a creature, who could not, indeed, suffer pain or misery in consequence of transgression, but would be debarred from all the best and happiest feelings of our present nature, and from all the glorious hopes held out to us for eternity? Natural reason, it is true, does not teach us these feelings or hopes; but it may teach us, that if these feelings are real, and these hopes will be realized, the condition of creatures capable of them must be much preferable to that of those who have them not; and, consequently, that it may not only be consistent with the Divine goodness, but the highest instance of it, to endue a portion of his creatures with various degrees of imperfection and moral responsibility, even at the risk that a majority of them might use their liberty to their own destruction and permanent unhappiness.

CHAPTER XI.

ON THE GENERAL PERSUASION OF MANKIND THAT THERE IS AN INVISIBLE PROVIDENCE.

IT does not need proof at the present day, because it is generally admitted as a fact, that mankind agree, and always have agreed to acknowledge some invisible object of worship. This worship may be directed towards images, as amongst the ancient Greeks and Romans, and modern Hindoos; or towards shapeless stones and pillars, as amongst the ancient Phœnicians; or towards fire, or the sun, as amongst the ancient Persians; the object of worship may be acknowledged to be malevolent, as amongst the inhabitants of Ceylon; he may be embodied in human form, as in Thibet; the objects of worship may be many or few: but still there is every where some invisible being or beings supposed to exercise an influence upon human affairs, and to be in the habit of, at least, punishing those, who act in a manner displeasing to them. A few philosophers may have doubted this influence; but the mass of mankind have always believed it; not only this, but there have been many countries in which one supreme Governor was

acknowledged. To say nothing of the Christian and Mahometan nations of the present day, who cover the whole of Europe, two-thirds of Asia, the North and South of Africa and much of the interior, and two-thirds of America; one supreme God was acknowledged by the ancient Greeks and Romans, by the ancient Persians and Egyptians, and by nine-tenths of the original inhabitants of America. They might not, and did not, recognise in Him all that we acknowledge; for they did not unite in one Being the Creator, the moral Governor, the future Judge; but they did acknowledge an invisible government, distributing rewards and punishments, and one supreme invisible Being.

Now there appear to be only three rational ways of accounting for this persuasion. The first is, that there is sufficient evidence from observation and experience, to warrant mankind in adopting the idea as the result of their individual reasoning; the second, that He who first made mankind, revealed the fact to the first of the human race, from whom it has been transmitted through successive generations to the present day; the third, that (without revealing it) He has impressed on mankind in general a tendency and disposition to receive this truth when stated to them, or to see the existing evidence for it. Whichever of these

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be the true hypothesis, or possibly two, or the whole, still the fact will be established, that there is an invisible moral Governor. For if the evidence *be* such as to have convinced the majority of mankind in all ages and countries, such a strength of evidence could not rest upon any thing but the truth of the fact; and if the Creator has either revealed the fact, or impressed on mankind a tendency to receive it, it follows, of course, that it must be true.

It has, however, been objected, that this consent is not universal; and therefore that we cannot argue from it. In reply we may grant, that if any parties have laid stress upon the word *universal*, as though the whole of the argument rested upon it, of course, so far as that assertion is invalidated, the argument is overthrown. But it does not appear to be sufficiently proved, that there is a nation which owns no invisible power influencing human affairs. Travellers who have spent a short time amongst some extremely barbarous nations (as some of the inhabitants of the frozen regions of North America), have reported such things of them; but it may reasonably be questioned, whether these travellers had sufficiently mastered the language of those tribes, or become sufficiently acquainted with their habits of thought, to ascertain the truth with any

certainty. But supposing the fact to be, that there are a few tribes in remote corners of the globe, who have totally lost all notion of superior spiritual beings, or even have never acquired it, this can only weaken an argument which should rest upon the *universal* consent of mankind; but it would very slightly impair that from their *general* consent in all ages and countries. We are influenced by a much less general consent than this, to adopt certain principles of social conduct, certain maxims of prudential and economical management, by which our habitual conduct in human affairs is governed. In short, it is a fact, that there is a very general consent upon this point; and the existence of this fact has to be accounted for. We think the best method of accounting for it, is to suppose it true; and we think no other rational solution has been suggested.

Some have attempted to account for it, by ascribing it to the effect of men's fears; and that they have created by the force of imagination the superior power, under the influence of undefined fears, which needed something to rest upon. But this, even supposing it a reasonable account in itself, only removes the difficulty by a single step. Supposing fear to account for the persuasion of the existence of an avenging power, how are we to account for the existence of the fear itself? It appears much more probable, that the fear of vengeance

should have arisen from a previous belief in the existence of a holy, just, and all-powerful Being, than that a fear of which we can give no account, an indefinite causeless fear, should have given birth to an all but universal persuasion of the existence of some such power or powers. Moreover, fear accounts for only half the phenomena. The invisible being, or beings, in whom men have agreed to believe, are not merely objects of fear, they are supposed to confer benefits upon those who pay them due reverence; and thence they are addressed with prayers and offerings, not only deprecatory or expiatory, but also simply imploring benefits, such as health, children, success, and the like. They are therefore supposed to possess, at least, some share of benevolence. Now fear may possibly produce the persuasion of an avenging power, but not of a benevolent power. The hypothesis, therefore, fails of the very office of an hypothesis, and of the only thing which can recommend it to the attention of intelligent persons, viz. to account for all the phenomena.

Another favourite hypothesis with unbelievers is to ascribe the belief in deities to mere state policy, to a desire to have something more effectual to prevent resistance to authority than punishment. And they have some shadow of reason for this notion in the relation of history, that unmaking of Rome (for example)

introduced or established the religious system, which afterwards took such hold upon that city; and in the fact, that in the ancient politics, the magistrate was frequently, or perhaps generally, a priest, or capable of acting as priest; and that there have been persons in high stations, professing privately a disbelief of the popular religion, but yet conceiving it wise to keep up that religion, on account of the greater ease with which men might be governed, who retained the practice of that religion. But there are two great difficulties attending this hypothesis: the first, that we find kings and rulers not only keeping up the outward practices of the popular religion, but also acting in such a way as to show they believed it. Thus, amongst the Greeks and Romans, we constantly find cases of chiefs being hindered from their enterprises by what they supposed to be indications of the displeasure of their gods, so long as they retained a general regard for virtue and integrity, and had not become corrupted by wealth, and prosperity, and ambition. Not only so, but we find this belief in retributive unseen powers, prevalent even before any formal institution, and even before the existence of regular communities. Romulus acknowledged gods before Numa. The Greeks, in the earliest periods of their history, and even the Pelasgi, who preceded them, when as yet there scarcely existed

civil communities, the Persians and Babylonians in their earliest history,—all acknowledged objects of worship. Nay, even the most barbarous hordes, the nomadic Scythians and the rude tribes of North America, nations in whom the elements of civil community are of the very rudest character, have still had their deities; nay, some of these have entertained the belief in one only universal superintending power.

Another hypothesis has been put forth, which appears still more untenable, viz. that mankind have agreed amongst themselves to acknowledge superior beings; and that this mutual agreement, either alone, or with the aforementioned causes, is the ground of the general belief. But this is only evading the difficulty. For such an agreement can have taken place only in the very earliest period of history, when mankind were few in number, and confined to a limited locality. We have then, first, to discover a motive sufficient to induce the earliest inhabitants of the world to invent the notion of invisible beings, having uncontrolled power over them, and able to injure them, if it so pleased them, and restraining them by terror from actions to which they feel the strongest inclination, and in which they find the greatest gratification. This seems so improbable a notion for any set of men to invent, that it would require the very strongest

evidence to render it probable. But this is not the whole of what has to be accounted for. We have to give some sufficient reason why the whole of the descendants of these men, in all their dispersions and in all their generations, differing in the modes of external worship, have yet agreed that there is some invisible object of worship, some avenging and retributive power. What could possibly induce all men, every where, to acquiesce in so unwelcome a figment of the imagination?

There is another objection to our argument, which appears at first sight very plausible, viz. that it is extremely conclusive in favour of polytheism and idolatry, but that it yields no support to the faith in one God.

The truth however is, that polytheism and idolatry, apart from some mode of belief in one supreme Governor, have at no time been universal, or nearly so. In the earliest historical records with which we are acquainted, we find various tribes of the East incidentally mentioned, amongst whom the belief in one God prevailed. More recently, in the few centuries which precede the Christian era, although, no doubt, polytheism prevailed over the whole of Europe, and a considerable part of Asia, yet even with it there was evidently a recognition of one superintending power, superior to the other deities; whilst in Chaldea and Persia there was no such gross polytheism.

Not only this, but in idolatrous Greece and Rome, the most thoughtful and intelligent in one way or another recognised the existence of one sovereign power. Moreover, it would appear probable, that these nations had at one time acknowledged one only God; their most ancient documents evidently being built upon such a belief. And this ancient belief so far retained its hold amidst the prevailing polytheism, that it tinged the popular language, after it had ceased to influence the external modes of worship. Thus Tertullian (as already cited, ch. 2,) testifies that in his time the most ignorant of the heathen had expressions such as—God forbid, God grant, and the like, constantly in their mouths. Such expressions show that whatever may have been the current belief or disbelief, there was a time when belief in one sovereign Providence did generally prevail. And the general prevalence of such a belief must very greatly strengthen the impression, that the deductions to which our own independent reasonings have led us are correct. It may be accounted for fully, on the supposition of their correctness; and it cannot be accounted for in any other way.

CHAPTER XII.

THE DIRECT EVIDENCE FOR THE FACT OF GOD'S MORAL GOVERNMENT.

WE have, if possible, still stronger ground for believing that the Creator of the world is also its moral governor, in the fact, which I proceed to establish, that we can trace his agency as such.

If we acknowledge one God, the Creator and Upholder of all things, we must acknowledge that the whole machinery of natural causes works by his energy and under his guidance; and consequently, as we cannot suppose Him ignorant of the results of his arrangements, that the whole sequence and connexion of events are arranged by Him. He has left much liberty to his rational creatures; but still, if we can any where discover that the connexion of cause and effect subsists between events, and that the connexion is regulated by certain laws, we must acknowledge these laws and their results to be the work of the Creator.— (See Butler's *Analogy*, Part I. ch. 1, 2.)

Now, it must be acknowledged, that in any

settled community, as a general rule, "the prudential management of ourselves and our affairs produces tranquillity, satisfaction, and many temporal advantages; whilst rashness, profligate negligence, and wilful folly, bring after them many inconveniences and sufferings." It must likewise be acknowledged, that prudence and indiscretion are moral qualities, partaking at least of the nature of virtue and vice. Here then is an instance of moral government.

We find, likewise, in the natural course of things, and without any direct intimation of the will of the Creator, the laws and customs of society positively punish many vicious actions; sometimes by direct enactments, sometimes by the general discountenance of society towards those who are guilty of them; and that there is also "a fear and apprehension of those punishments in the event of discovery, in those whose conduct renders them liable to them." Conversely, good actions are sometimes rewarded by direct authority; more frequently by the general esteem and countenance of society. This, then, is another proof; for this disposition or tendency in mankind must have been implanted by the Creator. It does, indeed, sometimes happen, that good actions are punished, as in the case of religious persecution; but then they are not punished

as good, but as being supposed to be injurious.

Again, through the operation of general laws, which of course emanate from the Author of all, "virtue, *as such*, is actually rewarded, and vice, *as such*, actually punished." It is notorious that through the simple operation of our faculties and powers, "the natural attendants of innocence and virtue are inward security and peace, and a disposition and readiness to enjoy the ordinary gratifications of life; whilst, on the other hand, misconduct is attended with uneasiness of the mind;" (quite distinct from a mere sense of loss or harm;) and when the misconduct is great, the uneasiness is frequently such as to produce positive misery, and to incapacitate the person for enjoyments of any kind. Moreover, "all good men are disposed to befriend good men as such, and to discountenance the vicious as such." "Public honours and advantages are often, in fact, the consequence of eminent justice, patriotism, and the like, considered as virtues; and death itself, but more frequently infamy and external inconvenience, the consequence of opposite conduct, considered as vices." In families again, "children and servants are punished for falsehood, injustice, &c., and rewarded for the contrary," regarded as evil or good in themselves. It appears, then, that the Creator has not only given man a moral nature, but that He has likewise

placed us in a condition in which the natural operation of the character of men so influences others, that we favour and reward virtue, and punish and discountenance vice, on account of their inherent qualities; nor can it be shown that there is in any one a natural disposition to do the reverse, although individuals, in course of time, may acquire such a disposition.

Finally, there appear in these operations of our moral character a tendency to increase instead of diminish. Vice would be much more frequently punished than it actually is at present, did it not escape notice: whilst the power of an individual or class of men over another individual or class has an evident tendency to increase, in proportion as it discountenances evil; and that power which supports virtue does evidently more and more prevail over that which supports vice. It must be acknowledged, indeed, that this assertion does not hold true in every individual case, and sometimes not in a whole generation; but is evidently so in the long run, and in the course of a considerable period. Nay, so strong is this tendency, that virtue has in many cases gained a gradual power for the person exercising it, without his intention, and with an overwhelming proportion of power arrayed against him: so strong is the force of that moral character with which the Creator has endued us.

All these remarks may be made in the gene-

ral, and will be confirmed by the experience of individuals. But we may bring instances on a large scale, to show that some moral principle is at work in the government of the world.

When the Persians invaded the Greeks, the Athenians, standing forth in defence of their common country, grew up into a powerful naval force, and for a while used the power they obtained beneficially, for the advantage of the whole Grecian confederacy. So long as they continued to act in this manner, their power and wealth increased. But when the possession of power caused them to become ambitious and rapacious, so that they oppressed and plundered their allies,—the Lacedemonians were raised up to keep them in check; and at length subdued them so totally, that they destroyed their fortifications, and imposed on them a form of government most abhorrent to their feelings. So again, when subsequently the Lacedemonians themselves became intoxicated with power, and imitated the oppression of the Athenians, they were checked and ultimately ruined by the Thebans. Then again the Romans, whilst they preserved their simplicity of character and generosity of spirit, and regard for religion (as they understood it), increased in power and influence over surrounding nations, and were free and independent at home. But when success rendered them luxurious, rapacious, and oppressive, then

civil strifes prevailed to such an extent, that individuals, by pandering to the passions of contending parties, were able to enslave the Romans themselves, and deprive them of almost every vestige of liberty.

We are able to appeal to these instances, because we happen to have the histories of these nations in sufficiently minute detail; and where we possess the history of other nations in the same detail, we shall find that this national reward and punishment is the rule of the Divine Providence. We have, indeed, the history of one other nation, that of Israel, in nearly equal detail; but as that history is mixed up with a Divine revelation, and we are concerned at present with that portion of Theology which is discoverable without revelation, I omit to dwell upon it. Otherwise, when we consider that a great change of national character on their part, in opposition to their own wishes and feelings, was the result of a belief in the earlier facts of that history, we must see that they are better established than the facts of any other history. But for the reason adduced, and because it is doubtful whether it may not be injurious to our own faith and reverence to examine that history as though it were the work of uninspired writers, I do not adduce it in evidence.

The observations, then, which we have already made, establish the fact that there is in

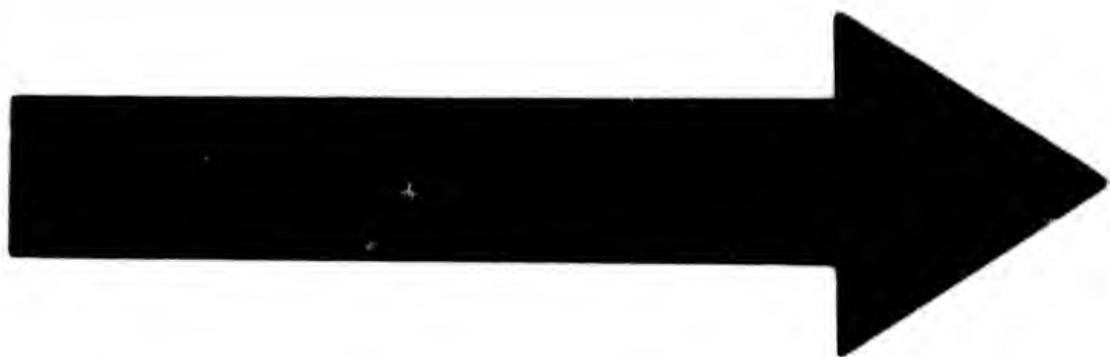
reality a moral providence exercised over the concerns of the world, and that it is exercised by the Creator.

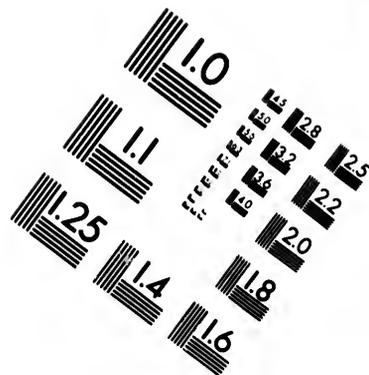
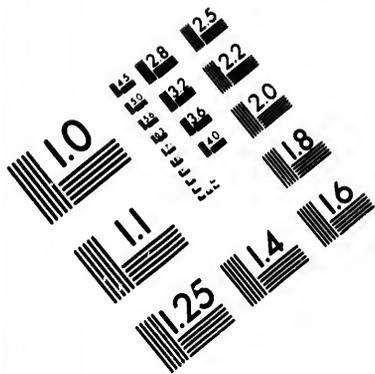
CHAPTER XIII.

ON A FUTURE STATE.

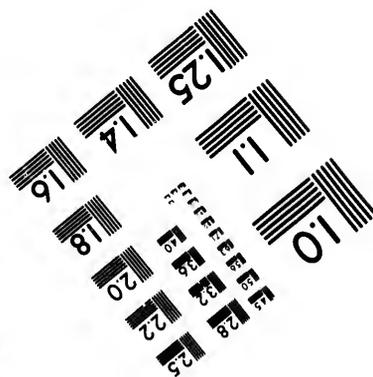
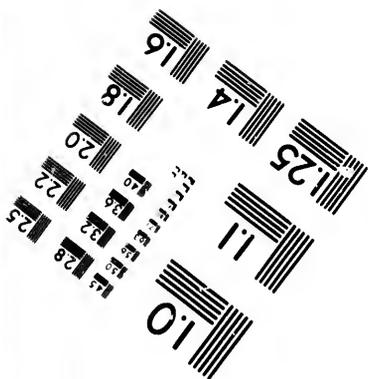
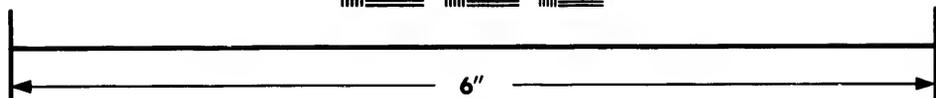
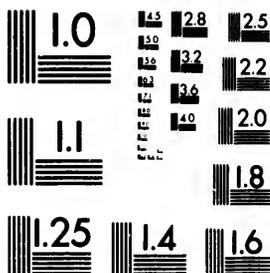
WE have seen in the previous chapters abundant reason to believe that the world is governed on a principle of rewards and punishments; that such and such conduct will by itself lead to happiness, and that an opposite line of conduct will, by the operation of natural causes, be productive of unhappiness. These rewards and punishments appear, to a certain extent, to be apportioned according to certain moral rules; and both from these rewards and punishments, and still more from the conduct of men towards each other, and from their feelings in regard to the conduct of others towards them, we get an idea of absolute *justice*; i. e. of the distribution of good and evil in exact accordance with merit and demerit.

But, although we have such an idea, we nowhere observe it fully realized. In the Divine government of the world, we occasionally witness instances in which men who act in direct contrariety, not only to kindness but also to justice,—who break through all those laws





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which nature teaches, and continue to do so to the end of their lives, and yet are prosperous. The ordinary results of such conduct do not reach them, and they die apparently without having ever incurred them. On the other hand, we occasionally see that a high degree of virtue exposes a man through life to all sorts of privation and suffering; and not only so, but that he is not favoured with that inward peace and tranquillity which are the ordinary attendants of virtue and piety. These inequalities occur so frequently, as to have attracted attention in all ages of the world; and thence, thoughtful men have been led to conclude, that the state of things in which we now live is an imperfect one; that it is part of a great scheme of which we only see a portion; and that there exists some future state of being, in which the indications of moral government we see here will be more fully carried out, and the absolute justice of God will be clearly exhibited. For that God is just; *i. e.* that He rewards and punishes according to merit and demerit, He has shown us in his providence: and as He who made us has also given us an idea of *absolute* justice, with a feeling of approbation for it, it is reasonable to suppose that He both possesses that quality Himself, and that He really acts according to it; and as nevertheless He has not provided in this present world any method of realizing it, it seems almost neces-

sarily to follow that He intends to provide some future state of existence, in which this idea shall be fully carried out in practice.

There is another similar consideration which deserves our attention. We derive from various sources the idea of *equity*; and one application of this idea is, that we should not place a person in an unfavourable position, without affording him some counterbalancing advantage. Now every person is conscious to himself that, in endeavouring to follow the moral rule suggested by God's providential government, he is drawn back, partly by a natural inclination to the contrary, partly by evil example, and other temptations. This is a condition in itself unfavourable; and there are many instances in which there is nothing in human life to counterbalance these unfortunate tendencies and this unhappy weakness. We must acknowledge that the being born with such dispositions, and liable to such disadvantages, was not (so far as we know) in consequence of any thing done in a former state; and that, were it not for these tendencies, many a man would have been much less vicious than he is, and consequently much happier in this world; to say nothing of another. Not only so, but many persons who have struggled on into virtue, in spite of this evil nature, would have found their pursuit of it much easier but for that; nay, they would to all appearance have

attained to higher virtue: at all events, their lives would have been more tranquil and happy. The only way, then, apparent to reason, of rendering this state of things consonant to Divine equity, is that there should be some future state of existence, in which these disadvantages will meet with adequate compensation.

The mind of man, it may be further observed, has a tendency to connect itself with futurity. Thus men plant trees, of which they know they shall not live to eat; and make dispositions of their property, which they cannot see realized: they compose literary works, and execute works of art, with the express hope of acquiring posthumous fame. Nay, men have been found who willingly laid down their lives for the benefit of their country,—thus tearing themselves away from that which they strove to serve, and by the very act depriving themselves (if this existence be all) of the power of enjoying the good they have done. These things rather indicate a tendency or instinct than a belief; and yet, as Cicero has well reasoned (*Tusc. Qu. i. 14, 15*), they lead to the conclusion that the soul is taught to look for an existence beyond this life.

These considerations, then, lead the thoughtful mind to hope that there may be some state after this. But then the question arises, what external probability exists that there will be

any such state. (See Butler's *Analogy*, Part I. ch. 1.)

Now, if we trace our existence in this world, we shall see that it has been in some respects altogether progressive. In the womb we were (to all appearance) endued with a mere animation; an existence scarcely higher than that of a sponge or an oyster. The change from this to infancy, in which we were to begin to obtain ideas, through the intervention of the senses, and the action of the mind, and to become capable of will, of passions, and affections, was a very great change. Yet provision was made, in the structure of the infant in the womb, for functions which he could never exercise when there, and could exercise only in a state which was then future. So again childhood, physically, intellectually, and morally, is a preparation for mature age. There are peculiarities of organic structure, totally useless to the child, but provided beforehand with reference to maturity: and in childhood the intellect and moral habits are both trained up with a view to the performance of duties to which the person cannot be called during childhood. And this progressive change of intellectual and moral functions, and previous adaptation for them, goes on into old age, and in most persons is only terminated by death; for it is only the few who live so long as to fall into second childhood: and even with regard to them, this

condition must be regarded simply as the commencement of death; which with them is an extremely gradual process, as compared with the majority of cases. As, therefore, our whole state in this life is progressive, especially so far as the moral being is concerned, it seems highly probable that when we appear to depart from life, it is for the purpose of proceeding to some other state of being, in which the faculties we have here acquired may be brought into some higher exercise.

This probability is strengthened by the analogy of natural facts. Several kinds of insects undergo a change of form, and of their manner of existence; and in each previous state of being, preparation is made for the next. For instance, the pupa or chrysalis of insects can be distinctly traced in the worm or caterpillar which preceded it; and would be a sure sign that the caterpillar state was not a permanent one, even if we had no knowledge of any such change. So again the butterfly is contained within the chrysalis; and the knowledge of that fact leads to the same conclusion. In the butterfly itself, however, there is nothing to indicate a continuance of being in another form: no other form concealed under that which appears; no training in improved habits of any kind, nor in any habits which cannot be fully exercised in the present state. And so the butterfly dies, without providing a suc-

cessor by the transmutation of his own form, as his predecessor had done. Man, on the contrary, goes on to the end of the present life, improving and developing his mental and moral faculties, and fitting himself for something higher and better. And if nothing higher and better is in store for him, but his existence is absolutely terminated by death, then analogy is broken. The insect which dies with faculties prepared for something higher, passes to a higher state of existence: it is reasonable to expect that the man should do the same.

Moreover, we appear to have faculties which, although employed in our present state, are never brought fully into exercise, and never satisfied: we have conceptions of the beautiful, of the great, of the noble, of the excellent, which are never satisfied in this state of existence; and which never can be satisfied, if there is no other state after this. And the very fact that the Creator has endued us with such conceptions, is a strong presumption that He intends them, at some time or another, to be satisfied.

This conclusion is strongly confirmed by the almost universal opinion of mankind on the subject. The *αἶδης* of the Greeks, the *inferi* of the Romans,—the circumstance that the latter reckoned the departed soul amongst the *dii*, or superior spiritual beings (dedicating the

sepulchre to the *dii manes*); the fact, that the most barbarous nations, such as the aborigines of the north of Europe and of America, or the South Sea Islands,—all, in one way or another, testify to the notion of a future state; many of them burying implements with their dead, which they imagine they will need in the next life: all these things are strong presumptions in favour of a future state. For they imply (as we asserted with regard to the belief in invisible beings) one or all of these three things: that the reason of the thing is so universally constraining, that it convinces all nations; that the Creator revealed the fact to the original parents of mankind, and that the knowledge of it has been continued by general tradition; that He has impressed a feeling, or instinct upon the human race, impelling them to hope for, and thence to believe in, such a state.

Nor has this persuasion been confined to the vulgar and ignorant. The most eminent men amongst the ancient heathen Greeks and Romans were of the same opinion. A few philosophers, such as Dicæarchus, Epicurus and his followers, Carneades, and some Academics, might advocate annihilation at death: but such men as Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero,—the greatest philosophers of their respective races,—together with Zoroaster amongst the Persians,—looked forward with

earnest desire to the hope of another existence beyond this, in which they hoped to be advanced to a condition resembling that of the gods, and to be admitted to their society.

This future state, then, being in so high a degree probable, it follows from the considerations which have been previously adduced, that it is in all probability a state of reward and punishment, and a state in which man will find the inequalities of his present condition rectified.

And this opinion is likewise confirmed by the general persuasion of mankind. To go no further than the Greeks and Romans, the "Odyssey" of Homer, and the "Æneid" of Virgil, represent the popular belief of those different races, that in the future state mankind will be divided from each other according to their conduct, and placed accordingly either in Tartarus or in Elysium; and that the vicious will either suffer direct punishment for misconduct committed in this life, or, at least, will remain in a melancholy and dissatisfied state, whilst the virtuous will dwell together in peace and tranquillity.

The opinions of the philosophers appear to have, in some degree, differed from those of the common people. Thus Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero, appear to have thought that the virtuous would be exalted, after no long interval, to a condition resembling that of

the gods, and to their society: but with regard to the vicious, whilst they believe with the vulgar in the certainty of Tartarus, and the punishments there inflicted, most of them appear to have leaned to the notion, derived from the Egyptians, that the less vicious would have to pass from Tartarus into the bodies of inferior beings, until they had expiated by a lighter punishment their offences in this state of existence. We may assert, however, that although the philosophers might differ from the generality or from each other, as to the mode of future reward and punishment, they almost universally supported the belief in such retribution.

The same remarks, then, will apply to this opinion of future retribution, which were made with regard to the belief in a future state in general; excepting that the persuasion is, perhaps, not quite so general.

CHAPTER XIV.

ON THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL.

THE natural argument for the future existence of the soul is likewise an argument for its eternal existence. This Cicero felt so strongly, that he said that when the Stoics granted that the soul continues to exist after the death of the body, they, in effect, granted its immor-

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tality. If our whole state here is progressive, and most of us become, up to the period of our quitting this world, more and more capable of improvement, and of high mental and moral action; and if this by itself is a strong argument, that this preparation is not likely to be altogether vain and aimless, but is intended to qualify us to exist in another state after we quit this world; if the fact that the soul does not at death yield up its interest in future events, but naturally and involuntarily frames to itself indirect methods of carrying on its individual existence, be a presumption that its Creator has endued it with (so to speak) an instinct of future existence; if the circumstance that the desire of the soul for enjoyment is never satisfied here, and that it has conceptions which it is not permitted to realize in this world, are arguments to lead us to think that there is another state where this capacity and longing for enjoyment is to be satisfied, and where these bright conceptions are to meet with answering realities;—if these are arguments for a future state at all, they are likewise arguments for an eternal existence in that state, or in states progressively higher, without limit and without end.

For, if our existence is to be continued beyond this life, what reason can be assigned why it should ever terminate? Our whole state, both intellectual and moral, up to the

commencement of death in its various forms, is progressive. Every advancement in knowledge and mental power not only renders us capable of a higher order of action, but of higher degrees of knowledge and power; which again are but preparations for a still higher order of action; and every exercise of our powers in action gives us the idea of higher intellectual power, and capacity for it. It is the same thing in matters of taste and imagination, and capacity for the beautiful and great. Again: in our moral training, all knowledge of moral excellence renders us capable of higher moral action; and all improvement in moral action gives us both ideas of something morally higher, and power to realize them in ourselves. Our nature, then, is progressive; its tendency is to unlimited advancement; and the only way in which that tendency can be carried out, is by affording us an unlimited existence.

This view is confirmed by the consideration of the strong resemblance in nature between mankind and the great Author of all existence. The mind of man appears to have capacities and modes of operation, both intellectual and moral, similar to those of the Divine mind; nay, it is by analogy from the human mind that we reason to the Divine. (*Cic. Tusc. Qu. i. 24. 27.*) We can, therefore, scarcely conceive that the great Creator would have constructed creatures of such eminent powers, capable of

continual development, and of continual advancement, and of an increased appreciation of the divine nature and works, and then have denied them that permanent existence, which alone would enable them to use fully the powers which he had imparted to them.

This opinion is not one of modern date, neither is it confined to those who have been instructed in revealed systems of religion, whether Jewish or Christian. Ancient heathen philosophers, both Greek and Roman, entertained that opinion, and upon similar grounds. Thus Cicero informs us (*Tusc. Quest. i. 16*), that Pherecydes had the reputation of being the first who asserted that the souls of men are immortal. Whether tradition was correct in affirming that he was the *first* to teach that doctrine, may be questioned; but I quote him to show, that the immortality of the soul was taught by one of the earliest Greek philosophers, six hundred years before Christ. Cicero adds, that his disciple Pythagoras very greatly established that doctrine. Now the doctrine of Pythagoras (as recorded by Diogenes Laertius) was, that the souls of the good are, after death, carried up on high; whilst those of the wicked are bound by the Furies in indissoluble chains. He likewise is said to have taught the doctrine of the transmigration of souls; viz. that after a while they pass from the state of death into other bodies, and will always

continue to do so. In what manner this doctrine is made to agree with the previous doctrine does not appear ; but, at all events, both imply that the soul never ceases to exist.

We have no distinct and avowed statement of the opinions of Socrates on this subject, unless we are to take his words, as supposed to have been reported in the *Phædo* of Plato, as truly representing his opinion. Be that as it may, Plato wrote that dialogue, both to record the understood sentiments of his master, and to embody his own : and the great object of the dialogue is, to prove that the soul does not perish when the body dies, but remains for ever in existence.

It is remarkable, however, that the argument of this dialogue (whether it really represents the conversation of Socrates on the day of his death, or is only the vehicle of opinions held by Plato or his master) is extremely deficient in cogency. The leading proofs are these:—

1. It is an ancient opinion, that souls of dead men sometimes return to earth: if so, they must have continued to exist after death.
2. The souls of men exist before their birth in some previous state: therefore, they have an existence independent of the body.
3. Things produce their contraries: therefore, death must be followed by life.
4. The soul is uncompounded: therefore, it cannot be dissolved.
5. Abstract ideas are permanent and unchange-

able existences; and the soul is the only thing capable of apprehending them: therefore, it is alive to them, and resembles Deity, and is consequently indissoluble. 6. Nothing can admit into itself the contrary quality to that quality which itself imparts; the soul imparts life to the body: therefore, the soul cannot admit death into itself, but departs from the body when the latter dies.

It is disappointing to observe how little of solid argument there is in these reasonings; in fact, there is not one of them which is not based upon some false or doubtful assumption. No wonder the opponent in Cicero (*Tusc. Quæst. i. 3*) is made to say, that when he laid aside the *Phædo*, all the impression it had made vanished; the only wonder is, that (as an argument) it made any impression at all. It is towards the latter part (§ 148) that Plato records, as expressed by Socrates, that language of confidence, that he was going to join the gods, which has been so often quoted, from the time of Cicero downwards (see *Cic. Tusc. Quæst. i. 29*): and this passage, as recording the sentiments of Socrates and himself, together with the general doctrine taught in it on this subject, are its chief merits.

Plato, himself, gave other reasons for holding the immortality of the soul. He thought (*Cic. Tusc. Quæst. i. 16*) its sublimated nature must carry it aloft when it quitted the body, until it

met with something congenial to itself;—that its attributes and powers showed it to be divine (20—22), and that it is consciously self-motive (*Phædrus*, § 51—53), and on both accounts, naturally eternal.

The *doctrine* taught in the *Phædo* is, that the soul is indestructible: that after death, those who have cultivated the love of knowledge, and have withdrawn the soul from the influence of the body, with its appetites and passions, will pass into the protection of the gods, and the society of good men, in the unseen place: that of the rest, some will go to Tartarus; others, after passing a restless existence below, will be transferred into the bodies of various animals, the most virtuous occupying the bodies of innocent and useful creatures: that of those who go to Tartarus, some, after various periods of torture, are permitted to escape, and transmigrate into bodies of animals, whilst others remain for ever; and that the first class, after a period of instruction under guiding spirits, will be translated to the dwelling and society of the gods, and remain there for ever.

Xenophon, another of the disciples of Socrates, puts into the mouth of Cyrus, on his death-bed, his own opinion, that the soul continues to exist after death (*Cyrop.* VIII. vii. 3), which he supports by the following arguments.

1. The souls of dead men torment those who

have injured them, and therefore are still living. 2. The honours paid to men after death show that they have not perished. 3. The soul gives life to the body, and lives whilst united to that which is mortal: *à fortiori*, it will live when separate from the body. 4. After death we see all the other parts of man dissolve, and return to their like; but we have no evidence that the soul dissolves.

Both the last are sound and correct arguments, if properly put: and the second would be sufficiently cogent, if employed only to show that men in general involuntarily hold the notion of the unending duration of the soul's existence.

This may be sufficient for the Greek philosophers: but Cicero affirms (*Tusc. Quest.* i. 12) that it was the general opinion of the ancients; nor does he less clearly give his own. In some of his philosophical dialogues, indeed, it is not always clear what sentiments he intends to adopt,—which of the supposed speakers represents his own views. But in his *Cato Major* (21—23), and in his *Lælius* (4), he professedly gives his own opinions; and in both he speaks in strong and ardent language of his hope of immortality. It is therefore right to presume, that in the first book of the *Tusculan Questions*, where he argues for the immortality of the soul, he is taking his own

ground; and it may be instructive to mark his arguments, and see how much more clear and practical they are than those of Plato; although he does not pretend to the same demonstrative proof as that writer.

He derives his first argument from the sacredness attached to places of sepulture, which is of very remote antiquity, and which shows a belief in the permanent interest the dead person has in his remains. The notions concerning deified men and women; the natural and universal care which persons feel and exercise respecting what will take place in this world after they have quitted it; the readiness of some men to die for their country; the disposition men show to perpetuate their names by poetry and works of art;—all are so many indications that men believe that the soul continues to exist after death. To this he adds, the universal consent of mankind in the actual belief in such continued existence, which he thinks is as effectual an argument for the immortality of the soul as for the existence of gods. After these arguments of his own, he subjoins that of Plato, from the self-motive power of the soul, which we have already given. He then proceeds to dwell upon the wonderful powers of the human mind, and argues, that they prove it to be of the same nature as deity, and, therefore, eternal. His

last argument is also that of Plato, from the uncompounded nature of the soul, which we have already seen.

These opinions and arguments will sufficiently explain the views of the most learned of the Greeks and Romans. Nor was this opinion confined to the learned. The accounts which Homer and Virgil give of the regions of the dead, exhibit the popular view of the subject: some believing simply in the indefinite existence of the soul; others believing additionally in transmigration. Nor was this belief confined to the Greeks and Romans. Theopompus (as quoted by Diogenes Laertius in the preface to his *Lives of the Philosophers*) testifies, that the Magi taught that men would come to life again and become immortal. Herodotus (ii. 131) testifies, that the Egyptians believed in the immortality of the soul, and its perpetual transmigration; and he is equally positive in stating (iv. 94, 95), that the Getæ held the former of these opinions. Indeed, so strong and general was this persuasion amongst the heathen nations of antiquity, that we find none denying it but the Epicureans and Stoics, together with some Academics. The former denied the immortality of the soul, because they denied its immateriality; being, as they said, wholly unable to conceive how the soul could possibly operate without the body: although, as Cicero has well observed (*Tusc.*

Quæst. i. 22), that it is equally difficult to conceive how the soul is capable of sense and perception in and by the body. The two latter denied the immortality of the soul, because they conceived that every thing which feels must be capable of grief and pain; and that whatever experiences pain must be mortal. (*Cic. Tusc. Quæst. i. 32*, and *Nat. Deor. iii. 13, 14.*) Notwithstanding this, they granted that the soul survives the body for some indefinite time; and, in so doing, granted that it possesses an existence not dependent on the body. It appears, likewise, that Dicæarchus wrote a treatise on the mortality of the soul. These exceptions are so comparatively trifling, that they detract in no important degree from the general persuasion of its immortality.

We come, therefore, to the argument which I have employed before. Since this persuasion is so general, however mixed up with error and absurdity of various kinds, what account can we give of it, if we do not attribute it to the fact that the persuasion is true?

The conclusions then to which we are led are these:—that there is one self-existent Being, the Author of all other existence, and, in particular, of this world in which we live: that the Divine Being exercises a moral providence over mankind, in which there are manifest traces of benevolence and justice, and in which the intention (where manifest) is uniformly benevo-

lent and just: that there are, however, many irregularities in this moral providence, which are capable of an easy explanation, if it is intended that this life should be a state of preparation for another, and that this future life should be a state of retribution: that there is the highest degree of probability, independently of these considerations, that our present state is not to be the termination of our existence, but only a preparation for another and a higher state; not only this, but that the intellectual and moral portion of our nature will exist for ever, and will be continually capable of advancement and improvement.

These conclusions, however, it must be granted, are not without their difficulties; but so are the whole of our practical principles, even of a temporal nature. It is seldom the case, that even in the ordinary prudential management of our affairs, the grounds of our conduct are so clear as not to admit of doubt or difficulty. The question, whether we shall choose this or that employment or profession, whether for ourselves or for our children, is beset with doubt as to its results: and the ordinary business of a tradesman, if narrowly examined, is equally involved in uncertainty as to its ultimate advantages. And yet persons do not hesitate to choose employments for life, or to embark in trade and commerce. The circumstance, therefore, that there are doubts

or objections hanging about the arguments we have employed, or the conclusions at which we have arrived, does not take away the fact, that we have the very highest degree of probability in favour of those conclusions, amounting, indeed, to moral certainty; and that of precisely the same kind as that by which we govern ourselves, without hesitation, in the ordinary concerns of life.

It is, moreover, to be considered, that we are placed by our Creator in this condition; with all these facts around us, and forming (so to speak) a part of our very being; that we conclude the Creator to be good and just, and to desire our happiness; that we see that He governs us by a moral providence, rewarding us when we act according to reason and prudence, and punishing us when we act in opposition to them. The natural conclusion then is, that, for our own happiness, we are bound to govern ourselves by the high probabilities in favour of a future state and immortality: the more especially as we see, that even supposing there were no state of conscious existence after this, virtue is in general the most productive of happiness, even during the present state of existence.

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CHAPTER XV.

ON THE BENEVOLENCE OF GOD TOWARDS
MANKIND IN PARTICULAR; AND ON A
PARTICULAR PROVIDENCE.

WE have already seen grounds for believing that the Supreme Being is benevolent in his very nature, and that his benevolence is shown towards his creatures; we have likewise seen that He exercises a moral providence over mankind. It is my present purpose to advance a step further, and to show that this benevolence is exercised towards mankind in particular, and that his moral providence is one of the instances of it. It is remarkable that this view of the Almighty Being is taken by Socrates, the earliest of those philosophers whose opinions on the subject are recorded; and that he suggests most (if not all) of the topics to which we must have recourse for the proof of our position. The only drawback is, that he conceived this benevolent care of man to extend to the various false gods whom his nation worshipped: but this was because he conceived them to be in part the agents of the Creator in the formation and government of mankind.

(See Xenophon, *Memorab.* I. iv. 11. 16; IV. iii. 3—12.)

The special favour of God to man is shown in some degree by the peculiarities of his physical structure. On these I shall not dwell at length, confining myself for the most part to those suggested by Socrates.

The first of these is the erect posture given to man, which enables him to see around him without effort during the whole of his waking hours; and in particular fits him for the contemplation and enjoyment of the beauties of the heavens, both by day and by night. Man differs from most animals in having hands; and from all in possessing such as are capable of constructing for him all the implements, utensils, furniture, instruments, machines, and structures suited to the ever-increasing and varying exigencies of civilized life. The power of articulate speech and of writing are likewise great blessings: for by means of them we carry on that varied intercourse of society which adds so greatly to the happiness of our existence. By their use we manage all the complicated relations of society; by them we can communicate our knowledge to each other, and treasure it up from age to age. Other creatures have, it is true, a certain power of communicating to each other facts in which they are interested; and they certainly do transmit knowledge by hereditary descent: for tribes of

birds, for instance, which by nature do not dread man, learn the instinct of dreading him in countries in which they come in frequent contact with him. But these powers bear no comparison with the corresponding powers as possessed by man. The sense of beauty and the perception of music are also powers, which, so far as we can observe, are peculiar to man; especially the first: and how much do both tend to refine our domestic relations, and to add to the innocent enjoyments of existence!

But if man is favoured in his body, how much more in his mind! Brute animals are enabled by instinct to provide for the various exigencies of a limited existence: but that of man is infinitely varied, and its variety adds no little to its happiness: and it is his reason which qualifies him to make provision for this varied existence. So again, animals have means of defence against a number of the most ordinary dangers of life, and remedies for the evils most likely to occur to them: but they have no ultimate defence against man; who, if he do but bend his mind perseveringly to the purpose, can prevail against and vanquish any creature which has hitherto become known to him: whilst he, on the other hand, has a defence against all dangers, and a remedy for all evils, excepting such as are brought upon him by natures invisible to him.

There is no person whose mind has been

cultivated in ever so small a degree, so as to teach and enable him to acquire knowledge for himself, who does not find that this power adds greatly to his enjoyment: and this power of acquiring knowledge rests in the mind. The Academicians of Cicero's time, it is true, objected that this power was equally capable of being applied to pernicious uses; and that, in short, its beneficial tendency rested entirely with the person who possessed it: and thence they concluded, that the possession of this power was no proof of any care of the gods for mankind. But they did not advert to the further fact, that the knowledge which is pernicious is that which is used without reference in its use to the will of the Creator; whilst that which is employed with that reference is uniformly of a beneficial tendency. All that is proved then by the objection is, that knowledge is like liberty of action; viz. capable of abuse. It is a power which is beneficial, when used for the ends intended by Him who gave it; and is therefore unquestionably an instance of his good-will to the recipients of it.

But the great distinction of man above all inferior creatures is the power of apprehending the existence and attributes of God, and his relation to him,—and of perceiving and appreciating the evidence of these all-important facts: and this rests altogether in his mind and soul. To this must be added his con-

science, which furnishes him with a criterion of that which is morally right or wrong,—pleasing to Him who made him, truly and ultimately beneficial to himself, or the reverse. This again rests in the mind; and still further enhances its value, and the obligations of man to its Author.

From what man is in himself we pass on to that which is done for him, exterior to himself. We learn from the study of nature that the whole fabric of the system of worlds in which we are placed conduces to our benefit. The wholesome interchange of day and night is brought about by the relation of our world to the sun, the centre of our system: and much of the comfort and pleasure of night is due to our attendant planet, and to the light which comes to us from the countless worlds by which we are surrounded. The tides of the sea, the progress of vegetation, and the consequent growth of the fruits of the earth, and many other things essential to our well-being, depend equally upon the connexion of our earth with the solar system; the whole of which is therefore evidently arranged with a view to us. Again, by far the larger portion of the contents of the surface of our globe,—the plants, animals, and minerals,—together with the atmosphere which surrounds it,—have been especially constituted and arranged with an eye to our sustenance, convenience, or wel-

fare. (Cic. *Nat. Deor.* ii. 60. 63.) More than this; in a large proportion of the instances in which any contrivance can be discerned in things connected with mankind, there is an evident design, on the part of the Creator, to render our physical condition as comfortable as possible. Nay, positive inventions are to be found abundantly, especially in the beautiful forms and odours of natural objects, which appear to have no other end but to afford pleasure to mankind. (Cic. *Nat. Deor.* ii. 63.)

Nor is our moral condition exempt from indications of the Divine benevolence, although in that department the evidence is more obscure. It cannot however be denied, that the tendency of man's reason and conscience, if duly followed up, is such as would promote his real happiness and improvement, whether as an individual or as a class of beings; and that the institution of society, and the moral discipline arising therefrom, is, in a series of ages, such as promote the improvement of the individuals who compose it, and to add to their happiness.

On the other hand, it must be granted, that men possess impulses which do, in point of fact, produce habitual effects subversive of the happiness both of individuals and of society. Yet it may be observed that these evil effects are but the excesses of these impulses; that we are not necessarily bound to carry them to excess; that experience teaches us that, when

indulged moderately, they are directly conducive to ultimate happiness, and in many cases bring in a large share of present pleasure;—that reason and conscience are portions of our nature, equally with those impulses, and are calculated, and evidently intended, to regulate them, and have the power of so doing; that the carrying them to excess at all arises from the fact that we are not mere machines, but voluntary agents; that it is evident that we derive both a kind and a degree of pleasure from being voluntary agents which we should be unwilling to resign; and that we are thereby capable of attaining excellence, both individually and collectively, which, without this freedom of the will, would be unattainable. It must be added, that we are placed by the Author of our nature in society; and that, as we have already seen, the tendency and effect of our relations to each other is, to check much of the evil in individuals, and to develop many excellencies, for which, without society, there would be no opportunity whatever. Indeed, so evident to the old Stoics was the moral tendency of the institution of society, that they made almost every moral excellence to arise out of the relations of man in society: and so satisfied were they that those tendencies were for the happiness and improvement of man, that they regarded society itself as a direct appointment of the gods with a view to

the improvement and happiness of mankind. Nay, so strongly were some of the ancients persuaded of the benefits of society, that they looked to civil government, which is its most complete development, as the great and only effective engine for the amelioration of the condition of human nature.

Nor have the opinions of mankind rested here. There has been no nation, at all advanced in civilization, which has not believed in direct interpositions of the Deity, for the purpose of upholding and vindicating his laws in the case of individuals, by rewarding the good with greater prosperity, but more especially by direct acts of punishment upon the wicked. And such a persuasion, whether founded upon well-ascertained facts or not, at all events shows the existence of a belief in the Divine interposition for the advancement of human happiness.

And this brings us to the question, whether these acts of providential interference are to be taken as evidence of what is called a *particular providence*; or, whether they are merely the method according to which certain general laws are regulated to work: whether in fact the Supreme Providence contemplates the individual or not in his treatment of mankind. It was the opinion of the Stoics that it did not contemplate every individual directly, and that it did not contemplate minute circumstances:

but they conceived that it did regard many individuals, and all the greater circumstances regarding them. (Cic. *Nat. Deor.* ii. 65, 66.) The Academics, on the other hand, contended, that as the only reason why monarchs did not attend to minutiae, lay in the limited extent of their faculties,—if the gods, who were not thus limited, exercised any providential care of human affairs,—it must extend to every particular. But they employed the concession of the Stoics to refute their doctrine of a divine providence, instead of employing their own argument to establish the truth. (Cic. *Nat. Deor.* iii. 37.)

The opinion of those who deny a particular providence is for the most part that expressed by Pope, in the well-known lines—

“The universal cause
Acts not by partial but by general laws.”

They appear to suppose that it would detract from the dignity of the Supreme Being, to think that He gives his attention to the welfare of individuals, and that it is presumption in the individual to suppose that He does so.

The arguments by which the Stoics maintained a particular providence were sound. “If,” said they, “we think the gods consult the welfare of all men, then they must consult that of the inhabitants of the known world; if of the known world, then of its three quarters,

Europe, Asia, and Africa; if so, then they regard the parts of each, Rome, Athens, &c.; and, if so, it follows that they regard the individual citizens." (Cic. *Nat. Deor.* ii. 66.) This was a perfectly sound argument: for if Divine Providence does care for the welfare of all men, it is simply limiting the power and functions of the Deity, to suppose that He does not care for the individual man, and for all that concerns them. It is well known that it is esteemed amongst military men one of the greatest qualifications of the greatest general of our own times, that he gave his attention to the minutest points which could either promote or interfere with his plans; and that he owed much of success to the remarkable power which he possessed of combining attention to the general and broad features of a campaign with attention to the minutiae which enter into those greater features, and in fact constitute them. It is, therefore, evident, that impartial thinkers regard it as the highest perfection of a great mind to contemplate and provide for both; and it therefore follows, by an irresistible force of reason, that the infinite mind must contemplate and provide for every thing both great and small. Indeed, as St. Ambrose has well said, (*de Offic.* i. 13,) "If it is no imputation and reproach to God, to suppose that He *made* the minutest things, much less is it a reproach to Him to govern them when made." "Si non

est injuria et probrum Dei minutissimas quasque res fecisse, multo minus probrum illius factas regere." Those who suppose that it is a stooping from his dignity to attend to the minutest matters, do not consider that great and small are relative terms; and that with an Infinite Being the difference in point of magnitude between the whole world and the smallest atom must be comparatively nothing.

It appears, then, that our most rational conclusion is in favour of the most minute providential government; a government which does not overlook the smallest existing being, or the most trivial circumstance. But still the question remains, whether this providence is exercised by means of general laws, or not; although not in the sense intended by unbelievers. This question is, however, one which reason scarcely helps us to answer. Bp. Butler points out (*Analogy*, Part II. ch. ii.) that we really do not know what classes of events are governed by general laws, and what not; that, for aught we know to the contrary, miracles themselves may be the development of some general law. It therefore seems to follow, that, for any thing that appears, there are no particulars whatever which may not be determined by some complex system of general laws. But as little do we know whether the Divine interference with general laws may not be frequent, and whether there is not the same personal superintendence

of all events, as there is in the consummate general.

Still, again, we are not able to say, whether the Supreme Governor may not habitually employ subordinate intelligent agents, in the direction of the ordinary affairs of men. Analogy would seem to be in favour of such a supposition. He has given men themselves a control over the destiny of multitudes of inferior animals; or, at least, a power of interfering with their actions and habits, and giving them a complexion they would not otherwise have: and why should He not give some superior beings, intermediate between himself and us, some similar powers? There have been scarcely any nations, who have not supposed that such beings existed; and the chief error in regard to them seems to have lain in regarding them alone, and forgetting altogether the supreme Lord of all; in looking solely at the secondary causes, and forgetting the First Cause. And even where that was not altogether the case, as with Socrates, the direct reference was to them, and the true God was practically passed over. But supposing these errors to be avoided, the polytheism of most Gentile nations, and the belief in various orders of spiritual beings in others, is no small presumption that inferior supernatural beings are employed by the Almighty Ruler in his providential administration of the world.

But in whatever way that providence is administered, we must conclude that it does reach individuals, and that it does reach the particular circumstances of their lives: that the Being, who, even according to Socrates (*Mem.* I. iv. 17), possesses the eye that can see all things, is aware of all possible circumstances; and that He whose understanding can care for all things (*ibid.*), does not restrain his care from any particular which can affect the welfare of any of his rational creatures, or his own providential plans for their moral discipline or improvement. To us, therefore, it is practically the same as though He interfered specially in every concern of our whole lives: nothing can be indifferent to Him, every thing we do must affect our relation to Him.

There is another question which both Socrates and Cicero suggest; viz. whether the providence of God may not be specially exercised in favour of particular individuals, or particular communities. Socrates, certainly, thought that he himself was favoured by a special spiritual guidance, which was exercised in deterring him from certain particular lines of conduct: and Cicero represents the Stoics as referring to a line of men, who occupy a distinguished place in Roman history, as having been special objects of Divine care. (*Xen. Mem.* I. i.; *Cic. Nat. Deor.* ii. 66.) Not only so, but he expresses his opinion that his

own nation enjoyed for a long period the special favour of the gods, and that this favour was the source of their prosperity. And we can easily imagine cases in which it might please the Almighty Ruler to exercise this special providence. That there is some plan of divine providence is evident ; indeed, it is essential to intelligent providence that there should be a plan. This may be either one original plan, embracing many subordinate details, and capable of infinite variety of application ; or, a succession of plans, one evolved from another by successive circumstances. According to either, there would be special ends to be accomplished, and special instruments required to accomplish those ends. It is, therefore, easily conceived, how one man may be better fitted than another to accomplish certain ends ; and, consequently, how a special providential agency may be brought into operation to bring forward that man, to endue him with peculiar powers, to shield him from dangers which would otherwise have removed him from the scene of action. And similar remarks may apply to a nation. Or, again, it is equally conceivable, that it may please the Lord of all to select an instrument from many equally qualified, or equally unqualified, to put him under peculiar training or discipline, such as may qualify him for the work he is to do, and, at the same time, to give him opportunities and powers, and to shield

him from perils in the manner which I have already expressed. We know that wise men, who have it in their power, will act in such a manner; and the thing is equally conceivable of Him who is all-wise and all-powerful.—These, then, would be instances of a special providence.

Again, it is evident from what has been previously said, that the government of the Creator is in part moral, and consists in part in rewarding and punishing for acts morally good and evil. Now it is true, that in many cases, perhaps in most, this may be accomplished by means of general laws. But it is very conceivable that the Supreme Governor may see some cases in which the virtue is transcendently good, or the crime transcendently heinous; and that the operation of general laws may be too tardy, or too unmarked, to signify adequately his approbation or disapprobation; or even that there may be in the operation of general laws no provision for such a case. It is, therefore, equally conceivable, that He who orders all things to produce their proper effects, may think proper so specially to direct the course of circumstances, as to mark the man of heroic virtue with special tokens of his favour, or to brand the atrocious criminal with some special marks of his displeasure.

These cases, I say, are conceivable: and we may see an adequate motive for such a depar-

ture from the ordinary course. For the minds of most men are apt to become so habituated to that which ordinarily happens, as to cease to observe and remark it, unless their attention is from time to time specially drawn to it. And such extraordinary and special acts of providence would both serve to recal them to the fact, that there is a moral providence, and to dispose them to pay more serious attention to its more ordinary operations.

CHAPTER XVI.

ON THE FREEDOM OF THE WILL.

THE doctrine of a First Cause, intelligent, omnipotent, omniscient, and exercising a universal providence, both natural and moral, has in all ages led to the inquiry, How far such a providence is compatible with freedom of action in mankind: the more especially as a portion of the proof of a divine providence to many minds rests upon their conviction that Almighty God has interfered to hinder men from accomplishing purposes upon which they were fully resolved.

It is difficult to come at the views of the earlier philosophers upon this subject. Pythagoras, we are told, recognised a fate; but it

does not appear that it amounted to more than this,—that whatever the Supreme Ruler has decreed must inevitably come to pass. Respecting Plato, it is difficult to form an opinion from his extant writings: but Cicero (*Quest. Acad.* i. 7) represents his followers as holding that God, providence, and necessity, are one and the same power. This, however, may not amount to more than we have supposed attributable to Pythagoras. The actual opinions of Zeno are not to be learned with much more accuracy, although there are to be found writers who speak very positively as to his views: but his followers held various shades of opinion on the subject. These opinions cannot be any where so accurately learnt as in the Treatises of Cicero *on Divination* and *on Fate*, especially in the latter. The point of view from which they contemplated the subject is somewhat different from ours: but both the resemblances and the differences are curious.

The point from which they started seems to have been the belief that the gods did actually convey to mankind the knowledge of future events. From this the Stoics argued as follows: If these events could be predicted with absolute certainty, there must have been causes existing at the time of the prediction, and known to the gods, capable of producing the events. Consequently there has always existed a chain of causes, from all eternity, which

produce events successively as they happen.— This, then, was their notion of fate.

When the school came to refine more, or to state their views more accurately, the argument assumed the following form: Every proposition is, at the time it is made, either true or false: there is no medium. Now predictions are propositions, and therefore at the time they are uttered, must be either true or false. Leaving false predictions out of the question, if a prediction be true, the causes which are to prove it, or make it true, must be in existence at the time at which it is made; otherwise it could not be truly asserted at all: there would be no foundation to rest it upon. Consequently, every event has a chain of previous causes, which are sure to produce it. And as there is no limit to the anterior time at which an event may be predicted, there is no limit to the previous chain of causes. There has therefore existed from eternity a chain of causes, which have produced all past events, and will produce all future ones. This was the doctrine of Diodorus.

The opponents of this view and of the Stoical system, altogether took up another principle of theirs, and by its aid proceeded to demolish their theory of fate. "You believe," they said, "that the action of the human mind, like all other motion besides gravitation, is produced by impulse from without; by the impression

produced upon it by external objects through the senses. You must therefore allow, if you follow out your theory of fate, that every act of the mind is caused by an eternal chain of causes; and, consequently, that the action of the human will is never free, but is governed by inevitable destiny. Consequently there is no responsibility, and no distinction of virtue and vice."

In order to avoid these conclusions, Chrysippus, another leading Stoic, distinguished between causes. "Some," he said, "are principal, and some proximate; some eternal, and others not so." He asserted that many things are possible, which will certainly not take place; and many things contingent, which will certainly take place, and may be predicted. Whilst, therefore, he held that there is no event which is not brought about by an unbroken series of causes, he did not conceive every link in the chain to have been *necessarily* fixed in that chain by the previous series of causes, although it did, in *point of fact*, arise from the previous series. He likewise thought that the human mind has some voluntary power to modify the series of events, although always set in motion from without. He illustrated his meaning in this way: "As a cylinder, although set in motion from without, will move in no other direction or manner than that which its form renders necessary; so the mind of man, although

always set in motion by impressions made upon it, has the power of determining by its own will the direction in which it will move, and consequently the conclusions to which it will assent."

It is not necessary that we should stay to discuss this question further: but there are two or three points connected with this subject which are entirely worthy of our attention. The first is, that all parties, without exception, asserted that the action of the mind, in assenting to any conclusion, is voluntary: that is, they agreed in maintaining the freedom of the human will. Secondly, it does not appear that many, even of the Stoics, denied that some events are not *necessarily* determined by previous causes, or seminally contained in them. Lastly, of the words *fatum* and *είμαρμένον*, used to express the series of causes, the first implies a sentence *pronounced*, and the second a lot *assigned* (*μέτρον*, to assign), by some personal being, and consequently opposes the notion of an eternal *series* of causes, and suits rather with the notion of one First Cause.

But I have said that the Stoic doctrine of fate differs from any modern doctrine upon the subject held by believers in God; and it differs in this very respect, that the modern doctrine assigns the fixing of the series of events to God Himself, and supposes that He has from eternity fixed that series. It begins,

as the heathen theory did, with the fact that God has foretold many events long before they happened, and that they happened as He foretold,—or with the universal and particular providence of God. In the former case it goes on to say, that it appears that God must foreknow all things; and that as He foreknows them, it cannot but be that they must happen. It then, in the minds of some, proceeds to infer, that no event can be contingent; and consequently that no man can act otherwise than as God foresees He will act: and further, that as God foresees all things, and therefore deliberately permits them to take place, He may be regarded as deliberately predestining all the good and evil which has ever happened, or will ever happen.

With others it commences with God's universal and particular providence; and infers, that, as the control of all events whatever are in his hand, and He must plan the whole series of events, from everlasting to everlasting, therefore nothing can take place out of the order in which He has planned it; and the whole chain of events is bound in a necessity as immovable and compulsory as any imagined by the Stoics.

There are, however, many persons, who, asserting the first stages in this series of opinions, do not follow them to their conclusion; believing, like the ancients, that the will is

free, and therefore, that, however easily the conclusions may appear to follow from the premisses, there must be some flaw in the argument, although they cannot detect it.

The subject is one which has engaged the attention of philosophers and theologians from the earliest times to the present ; but perhaps it would not be too much to say, that it has never been treated more justly or more acutely than by Tucker, the author of *the Light of Nature*, ch. 26.

It must, however, be borne in mind, that all writers whatever, excepting absolute Atheists or Pantheists,—even if believing in the absolute Divine predestination of all events,—hold firmly the doctrine of human responsibility: and, as that is the great practical question, it is of less importance whether the other difficulties be solved or not. Still, as, to many minds, any thing which casts even a portion of light upon this knotty question will be welcome, I proceed to exhibit such views as have been suggested by the discussions of the author above mentioned.

We will suppose a person much given to the indulgence of his appetite, but who perceives that this indulgence is undermining his health, and producing constant disquietude; and he thereupon resolves to deny his appetite. No one doubts that such a resolution is an act of free will. Suppose, however, the same person

to feel the restraint so irksome that he resolves to run all risks, and indulge himself as he likes. This again is undeniably an act of free will. But suppose this person to become the slave of another man, who forbids him to indulge his appetite, and threatens him with the bastinado whenever he exceeds: he has evidently two questions before him, whether he will deny himself and remain free from punishment, or indulge himself and suffer the bastinado. Now, in making this choice, it is clear that there is nothing to hinder him from choosing either the one or the other; and that, so far as this election is concerned, his will is free. But it is equally evident that he is not free to choose or not to choose. His appetite is a thing, which (at least at the time) he has no choice whether to have or not to have; and his position under a master is likewise a thing in which he has no choice.

But it may be that he has been so much in the habit of indulging himself, that, although he resolves to avoid the bastinado by denying himself, yet, when the time comes for acting, he is drawn on by imagination and appetite to indulge himself, all the time regretting his weakness, and wishing he had the power of resistance. Now we may say, even in this case, that the particular acts of reaching out his hand and taking his food are in fact voluntary acts; and that it required an act of the

will, or at all events a cessation of the act of resistance on the part of the will, and thus giving up the reins of appetite, before he consummated the act of inordinate self-indulgence. There has, therefore, been in reality a new will, in regard to the particular act, which has nullified the former act of will, made in an opposite sense. But we must concede that this act of the will differs from the former, inasmuch as it was sudden and not deliberate; inasmuch as it was in opposition to reason and judgment, instead of being in agreement with them. Yet, as a mere act of will, it seems not to differ from the other; and the person who performs it is conscious that it is his own act; for his conscience involuntarily blames him for it. The case then is, not so much that the will is less free in this case than in the former one; but that it comes to be directed by sense instead of reason and conscience: and reason and judgment are things to which he gives a permanent assent, whereas his assent to sense is only temporary.

Still we feel that we are in *some* sense less free in the latter case than in the former: and therefore, without further entering into the metaphysical discussion, it may be well to show that this power of sense over reason is not an involuntary state, but one in which we have placed ourselves, by our own voluntary act. And this will appear, if we agree, as I think every reflecting person will agree, that sense

does not acquire this power over us, except as a consequence of previous acts of indulgence of a more wilful and deliberate character. When we have upon many occasions directly chosen to yield to sense instead of to reason and conscience, these acts establish a habit; and by a law of our nature, in which we have no choice, but which is available for good as well as for evil, a formed habit exercises an influence, so as that the will follows it in preference to any other motive. We thus perceive that we may be practically not free in regard to the performance of certain actions, and yet that this want of freedom has been produced by previous acts which were in every respect essentially free. So that even granting that the acts themselves were not in our power,—we are still responsible for them, because the previous acts which deprived us of our freedom were absolutely in our power.

By this illustration, then, we have established two positions; that there are many cases in which the ultimate acts are in our power (for which acts we are therefore responsible), although the circumstances in which we are placed are not in our power: and that there *may* be acts (although it be not certain that there are such acts) not in our power, but for which we are responsible, because the acts which led to them, and which may have deprived us of our freedom, were not in our power.

We will now go a step further. It is a well-known fact, that by observation or by intuition we acquire or possess a limited power of foreseeing in what manner other persons will act under given circumstances, and that we can foretel, with tolerable accuracy, the line of conduct they will take. Acting upon the possession of that power, we may place before a person such motives as we foresee will lead him to act in the manner which we ourselves desire. And yet the choice which the person made was perfectly in his own power; and his ultimate choice, to act in such and such a way, was in his own power. He was not compelled to be governed by the motives we placed before him. He might have resisted them. Or, if not, his want of power to resist them arose from some perfectly voluntary acts of his in time past. It is evident in this case that our knowledge of his character, and the placing before him such motives as we knew would act upon his mind, constituted as it was, did not by themselves constrain him to act as he did.

Conceive, then, the case of Almighty God,—who has not a limited but an absolute knowledge of all human character, and of all the motives and circumstances which can influence every human individual; and we must see that he may bring about his own ends, perfectly and unerringly, without constraining the will of man to any act whatever.

To see this the more clearly, we will come a little closer to the subject. It is evident, from what has been said, that, as God has the original arrangement of all causes, and has an absolute knowledge of the character of every individual, and indeed has had it in his power to direct the original constitution of every individual, and the causes which have tended to form his character,—it is in the power of Almighty God to make the character and conduct of each person what He chooses, without interfering with the actual voluntariness of choice in the case of any individual action whatever. But how far a being so placed would be a responsible being, it is perhaps not in our power to determine; but, for aught that appears, such a being might have a sense of responsibility, and be justly rewarded or punished.

But we have no evidence whatever that Almighty God ever acts in such a manner. We have no evidence whatever that, whilst He has absolutely predestined certain events, He has not left others, and those the majority, absolutely and entirely contingent, and in the absolute and uncontrolled choice of his intelligent creatures. To use a familiar illustration, it is no uncommon thing for the chess-player to arrange a plan which he thinks he can carry into effect, and which he does carry into effect, let the next move of his adversary be whatever

it may. And we can thus conceive that He who knows all the possible combinations of future events,—may be able to determine certain ultimate results, whatever may be the conduct of voluntary agents in the course of the series of events which is to bring about these results. We have thus a Providence of the most minute character, but leaving responsible beings absolutely free to choose, whether to will or not to will,—and absolutely free to will in whatever way reason or inclination may lead us.

But it is inquired, Does not the omniscient Being hold the tangled web in his hand; and does He not see the line which will be taken by his creatures upon all occasions? If, then, He sees that they will take such and such a line of conduct,—that they will come to such and such a decision, or that they will decide not to decide at all, but to leave events to the chapter of accidents,—is it not a fact from all eternity, that such and such a series of choices will take place? and if so, can any others take place? and if they cannot, has man then any freedom of choice? This, as we have seen, was the argument of the extreme Stoics, and of those of the Academic school who opposed the moderate ones,—only that they placed their supposed eternal series of causes in the stead of the First Cause.

In this reasoning there is a confusion of

ideas, which will easily appear if we recur to one of our previous illustrations. We are familiar with the fact that we can often foresee the conduct which another person will pursue under given circumstances: but does it ever occur to our minds to suppose that our foresight of his conduct has any connexion with the line he will pursue? We smile immediately at the absurdity. We know the temper of one of our children. We are informed that in the course of the day he will have a certain choice placed before him. We foresee how he will choose. But does our foresight influence his choice or make it the less free? Or we know that his preceptor will punish him for his inattention, and we foresee that he will weep or be stubborn, as the case may be: but does our foresight affect his conduct in the slightest degree? We know it does not.

If then our foresight were not doubtful, but absolute, would that mere difference of degree form any link of connexion, in the nature of cause and effect, between our foresight and his will? It is evident it would not. And if that is the case with our foresight, what is there in the foresight of God to constitute a difference? Can reason discover any difference in this respect? No: the two things are in themselves absolutely without connexion. We may not be able fully to clear up the difficulty; but we can see that foresight, by itself, in no way

interferes with, or affects the events which are its objects.

Indeed, as we know that the ancients never hit upon the hypothesis, that the Divine foresight interferes with future events, we might almost suppose that they were too acute to suppose it possible; did we not know that they attributed this foresight only to the inferior gods, who were not supposed to have any influence upon the general course of events, but only to have a certain knowledge of all existing causes and of their mode of operation, and by that means to be capable of predicting. It is the confusion produced in our minds by our knowledge, that He who foresees and predicts has all things in his power as well as in his knowledge,—that has led us to attribute to foreknowledge a connexion with events, of which, *simply as such*, it is absolutely incapable.

CHAPTER XVII.

ON THE MEANS WE POSSESS OF ASCERTAINING THE WILL OF GOD.

THE discussions into which we have entered in the previous portions of this work, sufficiently establish the fact that we are moral beings, accountable to the Creator and Governor of all •

things, and that we are bound to Him likewise by gratitude for benefits received at his hands. It appears evident, likewise, that we live under a system of moral rewards and punishments administered by Him; which system, it appears probable, will be carried on into a future life, and may be carried on, if it so pleases Him, to all eternity. It thence appears that we have various motives for desiring to know what line of conduct is morally pleasing to Him; and it follows of course that we should inquire what means we have of knowing his will.

The first and earliest guide we have is, *the opinion of others.*

So soon as we become capable of moral conduct of any kind, our actions become controlled and our thoughts directed by the opinion of our parents; and that being a direct arrangement of the Creator, we may feel assured that we are intended to learn his will more or less from it. Moreover, whatever means each of us may have by nature of knowing his will, must of course become more available by exercise: and consequently those who are both older than ourselves, and interested by affection in studying our welfare, are likely both to have exercised their powers in discerning the will of the Creator, and to be disposed to impart to us for our benefit the results of their experience. Add to this that they have themselves received the results of similar experience from their

forefathers, and are, therefore, the depositories of the accumulated or repeated experience of past generations. They have besides this had the opportunity of comparing the impressions which they have received with the experience of those with whom they have conversed, and probably with that of many thousands of others (at least indirectly) who may have committed to writing the results of their experience. Furthermore as we grew older, we obtain the same opportunity of becoming acquainted for ourselves with the opinions of experienced persons.

We shall indeed find opinion very variable on many points: but yet experience warrants our asserting that the tendency of that opinion is uniformly in one direction, so far as it extends. We may not be able to characterize that direction; but we feel that it is tolerably uniform. It is true, likewise, that men do not act always according to the opinion they express; and thus give ground for the supposition that this expression of opinion is not sincere. But in most cases they will confess that it would be better, both for themselves and for others, if their conduct corresponded more accurately with their opinion. And we can ourselves perceive that, if they did so act, their conduct itself would form a consistent whole; whilst, as the fact stands at present, it is inconsistent with itself.

A second, and most important aid, is *conscience*.

That, again, exists in all men; and therefore is concluded to be the work of the Creator. It is likewise true of this, that its dictates are not uniform. But still we may observe that its *tendency* is uniform, like that of opinion, only in a higher degree. It in fact always works in one direction; viz. that of checking and controlling the operation of our passions and affections, and rendering it more agreeable to reason, and to that intuitive perception of right and wrong of which we are all sensible.

A third aid is our own *observation* of the operation of different modes of conduct upon *social happiness*.

We find ourselves, as the Stoics well insisted, placed in society by our Creator, and with a universal tendency towards society; which we likewise conclude to be an arrangement of the Creator. Whatever, therefore, tends to preserve society is agreeable to his will; whatever tends to break it up is opposed to his will. In order, then, that society may be maintained, it becomes necessary that men should control themselves; and, as all will not do so, some must be controlled by others. Some modes of conduct, if uniformly and universally pursued, would break up society, and so far as they are pursued do impair its comfort; others conduce to its ends and add to its comfort. Our observation of these will be found to lead us, with

great uniformity, in the same direction as public opinion and conscience, and will often enable us to correct the errors of both.

A fourth aid will be the *observation of God's providential government.*

We shall find, as we have already noticed, that by the simple operation of natural causes, operating by fixed laws, certain modes of conduct produce disease both of body and of mind; that they interfere with men's worldly comfort and prosperity; that they cause them to be disrespected and disliked; that in time they produce permanent unhappiness to the individuals who pursue them. We shall observe contrary lines of conduct producing or preserving bodily and mental vigour, adding to comfort and enjoyment, raising feelings of regard and honour in others, producing habits of internal peace and tranquillity. We shall sometimes observe, in remarkable cases, retribution for good or for evil following so speedily and directly,—or coming out in so remarkable a manner after years of concealment,—that all men recognise it as coming from the hand of the Supreme Governor. It is true that this providential government will not be seen to be uniform,—will not be perceived in all cases: but it will be sufficiently uniform and manifest to show us the direction in which it leads, and the kind of conduct which is approved by Him who superintends all things.

And to all these other means of knowing his

will, conscience, if constantly respected and obeyed, is found to be a very powerful aid. Its decisions are found to become more clear, more consistent, and more immediate in themselves, and to render us more capable of obtaining clear and consistent views from other sources; more particularly from our own observation upon the social effects of any particular course of conduct, and upon God's providential government.

These means of ascertaining the will of God we possess, independently of any direct revelation of his will. But when we know, as a matter of fact, that there have been professed revelations of his will given to mankind,—it surely becomes both our wisdom and our duty to examine the external evidence upon which those professed revelations rest, and to discover what there is in the revelations themselves which agrees or disagrees with that which natural reason has taught us to be probable in relation to God. There has always been an impression on the minds of men, that the deity they worshipped did occasionally reveal his will; as is manifest from the prevalence of oracles and other methods of consulting the gods in the ancient world. It seems agreeable to the good-will, which God has always shown to mankind, that He should do so, if any advantage could accrue to them from his so doing: and on that ground Socrates, followed by the Platonists and Stoics of old, thought that the

gods they worshipped did make such revelations, at least occasionally. The various and conflicting claims of diverse and adverse religious systems afford a reason for this interference. On these and other grounds a revelation possesses an external probability, anterior to evidence; and this probability adds to the reasons for investigating the evidence of such professed revelations as offer themselves.

We must not, however, suppose, that the apparent correspondence between the matter of these revelations, and the unassisted conclusions of natural reason, furnishes an unerring criterion of their truth: for we often see that conclusions, to which we are led upon high grounds of probability, are proved by subsequent experience not to be correct: and it must of course be acknowledged that it may be the express object of such revelation to correct the conclusions of unassisted reason; and, consequently, that there may be portions of Divine revelation expressly and intentionally at variance with our previous impressions. If, therefore, the whole evidence in support of any professed revelation should prove sufficient to recommend it to our earnest attention,—it ought not to stagger us, if we find some portions of it to be inconsistent with our previous conviction. On the contrary, natural reason itself would lead us to suppose that it would be an object of revelation to correct our previous notions: and we should, consequently, upon purely natural

grounds, be prepared to examine carefully into such Divine revelation, for the express purpose of correcting and enlarging those ideas as to the will of God, which we derive from natural reason.

These are the conclusions to which we should be led, looking at Divine revelation from without. But we are not, blessed be God, permitted to do so in the course of things in which He has placed us. If we do so, it must be because something has broken into and changed that condition; because the unbelief of others has constrained us, for their sakes and for our own, to see how we may prepare the way for faith, even without directly using the aids which faith furnishes. But this is not a position in which we should place ourselves voluntarily and without any call: for the consequences of so doing are unknown to us, and may be perilous in the highest degree; and we must, therefore, be careful how we do so, except in the case of some urgent necessity; and then only in imagination, and not in reality.

And, when we have finished an inquiry of this description, we may well rejoice in God at the results at which we arrive; when we see that unbelief, when taken on her own grounds by him who already believes, is driven step by step from every refuge of lies; how one false position after another is completely overturned by the simple action of divinely-enlightened

reason; how theory after theory is set aside by a closer investigation of the very natural facts upon which it relies; and how, consequently, the foundations of faith appear firmer and firmer the more accurately they are examined.

We may, consequently, learn to be thankful to our Great Father for the use of that gift of natural reason which by many is abused to their destruction. It is not to be conceived that any portion of our natural constitution can be evil in itself, but only in its abuse. The use of reason, therefore, is not to be disparaged; but its legitimate use is to be diligently sought for. And such a legitimate use we may rest assured we have found, when the results are such as have been described; and be thankful that we have found it. But when we likewise reflect how dimly and imperfectly men arrived at truth by the use of *unaided* reason,—that of all the heathens who arrived the nearest to it was Socrates, who professed himself to be enlightened and guided by supernatural aid,—we must surely be most thankful that God has cast our lot amongst those whom He has not left to themselves, but whose reason He has cleared and directed by his revealed Word and his enlightening Spirit.

THE END.

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