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THE SELECT WORKS OF GEORGE COMBE.

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SCIENCE AND RELIGION.

THE SELECT WORKS OF GEORGE COMBE.

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SCIENCE AND RELIGION.

BY

GEORGE COMBE.

“Impiety clears the soul of its consecrated errors, but it does not fill the heart of man. Impiety alone will never ruin a human worship. A faith destroyed must be replaced by a faith. It is not given to irreligion to destroy a religion on earth. It is but a religion more enlightened which can really triumph over a religion fallen into contempt by replacing it. The earth cannot remain without an altar, and God only is strong enough against God!”—LAMARTINE'S *History of the Girondists* (Vol. I., p. 16 ; Bohn, 1848).

CASSELL AND COMPANY, LIMITED:

LONDON, PARIS & MELBOURNE.

THE CASSELL PUBLISHING COMPANY:

NEW YORK.

1893.

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PREFACE.

THE nucleus of this work was a pamphlet published by George Combe in April, 1847, with the title "On the Relation between Religion and Science." A second edition was issued a few months later, and the entire essay was reproduced in the *Phrenological Journal* for July of the same year.

The publication brought on the author, with renewed virulence, the charges of irreverence and atheism to which he had been subjected for nearly thirty years. Referring to these attacks, he said: "No religious martyr ever held his faith more purely and firmly than I hold my own convictions. . . . Like the veteran soldier who has escaped unhurt from fifty battles, I hear the cannonade of passion and prejudice with a feeling that it cannot reach me."

To the charge that he had subordinated Scripture to the law of Nature, he replied in a letter to Mrs. Whately: "I have not said that Scripture is *derived* from natural religion, but only that its practical precepts regarding human conduct in this world must be supported by the order of Nature, otherwise that they cannot produce practical fruits. But natural religion appears to me to be derived from Nature, and not from Scripture."

Going on to explain his general position, he says, in the same letter: "I regard the external world as designedly adapted by God to the human mind and body, and as containing within itself (by this Divine appointment) objects and relations addressed to, and intended to arouse, excite, and gratify, *all our faculties.*

In short, I recognise God—His adaptations in everything animate and inanimate; I feel myself constantly in His presence, and every moment under the control and discipline of His laws. Revelation may present higher objects than Nature to our faculties, but Nature does appear to me to address them *all*.

“By you, perhaps, similar views are entertained, but I go a step further. I do not regard all the Divine adaptations unfolded to us through Causality and Comparison as intended merely to excite a devout Wonder and Veneration, without leading us to do anything practically. On the contrary, I see practical lessons embodied in every one of God’s natural institutions.”

George Combe’s cardinal doctrine thus was that God had revealed Himself in Nature as well as in Scripture; that the one revelation was as instructive in its facts, and as binding in its lessons, as the other; and that the two revelations are in entire harmony, except when God’s message is perverted by man-made creeds.

The pamphlet of 1847 grew under his hand until, in 1857, it assumed the dimensions of a volume.

That volume was affectionately inscribed to his friend Dr. Charles Mackay, in token of “A friendship of long duration, admiration of your genius, and cordial sympathy with the purposes to which you have devoted it.”

In a letter to Mr. Benjamin Templar in 1858, George Combe wrote regarding this work: “I consider it the most original, and, in its distant results, the most important of all my productions; but this may be, like a parent’s love of his youngest child, because it is my last.”

Edinburgh, October, 1893.

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SCIENCE AND RELIGION.



CHAPTER I.

AN HISTORICAL RETROSPECT.

THE Reformation in the sixteenth century produced a powerful effect on the European mind. The miracles, precepts, and sublime devotional effusions of the Old and New Testaments excited with deep intensity the religious sentiments of the people, and introduced ardent discussions on temporal and eternal interests which, unfortunately, were followed by furious and desolating wars. Freedom on earth, and salvation in heaven or perdition in hell, were the mighty topics which then engaged public attention.

In the beginning of the seventeenth century, a generation born and educated under these exciting influences appeared upon the stage. The Reformation was then consummated, but the duty remained of acting it out in deeds. The new generation had read in the Books of the Old Testament of a people whose King was God ; whose national councils were guided by Omniscience ; and whose enterprises, whether in peace or in war, were aided and accomplished by Omnipotence employing means altogether apart from the ordinary course of Nature. The New Testament presented records of a continued exercise of similar supernatural powers ; and the great lesson taught in both seemed to that generation to be, that the power of God was

exercised as a shield to protect, and an irresistible influence to lead to success and victory in secular affairs, *those who believed and worshipped aright*, who embraced cordially the doctrines revealed in the sacred volumes, who abjured all self-righteousness and self-reliance, and who threw themselves in perfect confidence and humility on Him as their King, Protector, and Avenger.

In the first half of the seventeenth century the active members of society in England and Scotland embraced these views as principles not only of faith, but of practice. With that earnestness of purpose which is inspired by profound conviction of religious truth, they desired to realise in deeds what they professed as faith. As remarked by Thomas Carlyle, that generation "attempted to bring the Divine law of the Bible into actual practice in men's affairs on the earth." In the contests between Cromwell and the Covenanters, we observe both parties claiming to be "the people of God"; both asserting that they are directed by Divine influence and supported by Divine power, even when in hostile collision with each other. It is necessary only to read attentively Cromwell's letters and speeches, and the contemporary narratives of the Covenanters, to be satisfied of this fact. Each party ascribed its successes to the Divine approval of its conduct and belief, and its calamities to displeasure with its unbelief or other sins.

When Cromwell overthrew the Scots, and "had the execution of them"—in other words, the slaughter of them—for many miles in the pursuit, he called it "a sweet mercy" vouchsafed to him by God, to whom he devoutly ascribed the glory. After mentioning his victory at Dunbar, the trophies of which were about "three thousand Scots slain," "near ten thousand prisoners," "the whole baggage and train taken," with "all their artillery, great and small," he adds, "It is easy to see the Lord hath done

this. It would do you good to see and hear our poor foot to go up and down making their boast of God."*

The Covenanters held the same belief; but, somewhat inconsistently, while they confessed that their own religious unworthiness had brought upon them the Divine displeasure, they denied to Cromwell the right to interpret the victory as a manifestation of the Divine approval of *his* faith, principles, and practice: They endeavoured to represent it as merely "an event"; for which Cromwell rebukes them in the following words:—"You (the men of the Covenant) say that you have not so learned Christ 'as to hang the equity of your cause upon events.' We (for our part) could wish that blindness had not been cast upon your eyes to all those marvellous dispensations which God hath lately wrought in England. But did you not solemnly appeal (to God) and pray? Did not we do so too? And ought not you and we to think, with fear and trembling, of the hand of the great God in this mighty and strange appearance of His, instead of slightly calling it an event? Were not both your and our expectations renewed from time to time whilst we waited upon God, to see which way He would manifest Himself upon our appeals? And shall we, after all these our prayers, fastings, tears, expectations, and solemn appeals, call these bare events? The Lord pity you!"†

While the people of that age entertained these views of the manner of God's administration of secular affairs, they

* Letter XCII., Cromwell to Lenthal, dated Dunbar, 4th September, 1650; "Carlyle's Cromwell," Vol. II., p. 41.—[In subsequent quotations, the words within single marks of quotation, and within parentheses, are inserted by Mr. Carlyle to make Cromwell's meaning plainer.—ED.]

† Letter XCVII., Cromwell to the Governor of Edinburgh Castle, dated Edinburgh, 12th September, 1650; in "Carlyle," Vol. II., p. 65.

were equally convinced of the supernatural agency of the devil, and with similar earnestness acted on this conviction. They ascribed their sins to Satanic influence on their minds, and attributed to the exercise of Satanic power many of the physical evils under which they suffered. They imagined that this power was exercised by the devil through the instrumentality of human beings, and burned thousands of these supposed agents of the fiend, under the name of witches.

This belief lingered among the Scottish people a century later. In February, 1743, the Associate Presbytery of the Secession Church passed an "Act for Renewing the National Covenant"; and among other national sins which they confessed and vowed to renounce is mentioned "the repeal of the penal statutes against witchcraft, contrary to the express laws of God, and for which a holy God may be provoked, in a way of righteous judgment, to leave those who are already ensnared to be hardened more and more, and to permit Satan to tempt and seduce others to the same wicked and dangerous snare."

These were the views of God's providence entertained by the religious men of the seventeenth century. Those who were not penetrated by a deep sentiment of religion acted then, as the same class does now, on the views of the order of Nature with which their own experience and observation, aided by those of others, had supplied them. They did not trouble themselves with much inquiry whether this order was systematic or incidental, moral or irrespective of morality, but they acted as their views of expediency dictated at the moment. It is with the opinions of the religious and earnest men of that century that we are now principally engaged.

In commenting on that period, Thomas Carlyle observes, in his own quaint style, that "the nobility and gentry of England were then a very strange body of men. The

English squire of the seventeenth century clearly appears to have believed in God, not as a figure of speech, but as a very fact, very awful to the heart of the English squire." He adds: "We have wandered far away from the ideas which guided us in that century, and, indeed, which had guided us in all preceding centuries, but of which that century was the ultimate manifestation. We have wandered very far, and must endeavour to return and connect ourselves therewith again."*

I ask, How shall we return? This is a grave question, and the answer demands serious consideration.

The grand characteristic of the Jewish dispensation, on which chiefly these views of the Divine government of the world were founded, was that it was special and supernatural. In the seventeenth century the people possessed very little scientific knowledge of the elements, agencies, and laws of inorganic and organic Nature. The Scriptures constituted almost the sole storehouse of deep reflection and profound emotion for that age; and, in the absence of scientific knowledge, thoughtful men fell naturally into the belief that, as the Scriptures were given for guides to human conduct, the same scheme of Providence, physical and moral, which had prevailed in ancient Jewish times must still continue in force. Their conviction on this point appears to have been profound and genuine, and they attempted to act it out in deeds.

But was there no error of apprehension here? Were they not mistaken in believing that the course of Providence was the same in their day as it is described to have been among the ancient Jews? A brief consideration of their actions, and the results of them, may help us to answer the question.

* *Lib. cit.*, Vol. I., pp. 3 and 87.

They assumed that the supernatural agencies which Scripture told them had been manifested under the Jewish dispensation might still be evoked, and would, in some form or other, be exerted for their guidance and support, if they appealed to God, and called for them in a right spirit. Hence, instead of studying and conforming to the laws of Nature, they resorted to fastings, humiliations, praise, and prayers, as practical means not only of gaining battles and establishing political power, but of obtaining Divine direction in all the serious affairs of life. Their *theology* and their science, so far as they had any science, were in harmony. They did not recognise an established and regular order of Nature as the means through which God governs the world, and to which He requires man to adapt his conduct; but they regarded every element of physical nature and every faculty of the human mind as under the administration of a special and supernatural Providence. They viewed God as wielding all these elements arbitrarily, according to His will; *and on that will they believed they could operate by religious faith and observances.*

In principle, their view of the nature of the Divine administration of the world was similar to that entertained by the Greeks and Romans. Homer's priests and heroes offered supplications to the gods for direct interference in favour of their schemes, and their prayers are represented to have been occasionally successful in bringing supernatural aid. Cromwell, and the men of his age, with more true and exalted conceptions of God, believed in His still administering the affairs of men, not by means of a regular order of causes and effects, but by direct exercises of special power.

I should say that in this condition of mind they were inspired by pure and exalted religious emotions, but misled by great errors in theology. It was under the influence of such views of the Divine administration that the existing

standards of the Church of England and of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland were framed ; and hence perhaps arose the very meagre recognition of the order of God's providence in the course of Nature as *religious* truth, and as a system of practical instruction for the guidance of human conduct, which characterises them.

After the days of Cromwell, however, the human understanding, by a profounder and more exact study of Nature, obtained a different view of the course of Providence in the administration of temporal affairs. Science revealed a system in which every object, animate or inanimate, appears to be endowed with peculiar qualities and powers, which it preserves and exerts with undeviating regularity as long as its circumstances continue unchanged ; and in which each object is adapted with wisdom and benevolence to the others, and all to man. In the words of the Rev. Mr. Sedgwick, science unfolded a fixed order of creation so clear and intelligible that "we are justified in saying that in the moral as in the physical world, God seems to govern by general laws."—"I am not now," says he, "contending for the doctrine of moral necessity ; but I do affirm that the moral government of God is by general laws, and *that it is our bounden duty to study those laws, and, as far as we can, turn them to our account.*"*

Here, then, an important revolution has been effected in the views of profound thinkers in regard to the mode in which Providence administers this world. Science has banished from their minds belief in the exercise by the Deity, in our day, of special acts of supernatural power as a means of influencing human affairs ; and it has presented a systematic order of Nature, which man may study, comprehend, and follow as a guide to his practical conduct.

* "Discourse on the Studies of the University" (of Cambridge).
By Adam Sedgwick, M.A., 3rd edition, p. 9.

In point of fact, the new faith has already partially taken the place of the old. In everything physical, men now act on the belief that this world's administration is conducted on the principle of an established order of Nature, in which objects and agencies are presented to man for his study, are to some extent placed under his control, and are wisely calculated to promote his instruction and enjoyment.

Some persons adopt the same view in regard even to moral affairs. The creed of the modern man of science is well expressed by Mr. Sedgwick in the following words:—“If there be a superintending Providence, and if His will be manifested by general laws, operating both on the physical and moral world, *then must a violation of these laws be a violation of His will, and be pregnant with inevitable misery.* Nothing can, in the end, be expedient for man, *except it be subordinate to those laws the Author of Nature has thought fit to impress on His moral and physical creation.*” Other clergymen also embrace the same view. The Rev. Dr. Thomas Guthrie, in his “Plea for Ragged Schools,” observes that “They commit a grave mistake who forget that injury as inevitably results from flying in the face of a moral or mental as of a physical law.”

This revolution in practical belief, however, is only partial; and the great characteristic of the religious mind at the present day is its aversion to the doctrine of an intelligible, moral, and practical system of government, revealed by God to man in the order of Nature for the guidance of his conduct, and that correct expositions of this system possess the character of *religious truths*. This unbelief in an intelligible and practically useful Divine government in Nature affects our religion, our literature, and our conduct. I put the following questions in all earnestness:—Are the fertility of the soil, the health of the body, the prosperity of individuals and of nations—in short, the great secular interests of mankind—now governed by special acts

of supernatural power? Science answers that they are not. Are they, then, governed by any regular and comprehensible natural laws? If they are not, then is this world a theatre of anarchy, and consequently of atheism; it is a world without the practical manifestation of a god.

If, on the other hand, such laws exist as science proclaims, they must be of Divine institution, and worthy of all reverence; and I ask, in the standards of what Church, from the pulpits of what sect, and in the schools of what denomination of Christians, are these laws taught as religious truths of Divine authority, and as practical guides for conduct in this world's affairs? If we do not now live under a special supernatural government of the world, but under a government by natural laws, and if these laws are not studied, honoured, and obeyed as God's laws, are we not actually a nation without a religion in harmony with the true order of Providence, and therefore without a religion adapted to practical purposes?

The answer will probably be that this argument is infidelity; but, with all deference, I reply that the denial of a regular, intelligible, wisely adapted, and Divinely appointed order of Nature, as a guide to human conduct in this world, is practical atheism; while the acknowledgment of the existence of such an order, accompanied by the nearly universal neglect of teaching and obeying its requirements, is real infidelity, is disrespectful to God, and injurious to the best interests of man. Christians cannot consistently believe that God answers the *prayers* of Mahommedans, Hindus, Persians, and Chinese, for they deny the soundness of their faiths; nor that He exercises a special providence for their guidance to temporal prosperity, and for their consolation in affliction and in the hour of death: and yet, if God really governs the world, His laws must apply to these nations as well as to Christians.

The Churches which have at all recognised the order of

Nature have attached to it a lower character than that which truly belongs to it. They do not recognise it as religious: *i.e.*, as an administration of Divine origin, deserving of reverential obedience. They have treated science and secular knowledge chiefly as objects of curiosity and sources of gain, and have given to actions intelligently founded on them the character of prudence. So humble has been their estimate of the importance of science, that they have not systematically called in the influence of the religious sentiments to hallow, elevate, and enforce the teachings of Nature. In most of their schools the elucidation of the relations of science to human conduct is omitted altogether, and catechisms of human invention usurp its place.

Society, meantime, including the Calvinistic world itself, proceeds in its secular enterprises on the basis of natural science, so far as it has been able to discover it. If practical men send a ship to sea, they endeavour to render it staunch and strong, and to place in it an expert crew and an able commander, as conditions of safety, dictated by their conviction of the order of Nature in flood and storm; if they are sick, they resort to a physician to restore them to health according to the ordinary laws of organisation; if they suffer famine from wet seasons, they drain their lands; and so forth. All these practices and observances are taught and enforced by men of science and the secular press as measures of practical prudence; but few Churches recognise the order of Nature, on which they are founded, as an object of reverence, and a becoming subject of religious instruction.

On the contrary, from the days of Galileo to the present time, religious professors have too often made war on science, on scientific teachers, and on the order of Nature; and many of them still adhere, as far as the reason and light of the public mind will permit them, to their old

doctrine of an inherent disorder reigning in the natural world. That disorder prevails is undeniable ; but science proclaims that it is to a great extent owing to man's ignorance of his own nature and of that of the external world, and to his neglect of their relations.

Many theologians do not recognise such views, but proceed as if human affairs were, somehow or other, still, in our day, influenced by special manifestations of Divine power. In Parliament, it was said by Mr. Plumptre, while discussing the famine in Ireland in 1846-7 through the failure of the potato crop, that "though he did not mean to enter at large into the question where the guilt which had drawn down upon them this tremendous dispensation lay—whether that guilt lay with the people or the rulers—he could not help expressing what he considered to be a well-founded opinion, that the rulers of this country had deeply offended by some Acts which they had recently placed on the statute-book, and which, in his belief, were calculated to bring down the Divine displeasure on the land."

It is conjectured that this honourable gentleman had in view the grant to the Roman Catholic College of Maynooth and the repeal of the corn-laws as the offences which, in his opinion, were calculated to bring down the Divine displeasure on the land. Be the acts what they may, the speech implied that, in his opinion, sin in the people or in their rulers had led to a special deflection of physical nature from its ordinary course, in order to produce a famine, for the punishment, not of the offenders, but of men, women, and children promiscuously, most of whom had no control over the transactions.

These notions would be unworthy of notice were it not a fact that they are still embraced as religion by large numbers of our people. In the olden time, eclipses were viewed as portentous announcements of Heaven's wrath against sinners ; but the discovery of unswerving physical

laws, by which the motions of the heavenly bodies are regulated, and in virtue of which the certain occurrence of eclipses can be predicted, has expunged that superstition from the civilised mind. Nevertheless, the same blind love of the wonderful and the mysterious, which led our ancestors to quail before a natural and normal obscuration of the sun, leads the unenlightened mind in our day to see in sin the causes of such visitations as cholera and agricultural blights, instead of looking for them in physical conditions presented to our understandings as problems to be solved, and to be then turned to account in avoiding future evils. Examples are frequently occurring of this conflict between the views of men who acknowledge a practical natural providence and those who do not.

Archbishop Whately, in his "Address to the Clergy and other Members of the Established Church on the Use and Abuse of the Present Occasion" (the famine in Ireland in 1846-47), says :—

"But advantage has been taken of the existing calamity to inculcate, with a view to the conversion of persons whom I believe to be in error, doctrines which I cannot but think utterly unsound, and of dangerous tendency, by arguments which will not stand the test of calm and rational examination. There are some who represent the present famine (as indeed they did the cholera some years back) as a Divine judgment, sent for the punishment of what they designate as national sins, especially the degree of toleration and favour shown to the members of the Church of Rome. Now, this procedure, the attributing to such and such causes the supposed Divine wrath, is likely, when those of a different creed from our own are thus addressed, to be by some of them rejected as profane presumption, and by others *retorted*. When once men begin to take upon them the office of inspired prophets, and to pronounce boldly what are the counsels of the Most High, it is as easy to do this on the one side as on the other. Roman Catholics who are told that a pestilence or a famine is sent as a judgment on the land for the toleration of Romanism may contend that, on

the contrary, it is Protestantism that is the national sin. And without the evidence of a sensible miracle to appeal to, neither party can expect to convince the other.

“When Israel was afflicted with a famine in the days of Elijah, on account of the idolatry of those of the people who had offended the Lord by worshipping Baal, the idolaters might have contended that the judgment was sent by Baal against the worshippers of Jehovah, *had not* the prophet expressly denounced that judgment *beforehand*, and foretold both the commencement, and afterwards the termination, of the drought, besides calling down the fire from heaven upon the altar. This it is that enables us to pronounce that that famine was a Divine judgment sent for the sin of Israel; and for *what* sin! And it is the same with the many similar cases that are recorded in Scripture. That Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed on account of their abominable wickedness *we know, because Scripture* tells us so. And that Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead for tempting the Spirit of God we know, and all present knew, *because* the Apostle Peter announced beforehand their fate, and declared the crime which called it down. But for any uninspired man to take upon him to make similar declarations respecting any one of his neighbours who may die suddenly, or concerning any city that may be destroyed by a volcano or an earthquake, is as irrational and presumptuous as it is uncharitable and unchristian.”

Another example is contained in a letter addressed by Lord Palmerston, as Home Secretary, to the Presbytery of Edinburgh, in answer to their inquiry whether he intended to advise the Queen to order a day of fasting, humiliation, and prayer to be observed in Scotland, in order to supplicate Divine Providence to stay the cholera which afflicted the people in 1854 :—

“The Maker of the universe has established certain laws of Nature for the planet in which we live, and the weal or woe of mankind depends upon the observance or the neglect of those laws. One of those laws connects health with the absence of those gaseous exhalations which proceed from overcrowded human beings or from decomposing substances, whether animal or

vegetable; and those same laws render sickness the almost inevitable consequence of exposure to those noxious influences. But it has at the same time pleased Providence to place it within the power of man to make such arrangements as will prevent or disperse such exhalations, so as to render them harmless; and it is the duty of man to attend to those laws of Nature, and to exert the faculties which Providence has thus given to man for his own welfare.

“The recent visitation of cholera, which has for the moment been mercifully checked, is an awful warning given to the people of this realm that they have too much neglected their duty in this respect, and that those persons with whom it rested to purify towns and cities, and to prevent or remove the causes of disease, have not been sufficiently active in regard to such matters. Lord Palmerston would, therefore, suggest that the best course which the people of this country can pursue to deserve that the further progress of the cholera should be stayed will be to employ the interval that will elapse between the present time and the beginning of next spring in planning and executing measures by which those portions of their towns and cities which are inhabited by the poorest classes, and which, from the nature of things, must most need purification and improvement, may be freed from those causes and sources of contagion which, if allowed to remain, will infallibly breed pestilence, and be fruitful in death, in spite of all the prayers and fastings of a united but inactive nation. When man has done his utmost for his own safety, then is the time to invoke the blessing of Heaven to give effect to his exertions.”

The majority of the Presbytery expressed great dissatisfaction with this communication, and refused to acknowledge that cleansing the town would be a becoming substitute for a day of fasting, humiliation, and prayer, as a means of averting cholera. The civic rulers of Edinburgh, however, acted on it, and with very beneficial effects; for the disease fell far more lightly on the city on this occasion than at the previous visitation in 1831.

It is impossible that the public mind can advance in sound and self-consistent practical principles of action in

this world's affairs while conflicting views of science, religion, and the course of God's providence are poured forth from the pulpit and the press; and it is equally impossible that the youthful mind can be trained to study, reverence, and conform to the course of God's providence, while that providence is treated with so little consideration by those who assume the character of accredited expositors of the Divine will.

The questions, then, whether there be an intelligible course of Nature revealed to the human understanding, whether it should be taught to the young, and whether the religious sentiments should be trained to venerate and conform to it as of Divine institution, are not barren speculations respecting dogmas and doctrines. They touch a highly momentous practical principle. While an impassable gulf stands between the views of God's providence on which society in its daily business acts, and the religious faith which it professes to hold, the influence of the latter on social conduct must necessarily be feeble and limited. It is a matter of great importance to have the principles of action and of belief brought into harmony. Nothing can retard the moral and intellectual advancement of the people more thoroughly than having a theology for Churches and Sundays, and a widely different code of principles for everyday conduct; and yet this *is*, and *must continue to be*, the case with all the Christian nations while they fail to recognise and to study the order of Nature as a Divinely appointed guide to human action.

A second Reformation in religion is imperatively called for, and is preparing. The devout teacher will recognise man and the natural world as constituted by Divine benevolence and wisdom, and as adapted to each other for man's instruction and benefit. He will communicate to the young a knowledge of that constitution and its adaptations as the basis of their religious faith and practice in reference to

this world. Until this change shall have been accomplished, religion will never exert its due influence over human affairs.

Thomas Carlyle, in treating of the theological opinions of the seventeenth century, observes that "the Christian doctrines which then dwelt alive in every heart have now in a manner died out of all hearts—very mournful to behold ; and *are not the guidance of this world any more.*" Dr. Chalmers also says : "As things stand at present, our creeds and confessions have become effete, and the Bible a dead letter ; and that orthodoxy which was at one time the glory, by withering into the inert and lifeless, is now the shame and reproach of all our Churches." Again : "There must be a most deplorable want amongst us of 'the light shining before men' when, instead of glorifying our cause, they (men like Thomas Carlyle) can speak, and with a truth the most humiliating, of our inert and unproductive orthodoxy."*

Though in some respects erroneous, this representation is literally true in the sense in which I have explained the fact. It is chiefly in regard to the continuation of the special supernatural agency of God in this world that the belief of the seventeenth century has practically gone out. It has not been abandoned in direct terms ; on the contrary, it is retained in the standards and instructions of the Churches, and is embraced, or attempted to be embraced, by many individuals ; but in point of fact it is no longer felt to be a reality by modern enlightened Christians.

"Nay, worse still," continues Mr. Carlyle, "*the cant of them does yet dwell alive with us ; little doubting that it is cant.*" With the *ignorant* it is *not* cant, but a sincere, although a sadly confused, belief. The strong-minded and well-informed men who have abandoned the ancient faith

* *North British Review*, Vol. VI., p. 326.

are wrong in supposing that it is cant in their weaker brethren. They are themselves to blame for not honestly disabusing them, and informing them that the belief of the seventeenth century was, in this particular, a mistake, and that it no longer constitutes a practical rule of action.

Mr. Carlyle proceeds: "*In which fatal intermediate state, the eternal sacredness of this universe itself, of this human life itself, has fallen dark to the most of us.*" This is lamentably true. The religious sentiments are not permitted practically to recognise the mode of God's administration in the ordinary course of Nature, as revealing His laws for the guidance of human conduct. We really *are* in the intermediate state here described. The old belief *has* partially died away; and our Churches scowl upon the new belief, which perhaps may help to remove the darkness which veils "the eternal sacredness of this universe itself, and of this human life itself."

In Germany, which led the way in the first Reformation, the same truth has forced itself on the attention of religious men. Dr. Tholuck, Professor of Theology in the University of Halle, who is well known in this country as a distinguished evangelical Protestant divine, remarks:—

"We live in an age when mankind is particularly rich in means to render the elements and Nature subservient to their will. We live in a time when the individual becomes every day more independent of restraining power: and if in the same measure in which this might, and dominion, and richness in means increases, the fear of God and the consciousness of dependence on Him decreases more and more; when all these gifts and all these means, instead of being used in the service of God and of His kingdom, are used in the service of selfishness and our own enjoyment: when man, through this dominion, becomes day after day more free from earthly restraints, but each day more and more a slave to his earthly passions: when blinded man builds altars, and sings praises to his own skill and wit, instead of to his Heavenly Father, from whom cometh every good and perfect gift—oh! have

not even the ancients foretold what must become of such a generation in that wonderful fable of the daring of Prometheus, who with violent hands stole from heaven its vivifying fire? What we here speak of is no anxious dream, no unreal imagination; no! *undeniable is the existing tendency in this generation to consecrate the temple which our pious forefathers reared to their Father in heaven to man, the fleeting son of an hour.*"*

Who is to blame for this forgetfulness of God by the cultivators of science but the Churches that have omitted to teach the sacred character of Nature, and to acknowledge her instruction as Divine?

To those whose understandings have embraced the views which I am now advocating, and whose religious sentiments have been interwoven with them, "this eternal sacredness" stands forth in all the beauty, brightness, and intensity which it ever possessed in the minds of the men of the seventeenth century. Mr. Carlyle adds: "We think *that* too" (the "sacredness of the universe") "cant and a creed." Yes—men of science whose religious sentiments have never been led to recognise the Divine adaptations in Nature as proclamations of the Divine will and attributes, but who have pursued their investigations from intellectual or interested motives alone, *do* regard the views which I am now advocating as "cant and a creed." To such persons I can only say that the religious sentiments exist in man: that the experience of all ages shows that in youth they may be directed to almost any object, and will ever afterwards cling to it as sacred; and the question is—Whether their legitimate direction is exclusively to dogmas and formulas of belief in reference mainly to another world, framed by fallible men in the dark ages as true interpretations of Scripture; or also towards that revelation which is

* "A Selection from the University Sermons of Augustus Tholuck, D.D.," p. 181; London, Seeley, 1844.

addressed by the great Ruler of the universe to man in Nature, and adapted to promote his improvement and enjoyment?

If we can persuade the people that the course of Nature, which determines their condition at every moment of their lives, "is the design—law—command—instruction (any word will do) of an all-powerful though unseen Ruler, it will become a religion with them; obedience will be felt as a wish and a duty, an interest and a necessity." The friend from whose letter I quote these words adds: "But *can* you persuade mankind thus? I mean, can you give them a *practical conviction*?" I answer: In the present unsatisfactory condition of things, the experiment is at least worth trying. Whatever objections may exist to this proposal, *something* is needed to reconcile religion and science; for, as Mr. Carlyle remarks, "the old names suggest new things to us—not august and Divine, but hypocritical, pitiable, and detestable. The old names and similitudes of belief still circulate from tongue to tongue, though now in such a ghastly condition: not as commandments of the living God, which we must do or perish eternally; alas! no, as something very different from that."

CHAPTER II.

THE COMPLEX CHARACTER OF RELIGION.

IN an inquiry into the relation between science and religion, it is necessary to define what is meant by these terms. By science, then, I understand a systematic exposition of correctly observed facts concerning the constitution, qualities, modes of action, and relations of the objects of Nature.

It is unnecessary to enlarge on the definition of science ; but, as much obscurity exists with respect to the nature and objects of religion, it may be useful to enter more fully into an elucidation of this subject.

By general acknowledgment there is a distinction between the emotional and the intellectual faculties of men ; but the mind being considered by many as a single power, the distinction is, in their view, one of nomenclature merely. A little reflection will lead to a different belief.

Religion is not a product of intellect alone. No kind, quantity, or quality, of intellectual conceptions will generate religious emotions. On the other hand, the religious emotions which prompt us to reverence and adore cannot reach definite objects without the aid of the intellectual powers. These objects may be physical or they may be mental. Entwine the reverential emotions from infancy with the statue of Jupiter, and it will become a religious object ; connect them with dogmas and articles of faith, and these will be revered as religious truths.

The kind of intellectual conceptions with which the religious emotions may be associated will depend upon the

strength and cultivation of *both* of these orders of faculties. When the intellectual faculties are weak, the emotions may be trained to invest almost anything with the attribute of holiness, and to regard it with reverence. In ancient Egypt, reptiles and birds were objects of religious veneration. In Hindustan, Juggernaut is worshipped ; in Greece and Rome, Jupiter and Apollo, Juno, Venus, and Diana, and many other imaginary beings, were adored as deities. In those countries the religious emotions were trained from infancy to reverence the statues of these imaginary personages as worthy of religious homage.

The intellectual faculties not only perceive the external objects represented as sacred, but receive the instruction concerning their qualities which the religious teachers of the people choose to communicate ; and the combination of the religious emotions with these ideas constitutes the religion of the various worshippers.

When, on the other hand, the intellectual faculties are powerful, and those of the religious emotions are feeble, the individual will with great difficulty attain a strong living religious character. He may try to believe dogmas, to perform ceremonies, and to conform to observances ; but he will feel, and penetrating observers will discover, that the unction of piety is not a powerful element in his mental constitution.

Religion, in the common acceptation of the term, means a system of Divine faith and worship, and thus used, it expresses only external objects. In the present treatise I consider it as a mental state, made up of certain emotions and intellectual conceptions. In this subjective sense, the two are necessary to constitute religion.

As this proposition is a fundamental one in the discussions on which we are about to enter, and as it will probably be new to some readers, a few illustrations of it may be useful. In the following instances, objects possessing

in themselves no sacred qualities are invested with such a character by becoming associated with the religious emotions.

In England, for example, graveyards and churches are consecrated, and in Scotland they usually are not. What constitutes consecration? A bishop performs certain ceremonies, reads certain prayers, and declares the ground holy and set apart to receive the bodies of believers, there to rest till the resurrection. In like manner he declares the Church to be sacred, and dedicates it to the worship of God. In England, the religious emotions are, from infancy, entwined with these ceremonies and objects; and in the mind of the thoroughbred Church of England Christian, in whom the religious sentiment is active, these places actually become sacred. He shudders at the idea of being buried in unconsecrated ground, and is shocked at the proposal to transact secular business in a church. If there were a naturally sacred character in the burial-ground and church, consecration would be unnecessary; and as it is incredible that the ceremonies change their nature, the change can occur only in the minds of the people.

How are these acts viewed by the staunch Scottish Presbyterian—one trained from infancy to venerate Calvin and John Knox, the Shorter Catechism, the Westminster Confession of Faith, and his own Church ceremonies—and taught, moreover, that Episcopalians persecuted his ancestors to death, and still profess a religion closely allied to Romanism? To such a person the ceremonies of consecration appear as unmeaning and unreal as the incantations of the witches in *Macbeth*; the graveyard appears to him merely a piece of ground, and the church four walls and a roof; and he regards as a superstitious fancy the holy character in which these appear to the Englishman. And why does he do so? Because he views them through his intellect alone, which experiences no emotions; while, from

infancy, feelings of hatred have been associated in his mind with the Episcopalian doctrines and ritual.

With the sound Scottish Presbyterian no edifice is sacred. In Edinburgh, a theatre was long used on week-days for the drama, and on Sundays as a church. The English Churchman would have revolted at this practice. A congregation of the Free Church of Scotland worshipped in a music-hall; and in the new cemeteries, a portion of the ground is consecrated for the burial of Episcopalians, while the remainder is unconsecrated for Presbyterian use. A line on the ground-plan or a walk in the graveyard distinguishes the parts, but no demarcation indicative of difference of character is discernible.

The name given to the intellectual ideas which enter into the composition of religion is *THEOLOGY*. It means the notions which we form concerning the Being to whom, or the objects to which, our reverential and devotional emotions should be directed.

“Lo the poor Indian! whose untutored mind
Sees God in clouds, or hears Him in the wind.”

This is the theology of the Indian. The Hindus and the Mahommedans have embodied their theology—in other words, their notions concerning the objects to be revered and worshipped—in books. The emotional faculties of the people being trained to reverence as Divine revelations the narratives and dogmas which these books contain, the compound becomes in their minds religion. Hence, a man may be highly religious, and know nothing of theology beyond the narratives and dogmas which have been entwined with his religious emotions from his infancy; while another may be a profound theologian, acquainted with the original languages of Scripture, skilled in all the controversies which have taken place concerning the authors by whom

its different parts were written, the time and order of their appearance, their title to the attribute of inspiration, and the true meaning of their texts, and yet may not be religious. In point of fact, experience shows that, in many instances, the more an individual knows of these subjects, the less religious, in the common acceptation of the word, he becomes; that is to say, his reverence for the special dogmas and observances, which in his youth he was trained to regard with religious awe, diminishes.

The primitive emotion, when energetic and excited, is so overpowering, that it carries the whole mind captive. When it acts blindly, it dethrones reason, stifles conscience, and enlists every passion to vindicate the honour and glory of the Being whom it has been trained to reverence. When the woof of error has been added in infancy, and the web of superstition has been formed, every thread—that is to say, every notion concerning God and His priests, and man's duty to both—becomes sacred in the eyes of the devotee, and stirs the emotion into a glow of rapture if gratified, and of pain, accompanied by indignation and fury, if offended. In this state of mind, barbarous nations plunder and slay in honour of and to the glory of their gods.

In Christian nations, analogous phenomena appear. We all profess to draw our religion from the Bible; but in Scotland, one woof is woven into the warp, in England another, in Ireland a third, in Germany a fourth, in Russia a fifth, and so on. In Scotland, my own country, the woof consists of certain views of God, of human nature, and of man's state, duties, and destiny, embodied in the Shorter Catechism and the Westminster Confession of Faith. In our infancy these are woven by our parents and clergy into the very core of our religious emotion, and the resulting texture is our religion. The union is so intimate, and the web so firmly knit together, that most of us have no conception of anything being religion except this our own compound web

of devotion and intellectual doctrine. The doctrine is to us as sacred as the emotion, and he who controverts it is regarded as the enemy of our religion.

In barbarous ages, Christian men, acting under this impression, burned those who controverted their interpretations of Scripture ; and in our own day they calumniate them as infidels. Nevertheless, the doctrine which they thus regard as unquestionably Divine is a mere human woof, composed of inferences drawn from particular texts of Scripture by mortal men assembled at Westminster in the seventeenth century : men fallible like ourselves, and many of them more ignorant, though the intimate union of the doctrine with our devotional emotion is apt to incapacitate our mind from so regarding it.

We obtain direct and irresistible proof that such is the fact by merely crossing the Border, or St. George's Channel. In England, the woof is composed of the Liturgy and the Episcopalian Catechism. The Englishman into whose devotional emotion the doctrines of these books have been woven from infancy cannot conceive that anything but his own web of opinion is the true religion. Cross the Channel again, to Roman Catholic Ireland, and there you find that the Pope and Councils have fashioned other standards of faith, and that the priests have woven them into the warp of the Irish mind ; and this web constitutes *its* religion.

The difference between Religion and Theology, which I have here endeavoured to indicate, may also be illustrated by comparing them to the warp and the woof of a web. In our present problem the native sentiment of reverence and devotion may be likened to the warp. It is the foundation, or first element, of the web. The theological ideas may be considered as the cross thread, or woof. As the shuttle adds the woof to the warp to make the cloth, so the intellect adds theology, or particular notions about God, to the emotion, and the two combined constitute what

we commonly call religion. The Hindu religion is the primitive pure emotion, *plus* such intellectual ideas as the priests of the country have been able to weave into it. The Mahommedan and Christian religions may be described in similar terms; and thus it is that the composite web of reverential emotion and intellectual ideas formed by each nation for itself is called its religion.

Nay, the clergy of different sects have woven notions about Church government and ceremonies into the warp, and have made these also appear portions of religion; and men fight for and defend them with as much zeal as if they were attributes of God.

We may now understand why it is that we are afflicted with such deadly strifes and hatred in the name of religion. "The clouds that intercept the heavens from us come not from the heavens, but from the earth." The thing we call religion is a compound web, and when our neighbour shows us his threads of religious opinion and calls them Divine, we, into whose minds they have not been woven, survey his fabric with the eye of reason, and pronounce it to be partly pure and partly spurious. Our neighbour's devotional feeling receives a rude shock; he becomes angry, and attacks our web of religion in his turn, and treats it in a similar way. Neither of us, probably, is capable of examining closely and calmly the threads that constitute the woof of his own web, and hence discord between religious parties is interminable.

In the prevalent creeds, Nature is not recognised as sacred; no dogmas are founded on scientific truth and systematically combined with the religious emotions, so as to invest them with a religious character. This appears to be the true cause why no practical natural religion exists, and why none can be formed until we venture on a new religious Reformation. It explains also why "the eternal sacredness of this universe itself, of this human life

itself, has fallen dark to the most of us." Meanwhile, the union between the religious emotions and the prevalent dogmas, being cemented by no natural bond, is in constant danger of dislocation, either by forcible and confident appeals made by other pretending authorities to the religious emotions themselves, as in the case of Mormonism, or by the teachings of science rendering it impossible for the intellect to recognise the truth of the established doctrines.

The absence of a rational foundation for their faith has recently been shown by the prevalence, even among the educated classes, of belief in spirit-rapping and table-turning. Professing to believe in the sublime doctrines of heaven and hell, and some of them in that of purgatory, they have actually embraced the notion, and have earnestly acted on it, that the spirits of the dead can be evoked from those awful abodes, and induced to answer the most trumpery questions by the invocation of practitioners who make gain of the popular credulity.

Is the human mind to continue for ever to have its religion stamped upon it like a pattern on potter's clay, and to retain and act upon it through life, irrespective altogether of a foundation in Nature? And can religions that repudiate, or at least neglect Nature, and rest chiefly on mediæval interpretations of sacred books, be calculated to promote the civilisation of man amidst the blaze of light and reason which is every hour revealing the imperfection of the popular notions, and their conflict with the works and will of the Almighty? Let us not shrink from answering these questions, but let us boldly, yet humbly, inquire into the resources afforded by the present state of knowledge for improving our religious systems.

To attain this object, it appears necessary to inquire whether science affords a foundation for a natural theology and a natural religion. In order to answer this question

we must consider, *1st*, The natural evidence for the existence of a Supreme Being; *2ndly*, Whether we can trace Divine government in the phenomena of the physical and moral departments of the world? *3rdly*, If such government be discernible, by what means is it maintained and rendered efficient? *4thly*, Whether specific duties are revealed and prescribed to man by this government, and what these are? —the answers to these questions will constitute our natural theology; and *lastly*, Whether, by entwining with the religious emotions the views of God, of His government, and of the duties which He prescribes, we shall be able to confer a religious character on these truths, and thus constitute a natural religion? If we succeed in those objects, we shall render science sacred, invest the practical duties of life with a religious character, and produce a faith calculated to expand and purify itself by every advance in the discovery of truth, and to reinforce, by all the power and fervour of our highest emotions, the progress of mankind towards the utmost degree of improvement and happiness which human nature is fit to attain.

CHAPTER III.

OF GOD.

THE highest object to which the religious emotions of any people are directed constitutes their God. Their notions concerning that object being associated with the religious emotions, the object becomes sacred, is hallowed, and adored; and these opinions become the grand foundation of the rest of their faith. The natural and mental process by which ideas of God have been formed appears to be the following. The faculties* of Wonder and Veneration give us a tendency to believe in a supernatural cause of the remarkable phenomena of Nature which we see and feel, but cannot comprehend. The faculties of Individuality and Imitation prompt us to personify abstract ideas and active powers.

The Greeks and the Romans, unable to account scientifically for the cause of the winds, imagined it to be a supernatural power, personified it, and called it Æolus, or the God of the Winds. Roused to admiration by the teeming fertility of the soil, and unable to comprehend its cause, they attributed *it* also to a supernatural power, and personified it; and as, in the animal economy, the producer is feminine, they were led by analogy to regard it as of this sex; hence arose the goddess Ceres. These nations multiplied deities to represent the causes of all the interesting and impressive phenomena of nature of which they could give no other account, including human passions, emotions,

* Combe's Scheme of the Human Faculties may be found in his "Constitution of Man," Chapter II.

and intellectual powers. Mars was the god of war, the personification of Combativeness and Destructiveness; Minerva the goddess of wisdom, the personification of the moral sentiments and the intellect; and so forth.

These notions, being entwined in youth with the religious emotions of the people, became religious truths, and led to important results. First—They diverted the national mind from inquiring into the natural causes of the phenomena, which they ascribed to the agency of these supernatural powers; and hence, when evil overtook them, such as famine, or shipwreck, or pestilence, they attributed it to the displeasure of Ceres, or of Æolus, or of Jupiter. Instead of endeavouring to remove its natural causes, or to protect themselves by natural means against their influence, the Greeks sought to discover why the supernatural Power was offended, and how it might be appeased and its favour secured; and ascribing to it passions and emotions like their own, they sacrificed animals, and occasionally men, to assuage its anger, and offered incense, sang praises, and presented gifts to gratify its senses and its love of glory.

Secondly—These errors, having become sacred, prompted the people to regard everyone who tried to deliver them from their superstitions as a blasphemer and contemner of the gods, and to punish him severely.

The Jews were taught higher conceptions of the great supernatural Power named God. Their earlier Scriptures represent Him as existing in the form of a man; for we are told that God made man after His own image, which implies that God had a form like the human; and it is narrated that, on one occasion, Moses saw the hinder parts of God's person. Moreover, the Jewish Scriptures ascribe to God human passions: they represent Him as angry, jealous, revengeful, capable of being moved from His object by entreaty, and pleased with praise, sacrifices, and incense. Elsewhere, however, they ascribe to Him the

sublimest attributes which the human faculties can conceive : unity, eternal existence, ubiquity, omniscience, omnipotence, and all the human virtues.

These ideas of God were woven into the religious emotions of the Jewish people, and became the foundation of their religion. They were greatly superior to the ideas of the Greeks and Romans, and of other contemporaneous nations ; and this superiority has been one natural cause why the Jews maintained themselves as a distinct people after their expulsion from Judea, and when living in society with the professors of all the other creeds of the world.

Mahommedan writers recognise, to some extent, the distinction between theology and religion, and name the first *Imân*, and the second *Din*. Mahomet, the founder of this faith, appears to have borrowed his ideas of God from the Jews. He “emphatically proclaims that there is but one God, the Creator and Governor of the universe—omnipresent, eternal, omniscient, omnipotent—most holy, wise, good, and merciful.” In the Koran we find these words :—“God ! there is no God but He, the living, the self-subsisting ; . . . He knoweth that which is past, and that which is to come ; . . . His throne is extended over heaven and earth, and the preservation of both is no burden to Him. He is the high and mighty.” (Ch. vi.) And again : “He hath spread the earth as a bed for you and the heaven as a covering, and hath caused water to descend from heaven, and thereby produced fruits for your sustenance. . . . He directeth whom He pleaseth into the right way. God knoweth that which ye do ; . . . and whether ye manifest that which is in your minds, or conceal it, God will call you to account for it, and will forgive whom He pleaseth, and will punish whom He pleaseth ; for God is almighty. Your God is one God ; there is no God but He—the most merciful.” (Ch. ii.)

“In the creed of Islam, the Christian doctrine of the Trinity is distinctly repudiated. In the Mahommedan Confession of Faith it is declared, ‘As He never begot any person whatsoever, so He Himself was begotten by none : as He never was a son, so He never hath been a father.’

“In their search after the true ideal of the Divine nature, the faithful are directed to the works of creation and the benign agencies of Providence—to the sun and stars, to the clouds, to the rain and winds, and to their vivifying influences on the animal and vegetable world—as ‘*signs* to people of understanding.’ (*Koran*, ch. ii.) But, looking to the mutability and the limited existence and duration of all mere earthly and sensible objects, idolatry and creature-worship are denounced, as suggesting low and unworthy ideas of the Divine nature and character. ‘Whatever rises,’ says the *Koran*, ‘must set ; whatever is born must die ; and whatever is corruptible must decay and perish.’ (Ch. vi.) On such grounds, the worship of saints and images, and the use of pictorial or other representations of living things, were strictly forbidden.

“The belief in *angels*, which from time immemorial had been universal throughout the East, was adopted into the creed of Islam.

“As to the *Koran*, Mahommedans were required to believe that it was not the work of the Prophet himself, but that it was an emanation from ‘the very essence of God ; that it was preserved from all eternity, near the throne of God, on a vast table, called ‘The preserved Table,’ on which were also inscribed the Divine decrees, relating to all events, both past and future ; and that the angel Gabriel was sent down with a transcript from it to the lowest heaven, whence he revealed it to Mahomet, from time to time, in successive portions, as circumstances required. A view, however, of the entire volume of Scripture, bound in silk and adorned with precious stones, was vouchsafed to the

Prophet once a year ; and during the last year of his life he was twice indulged with that privilege."*

The notions of God before quoted form the great foundation of the Mahommedan religion. The doctrines and practices of the Koran derive their sanctity from being believed to be revelations of His will. Some of these doctrines harmonise with the order of God's natural providence, but many of them are at variance with it ; and the whole being entwined with the religious emotions in the minds of the people, the two form together their religion.

Like the religions of Greece and Rome, Mahommedanism averts the minds of its votaries from inquiring into the course of God's natural providence, paralyses the intellect by limiting the scope of its pursuits, diverts the moral and religious emotions from their highest objects, and renders sacred every error which the Koran contains. It thus constitutes a huge barrier to progressive civilisation.

Mahommedans propagate their religion by the sword, and succeed. They force parents in the conquered nations to allow their children to be taught religion by the Mahommedan priests. These find little difficulty in entwining the Koran with the religious emotions of the young, and in one generation produce many sincere believers in the imposed faith. These are constantly augmenting, until the whole people become Mahommedans.

The Christian religion overthrew the religion of Greece and Rome, and took its place. In the age when this happened, little natural science existed ; printing had not been invented, books were scarce and dear, and the mass of the people could neither read nor write. In Italy, the clergy introduced into Christian worship the use of pictures, in which were represented God the Father, under the form

* "Cyclopædia of Religious Denominations;" London, Griffin & Co.; article "Mahommedanism," by John Bell, A.M., formerly Professor in the Elphinston College, Bombay.

of an old man ; Jesus Christ, the Son, as a young man ; and the Holy Spirit as a dove ; and they trained the people to regard these three as one, the only true God. They ascribed attributes and offices to each of these persons, founded on interpretations of Scripture ; and their notions constitute the general Christian idea of God. They entwined these with the religious emotions, and thus formed them into important elements of the Christian faith.

They also led the emotions to reverence the Scriptures as a revelation of the Divine will ; but they did not trust the people with the sacred books themselves. They formed dogmas out of them, and trained the people to reverence these as an epitome, and as correct interpretations, of the sacred volume. Moreover, the Roman Catholic clergy told the people that the true meaning of Scripture was, in some instances, obscure ; that, in their state of unavoidable ignorance, they might err in their interpretations of it and imperil their souls, and that the Pope and assembled clergy were far better judges of its import ; and thus they persuaded the laity to dispense with the exercise of their own judgment, and to accept, reverence, and believe whatever the clergy represented to them to be Divine truth.

Great knowledge of human nature was displayed in this proceeding. In a barbarous age, the emotions were necessarily much more powerful than the intellect, and by authoritatively presenting to them images and dogmas, and rendering these sacred by entwining them with the emotions, the clergy constituted this compound their religion. By excluding the privilege of private judgment, they aimed at securing perfect unity of faith and doctrine in the Church, and conferring repose of mind on the individual believer.

Had it been possible to maintain the intellect of the laity permanently in the condition in which it was when this system of religion was founded, and had the clergy

abstained from violating their own precepts in their practical conduct, the Roman Catholic faith might have had an indefinite existence over Europe. But the invention of printing conferred on the people the power of reading, and this roused their intellectual faculties and prompted them to inquire into the accordance of their religion with Scripture; while the dissolute character of the clergy at the time shocked their moral faculties, and a reformation of religious doctrine and observances ensued.

The Reformers continued to preserve unbroken the association between the Scriptures and the religious emotions of the people, and recognised these writings as Divine revelation; but they asserted the right of the laity to read and interpret the Bible for themselves. By abolishing the use of images and pictures, they dissolved the connection between these and the religious emotions. The only intellectual object which the leaders of the Reformation at first presented to the laity, as a substratum for their religious emotions, was the Scriptures. If the right of private judgment had been intended to be a reality, they should have left every Christian to extract the true meaning of the sacred volume for himself, and to combine it with his own religious emotions, and thus to constitute an individual religion. This would have been the infallible result of consistent action on their own principles; because, as no two individuals possess the intellectual and the emotional faculties developed in precisely the same degree, men's natural powers of interpreting Scripture differ, and differences in cultivation and literary and historical acquirements also lead to variety of interpretations.

This result is the more inevitable because the Bible contains no system of theology, but is composed chiefly of narratives, descriptions, sublime effusions of devotion, and much sound morality, bound together by no obvious logical connection.

The leaders of the Reformation were not slow to perceive the consequences of this state of things. To found a sect, a series of dogmas must be extracted from the Bible, and the religious emotions must be trained to accept and reverence them as religious truths. The Reformers carried this principle into practice, framed epitomes of Scriptural doctrine, and taught the laity to believe in them as sound expositions of Divine revelation.

The present religions of Europe consist of dogmas compiled or deduced, in distant ages, from the Bible, by men ignorant of natural science and of the real order of the Divine government on earth. These have been intertwined, from generation to generation, with the religious emotions, and are all sacred in the eyes of believers. So completely is this the case, that when a clergyman is accused of preaching heresy, he is not allowed to appeal to the Scriptures to prove the soundness of his views ; but his doctrine is tried by the standards of his Church, and he is condemned if he has deviated from them, whatever the Scriptures may prove to the contrary.

We read the Koran with our intellect alone ; and in consequence of our religious emotions never having been intertwined with its text, it bears no aspect of sacredness to us. On the other hand, we find great difficulty in reading the Bible and our religious formulas with our intellect alone ; because our religious emotions have been trained from our infancy to venerate the former as Divine revelation, and the latter as true interpretations of it. When the Mahomedan reads the Bible, he judges of it by his intellect, or tries it by the Koran ; and finding in it some parts like his own sacred standard, he approves of these, but finding other portions in discord with it, these he condemns. The Mahomedan will never judge soundly of the Koran till he becomes capable of trying it by his intellect alone, and comparing it with the laws of God inscribed in the Book of

Nature. When he shall become capable of this comparison, he will accept as Divine only such of its doctrines as harmonise with natural truth.

In a future chapter I shall inquire to what extent our Christian formulas are aiding or impeding our civilisation ; meantime, I desire it to be understood that I cast no imputation on their compilers. These theologians are not chargeable with disrespect to God in omitting to direct the religious emotions to His works and agency in Nature ; because at the time when they wrote, there were few expositions of these deserving the name of science, or worthy of being combined with the religious emotions, and rendered sacred. And even now I have no charge to prefer against the clergy who still fail to teach the sacred character of Nature, and who conscientiously substitute these dogmas in its place, although in many respects at variance with what appears to me to be the order of God's moral government of the world

We have hitherto considered the Greek and Roman notions of God derived from the simple suggestions of the human faculties acting in the absence of scientific knowledge of Nature ; and also those derived by other nations from books believed by them to be Divine. We may now briefly inquire into the ideas concerning God which may be legitimately drawn from Nature in the present state of our knowledge.

The first difficulty that meets us in this inquiry arises from the depth to which, during our whole lives, our religious emotions have been imbued with dogmatic ideas on the subject. Notions concerning the existence and attributes of God were impressed upon us by our mothers and nurses at the first dawn of our intelligence ; were multiplied and ingrained in us in our youth by perusal of the Scriptures, and by instruction in catechisms and articles of

faith ; and were enforced in adult life by the pulpit, the press, and the general voice of society. To unravel the threads of this religious web, and to discover how many of them we owe to God's revelations of Himself in His works, and how many to human instruction—and, moreover, to discriminate the real title of the threads of human construction to form parts of the web of belief at all—may baffle the acutest understanding. Nevertheless, if we direct our attention to the Hindu, the Mahommedan, or any other false religion, we shall have little difficulty in perceiving how important it would be to succeed in such an analysis of the notions concerning God entertained by its adherents, with a view to redeeming them from the practical consequences of their erroneous opinions as to His nature and His will.

There is reason to believe that a similar process of analysis of the threads of their faith might benefit the European nations also ; because nothing is more certain than that, although all profess to derive their views of God and of His will from Scripture, not only nations and sects, but also individuals of the same sect, differ widely from one another in their opinions regarding these momentous subjects. Every one, therefore, cannot be holding the truth ; and error reduced to practice must lead to disaster in Europe, as certainly as in Turkey or in Hindustan. Let us, therefore, at least attempt to discover what lessons unaided Nature teaches us in regard to God and His will.

There are two opinions regarding the natural sources of our belief in the existence of God—one that it is intuitive ; and the other that it is a deduction of reason. Reason may assist us in examining and analysing the circumstances in which our intuitive convictions arise, but it cannot account for them. In the science of Optics, for example, we find expositions of the compound nature of light, and of the kinds of surfaces which reflect the green rays, and cause

these objects to appear to us green ; of others that reflect the red rays, and are seen by us as red ; and so forth : but we see no necessary connection between the appearances of these surfaces and their power to reflect different rays, or between these rays and our own mental perceptions of colour. Our perceptions, and the convictions which attend them, are pure intuitions—the results simply of the constitution of our faculties and their adaptations to external Nature.

Now, it appears to me that by the constitution of the mental faculties, particularly those of Wonder, Veneration, and Ideality, and their relations to external objects, belief in a supernatural Power arises intuitively in the minds of persons with a well-constituted brain, from the perception and comprehension of the qualities, phenomena, and relations of the outward world. Here also reason may investigate the circumstances under which this intuitive belief arises, and extend and deepen it ; but it is not its source. This view is fortified by the fact that we find the existence of a supernatural Power recognised by all the races of men in whom the faculties named above are even moderately developed, however ignorant of science they may be.

But the qualities or attributes of this Power are deductions of reason, and nations and individuals view these differently, according to the differences that exist in the development of their brains or in their intellectual cultivation. From the same cause they interpret differently the statements of Scripture on those subjects. The nature of God (Unity or Trinity), and His attributes, are apprehended differently by different minds, all drawing their conclusions from the Bible. Some believe that the First Person of the Trinity possesses qualities that rendered it indispensable for Him to demand the sacrifice of the Second Person as the sole condition on which He could forgive the sins of mankind ;

while others consider this to be an erroneous interpretation of Scripture concerning the character of God. Many other discordant views of the Divine Nature and Attributes are known to prevail even among the sincerest Christians; and these show that the Bible does not protect us from forming different opinions of its import when differences exist in the development of our brains and in our intellectual cultivation.

The manner in which reason may throw light on the circumstances in which our intuitive belief in God arises may now be considered.

If the definition of a cause given by Dr. Thomas Brown, namely, that "priority in the sequence observed, and invariableness of antecedence in the past and future sequences supposed, are the elements, and the *only* elements, combined in the notion of a cause," be correct, it appears to me to be impossible to elucidate or strengthen by reason our intuitive belief in the existence of a God. On that supposition, the whole external world will exhibit only a succession of phenomena. However regular the sequences may be, and for however long a period they may have been observed, nothing seems to be implied in mere sequence that indicates anything beyond the phenomena themselves, and the circumstances in which they occur.

When, however, the faculty of Causality is developed, the perception of antecedence and sequence in phenomena is accompanied by a belief, intuitive and irresistible, that in the antecedent there exists a quality of *power* and *efficiency* to produce the sequent. The proper function of Causality, I take it, is to produce this belief, and it is only when the antecedent is thus viewed that it can properly be called a cause. There may be complex antecedents to one effect, but on analysing them we recognise those only as causes in which we discern active power. Everything else belongs to the category of circumstances.

Let any one, for example, observe the appearances of the clouds as they float along a summer sky, borne onward by a gentle breeze, and let him note their forms, colours, and magnitude, and try to draw conclusions regarding the succession of forms or other attributes which will characterise the clouds floating on a similar breeze to-morrow. Here are antecedents and subsequents in abundance, but we soon discover that the clouds exhibiting these phenomena do not enable us to draw conclusions in regard to the succession of future clouds.

The reason of our hesitation is, that we have no *belief* of the antecedent cloud being the *cause* of the characteristics of the one that succeeds it. There is the absence of that regularity in the sequence which indicates the relation of cause and effect; but it is not the mere absence of this order which we recognise—its absence suggests the thought that the antecedent cloud is not the cause of the appearances of the subsequent one, and we are prompted to search deeper, in order to discover what the cause is. We may discover substances, agents, or forces, such as are treated of in the science of Meteorology, more adequate to produce the effects. As formerly observed, however, Causality appears to produce only a belief in efficiency, without giving us a notion of the *nature* of the efficient cause.

The mental process by which conviction of intelligence in a cause is attained may be illustrated by referring to the sun and the eye as an example. These objects exist, and the one is obviously adapted to the other: the sun to give light, and the eye to receive it, to modify it, and thus to enable us to see. The eye and the sun did not arrange this relationship themselves. If these are contemplated, no necessary connection can be perceived between the two. There is nothing in the sun that necessarily implies the existence of eyes; and nothing in the eye that necessarily implies the existence of the sun. Nevertheless, the relationship of adaptation exists

between them. Comparison and Causality, if adequately developed, cannot ascribe *adaptation* to either of the two structures, because both are required to render it possible. The adaptation, therefore, not being an attribute of either, and yet the perception of it being produced in the mind by the contemplation of the objects, the hypothesis of the existence of an intelligence external to both the eyes and the sun, which instituted it, seems alone capable of accounting for it.

All Nature is full of adaptations. The structure of the lungs is adapted to the air, and that of the muscles to the force of gravitation; the structure of plants is adapted at once to the sun, the air, and the soil; and so forth. Causality and Comparison, therefore, are furnished with such innumerable examples of what appear to them to be designed adaptations, that they cannot rest in the assumption that these are merely accidental or inherent qualities of matter.

It has been said, that as science advances the Deity recedes. If by this is meant that the hypothesis of God's irregular action becomes more and more untenable, the statement is correct; but in the sense that the evidence of His existence, power, and wisdom becomes feebler, it is a mistake. The most stupendous idea of the universe that has yet been formed is that which supposes every fixed star to be a sun like our own, with planets circling round it, and the whole to be revolving round a more gigantic and hitherto undiscovered central orb. But this hypothesis assumes that the stars move round the central sun in virtue of forces of the same nature and obeying the same laws as those which prevail in the earth; so that, even according to this view, the Deity is as directly influencing our planet as the heavenly host. The faculties of Causality and Comparison, judging from these data, support our intuitive belief that an extramundane Power and Intelligence exists, and that it instituted those *adaptations*.

It is objected that reason does not warrant our belief in the *self-existence* of God ; and some affirm that, for anything we know to the contrary, the Ruler of the world may Himself own a superior, and have been created. Their argument is stated in this form : “ You who believe in God from intuition must submit your belief to the scrutiny of reason. If you admit that every Being must have a cause, then this Being Himself *is an effect*. You have no warrant in your intuitions, and there is no evidence from reason, for His *self-existence* or *self-creation* ; and, as He does exist, you must assign a *cause of Him*, on the same principle that you regard Him as the cause of the material creation.” The atheists carry this argument the length of an absolute denial of God, in respect that it is only the *first cause* that, according to them, can legitimately be regarded as Deity ; and the first cause, say they, is to us unknown.

The following answer to this objection may be considered. The knowing faculties *perceive objects directly*, and Causality *infers* qualities from manifestations. To be able to judge thoroughly of any object, the *whole* of these faculties must be employed on it. When a watch, for example, is presented to us, the knowing faculties perceive its springs, lever, and wheels, and Causality discerns the object or design. If the question is put, Whence did the watch proceed?—then, from the nature of its materials as perceived by the knowing faculties, Causality infers that it could not make itself ; and from discovering intelligence and design in the adaptation of its parts, this faculty concludes that its cause must have possessed these qualities, and therefore assigns its production to an intelligent artificer.

Suppose the statement to be next made—“ This artificer himself is an existence, and every existence must have a cause ; who, then, made the watchmaker ? ” In this case, if no farther information were presented to Causality than what it could obtain by contemplating the structure of the

watch, the answer would necessarily be, that it could not tell. But let the artificer, or man, be submitted to the joint observation of the knowing faculties and Causality, and let the question be put, Who made him?—the knowing powers, by examining the structure of his body, would present Causality with data from which it could unerringly infer that, although it perceived in him intelligence and power sufficient to make the watch, yet, from the nature of his constitution, he could not have made himself. Proceeding in the investigation, Causality, still aided by the knowing faculties, would perceive the most striking indications of power, benevolence, and design in the human frame; and from contemplating these, it would arrive at a conviction that the watchmaker is the work of a great, powerful, and intelligent Being.

If, however, the question were now put, Whence did this Being proceed? Causality could not answer, any more than it could tell, from seeing the watch alone, who made the watchmaker. The perceptive faculties cannot observe the substance of the Maker of the human body; His existence is suggested by Comparison and Causality; and all that they can accomplish is to infer His existence and His qualities or attributes from perceiving their manifestation. They have no data for inferring that He had an antecedent.

The argument now stated is objected to in a letter written to me by a deceased friend of great talents and attainments on the following grounds:—"The argument of Design," it is said, "is *à posteriori*. It is an argument of analogy. It ascends from the known to the unknown. The subjects of the analogy are the works of man, a watch, a code of laws, or any other human contrivance, on the one hand; and the phenomena of Nature on the other. The former, the watch, &c., are known to have been designed by the human designer, man; the latter, the phenomena of Nature,

are inferred analogically to have been designed by the unknown, but sought, Designer, God.

“ Well, it appears to me that an analogy to be good for demonstration must be extensible, at least in its essence, equally to both of the terms of the analogy. Now, man, the known designer, invents or designs by discovering laws external to and independent of himself, and then applying these laws to the sure production of effects which he desiderates. (Black discovers latent heat, Watt applies that discovery in a desiderated direction, and the steam-engine is brought to perfection.) Therefore the unknown Designer, who is inferred by this analogy, does, for all the analogy makes good, simply discover truth external to and independent of Himself, and then applies that truth to the production of effects (the phenomena of Nature), which He desiderates. This is not God, the eternal, almighty, and every way infinite One, whose existence the argument professes to demonstrate.”

The argument from reason maintained in the preceding pages, may no doubt fall short of this demonstration ; but it appears to me that the supernatural Designer does much more than, like man, invent or design by discovering laws external to and independent of Himself. The bodies of the mammalia are composed of certain chemical elements ; and out of these, the unknown Designer has formed different organisms, which manifest very different qualities. The tiger and the lamb, the horse and the owl, man and the ape, are all composed, so far as we have yet discovered, of these ten or twelve elements. We have found out many of the laws which the elements obey in entering into combinations, and are able to produce from them many admirable new results ; but we have never been able to convert them by any skill of our own into organised beings ; much less to make those specific combinations of them which constitute different organisms, capable of manifesting different qualities.

The unknown Designer appears to encounter no such difficulties. The specified elements, when wielded by Him, take every variety of form, and manifest the most diverse qualities. Nay, He endows the structures with powers to be exerted contingently—powers which are ready to act when circumstances require their action, or to remain latent for ever. The blood of animals, for example, has the quality of repairing losses and injuries which may be sustained by their organisms ; so that if a muscle is injured, it shall deposit muscular fibre, and if a bone is broken, it shall deposit osseous matter, in the places and quantities necessary to restore the parts to health and efficiency. But life may be passed without these parts sustaining any injury ; and in this case the powers are never evoked into action. These phenomena indicate to Comparison and Causality that the unknown Contriver possessed over the elements He used a command indescribably superior to that which we can wield.

Again, man has in vain attempted to produce a perpetual motion ; but the supernatural Power appears to have found no difficulty in doing so. The revolution of the planets round the sun, and of the satellites round their principal planets, are examples in point. We comprehend the laws which govern these evolutions, and see uniformity and design manifested in them, but we cannot even conjecture how the planets were formed, and how their powers of motion were communicated to them. The only inference we can legitimately draw appears to me to be that intelligence and power produced these stupendous phenomena, and that the Author of them is not a mere analogue of human power and intelligence, but that He deals with matter as its Master. When we see things done with matter which man in vain attempts to accomplish, it seems a logical inference that the unknown Author of the things is not, like man, a mere worker on materials possessing

properties which He cannot change, but one who, in a far higher degree, and to an extent unknown to us, commands their very essence, and applies them according to His will. We cannot discover limits to this power in the unknown Designer.

It has been objected, that although our intuitive perceptions, and also inferences drawn by Causality and Comparison may lead us to believe that God *has* existed, we see no evidence that He *now* exists. I reply that the manifestations of His agency, power, wisdom, and goodness, *continue* to be presented to us every moment, and that we have no data for concluding that the *cause* has ceased, while the effects continue.

This argument does not profess to demonstrate *all* the attributes of God, but only His existence and such of His attributes as our limited faculties are capable of comprehending. Our notions of the latter will be constantly augmented in number, and will rise in sublimity, in proportion to our advance in correct knowledge of their manifestations in Nature. At present, we have scarcely started in our career of discovery of these, because hitherto we have wanted the grand element necessary to comprehend God's mode of governing the most important departments of this world: viz., knowledge of the means by which moral phenomena are produced and regulated.

Dr. Vimont remarks that we cannot fully comprehend God without being His equal: just as a dog cannot comprehend the human mind, in consequence of its utter want of several of the human faculties. And Hobbes, in his "Treatise on Human Nature," observes: "Forasmuch as God Almighty is incomprehensible, it followeth that we can have no conception or image of the Deity; and consequently, all His attributes signify our inability and defect of power to conceive anything concerning His nature, and not any conception of the same, except only this, That there is a

God. Thus all that will consider may know that God *is*, though not *what* He is."

The impossibility of the human faculties fully comprehending God has forced itself on some of the great minds who attempted to describe the Deity in Scripture. The definition of Him as "I AM" assumes that all is implied in the simple fact of His existence; and the question, "Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" coincides with the views now suggested.

If our capacity to comprehend God is thus limited, all discussions about the manner in which He exists must be futile, and to my mind they are highly irreverent. Locke defines "a person" to be "a thinking, intelligent being, that has reason and reflection, and considers itself as itself, the same thinking thing in different times and places." In this sense of the word our intellectual faculties lead us to assign a personal character to the Deity, although we can form no well-grounded notions concerning His form, His substance, His size, or His mode of living.

An article in the *Edinburgh Review*, generally ascribed to Professor Sedgwick, expresses a similar view:—

"What know we," says he, "of the God of Nature (we speak only of natural means), except through the faculties He has given us rightly employed on the materials around us? In this way we rise to a conception of material inorganic laws, in beautiful harmony and adjustment; and they suggest to us the conception of infinite power and wisdom. In like manner, we rise to a conception of organic laws—of means (often almost purely mechanical, as they seem to us, and their organic functions well comprehended) adapted to an end—and that end the well-being of a creature endowed with sensation and volition. Thus we rise to a conception both of Divine power and Divine goodness; and we are constrained to believe, not merely that all material law is subordinate to His will, but that He has also (in a way He allows us to see His works)

so exhibited the attributes of His will, as to show Himself to the mind of man as a personal and superintending God, concentrating His will on every atom of the universe." (Vol. LXXXII., p. 62.)

It is believed by many that we owe our knowledge of the existence of God to the Bible; but this is a mistake, for it commences with expressions which obviously assume His existence as a recognised fact.

Instead of vainly attempting to define so sacred an object as God, and one so far transcending our power of comprehension, let us inquire into the manifestations of His will presented to us in Nature.

CHAPTER IV.

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PHYSICAL AND MORAL
WORLDS.

SECTION I.—THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PHYSICAL WORLD.

ALL matter appears to exert force. The particles of the diamond cohere with so intense an energy, that it requires great mechanical power to separate them. The mountains seem inert, but they are constantly pressing downwards towards the centre of the earth. Water slumbering peacefully in the bosom of a lake is exerting a pressure on the bottom and sides, and is, in fact, operating with a force similar to that which it manifests in rushing over the precipice. In the latter case we perceive the force only because there is no counter-balancing resistance to arrest its action.

Further, the forces of different substances act on each other, and produce important results. Oxygen acting on sulphur, in certain circumstances, combines with it and produces sulphuric acid : a highly corrosive liquid. Under the influence of heat, the same gas combines with carbon, and produces a gas destructive of animal life. If this reciprocal action of corporeal substances were indefinite and unlimited, the physical world, apparently, might lapse into confusion, chaos might come again, and the earth could afford no abiding place for animated beings. How is this result obviated? And by what means are order in the arrangements and regularity in the evolutions of matter preserved?

Each elementary substance manifests the tendency to undergo changes, and to act on other substances, only in certain ways and under certain conditions. The formation of crystals, and the cohesion of the particles of a liquid metal on cooling, are examples of the tendency of elements of the same kind to combine with each other in a specific manner; while the combination of different chemical elements, always in certain definite proportions, in constituting a new compound, is an example of the regulation of the powers of distinct substances in acting on each other.

By investing the elements of matter with definite tendencies, and subjecting them to definite restraints, God appears to have made a provision for the maintenance of order and regularity in physical nature which commends itself to the human intellect as simple and efficacious, and to our sentiments as admirable and exquisitely beautiful. After perceiving it, we are able to contemplate the ceaseless changes proceeding in the material world without apprehensions of confusion. The rocks are riven by the lightning, worn by the flood, or disintegrated by the frost, and their particles are swept into the sea; but other regulated forces are there forming new combinations of them, and new rocks, similar to the old, will in future time emerge from the deep.

The Divine government of the physical world thus becomes manifest to us through the perception of order and regularity in the action of matter; and the means by which it is accomplished appear to be the endowing of these with definite forces, and enabling them to act on each other in definite modes alone. As our faculties cannot penetrate behind the screen of matter, we can study the method of the Divine government *only in the means by which it is conducted*; and under this view, science is an exposition of the order of Providence in governing the world. Every

action of matter is a manifestation of Divine power, and when it is so regarded, is calculated to challenge the highest reverence of our emotional faculties.

Astronomy, Chemistry, and the other physical sciences unfold to us the forces and arrangements through which the changes of the seasons, the fertility of the soil, and the food of man and animals are produced. Famine and overflowing abundance, with all their physiological and moral consequences, are the results of the action of these forces ; and we must extend our knowledge of them, and adapt our conduct to their operation, if we desire to understand and to conform to the Divine government.

Physics, or Natural Philosophy, consists of a description of the manner, so far as man has discovered it, in which the stupendous universe of suns and worlds, stretching beyond the scope even of our imaginations, is bound together and regulated ; and mechanical science is an exposition of the conditions under which God has enabled us to control and apply many of the powers of Nature. The forces of matter act in the same circumstances with so much regularity and precision, that we are able to employ even mathematical proportions as means of measuring and calculating their effects.

In investigating physical forces and their relations and consequences, we may employ the intellectual faculties exclusively ; and in this case our observations and conclusions are scientific in their character. The moral and religious emotions not being engaged in the investigation, there is nothing directly *moral* or *religious* in the knowledge which constitutes pure physical science. It is advantageous that science should be thus cultivated for its own advancement, because excited emotions disturb and often mislead the intellect. But from the teacher's desk, from the moral and religious chairs of our universities, and from our pulpits, the intellect and the moral and religious sentiments should

act together in teaching the truths of science as expositions of the means by which God governs the world.

These sentiments would give to the intellectual instruction that exciting and hallowing influence which is indispensable to excite reverence at once for the Ruler of the world and for the means by which His government is conducted. It is difficult to perceive how otherwise the aid of the religious emotions can be obtained towards leading men seriously to regulate their conduct in conformity to the order of Nature. Religion and science have never been thus systematically combined in the general instruction of the people ; and hence the barrenness of science in moral and religious fruits, and of religion in the practical advancement of secular well-being.

Divine government, then, is conspicuous in every well-understood department of physical nature, and seems to be effected by endowing physical substances with definite properties ; and *the evidences of this government, of the mode in which it is administered, and of the laws by which it is maintained, will become more and more clear and comprehensible in proportion to the exactness of our knowledge of the objects through the instrumentality of which it is accomplished.* It is only where we are altogether ignorant of the causes of phenomena, or where our knowledge of them is vague and general, that confusion appears to reign ; while intimate knowledge constantly reveals order and harmony.

SECTION II.—THE GOVERNMENT OF THE MORAL WORLD.

By the government of the moral world, I mean the regulation of the phenomena exhibited by conscious and intelligent beings. We may first consider the case of the lower animals. Order and law appear to govern in the highest degree their production and action. They are all composed of the same chemical elements, but the most rigid restrictions have been placed on the manner and

conditions under which these shall combine in forming each species of animal.

Man has not succeeded in imitating these combinations, and has not been able to manufacture a living organism. How are the characteristics of each species of animated beings instituted and preserved, so as to render each permanent, without any one of them changing its nature, and without the possibility of their generally amalgamating, and thus producing monstrosities, ending in ultimate and universal confusion? Apparently, by imposing impassable restraints on the action of the atoms of matter, when combining to form their organisms. The sheep and the wolf cannot combine their blood and qualities by propagation; and although the horse and the ass produce the mule, which appears an exception, it cannot continue its own race. Here, then, law and order are conspicuous.

When the animal is produced, its unconscious and conscious actions are equally regulated. Each species finds itself in circumstances in which external things are adapted to its organism—the water to the fish, the land to the quadruped, and the air to the bird. Each species possesses an apparatus for breathing, and the air is found to be adapted to all; each has digestive organs, and peculiar food related to these organs is provided for each variety—grass for the ox and sheep, and flesh for the tiger and lion.

Ascending to their conscious actions, we find the swallow inspired with the inclination and capacity to build its nest, the beaver its hut, and the bee its cells, with unerring precision; while the fox practises cunning, and the cock manifests courage, without experience or instruction.

Directing our attention still upwards, we find the very existence of the different species of the lower animals placed under regulations. At a meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science (in 1856), Sir William Jardine read a communication on the progress of

the artificial propagation of salmon in the Tay : a subject on which he was specially authorised to report by the Association. In the course of his remarks, Sir William is reported to have stated, "that it has been found that one of the worst enemies of the salmon ova in the breeding-beds is the larvæ of the May-fly, a creature which, in its turn, was preyed upon by the common river trout. Now, the practice had prevailed in rivers preserved for salmon-fishing of destroying trout, though this fact showed that the numbers of trouts ought not to be unduly diminished, as by keeping down the May-fly they aided in propagating salmon. As an illustration of this law of Nature, he pointed out that in parts of the country in which hawks had been ruthlessly extirpated, with the object of encouraging the breed of game, wood-pigeons had increased to such an extent as to have become a positive nuisance, and most injurious to the farmer ; and *he showed the danger incurred by unduly interfering with the balance established by Nature among wild animals.*"

How, then, are these specific qualities and powers of action, these adaptations, restrictions, and reciprocal checks, through which universal order is instituted and preserved among beings destitute of reason, and unconscious of the place and duties allotted to them in the world—produced ? It appears to me that this is accomplished by the endowment of the material elements of which they are composed, with specific powers of action, and by placing every one of these under restraints which it cannot surmount. It is in the organisms of the animals that we find the instruments of the Divine government of their actions revealed, and it is through the study of the qualities of these instruments that we discover the laws of this government.

Stupendous and admirable as these examples of Divine government are, our dogmatic religion not only ignores them, but excludes their being converted into religious

truths by association with our religious emotions. Although the natural history of animals is taught meagrely in a few schools, and more largely in our universities, it is the physical appearance and habit of the different species that form the grand elements of this instruction : the view now given of these as examples of the Divine government on earth is omitted, and by many persons it is objected to as disguised infidelity or as a new religion. If the young were taught to perceive and comprehend the prevalence of law and order in the government of the inferior races, and to view this as a manifestation of the power and wisdom of God, it would greatly augment the interest with which they would study the physical and organic qualities and actions of the creatures : and it would also prepare their minds for the all-important truth that man is placed under a similar *régime* himself. The evidence of this fact shall form the next subject of our consideration.

By the moral government of the world in relation to man is meant the control and direction maintained by the Divine Ruler over human actions, by means of which He leads individuals and the race to fulfil the objects for which He instituted them. The problem is to discover the reality of this government ; and this may perhaps be best accomplished by considering the *manner* in which it is accomplished. As previously observed, our ancestors in the seventeenth century believed this government to be conducted by special acts of supernatural interference on the part of God with human affairs. Science has banished this idea, and has substituted in its place the notion that the moral world also is governed by natural laws ; but it has made small progress in unfolding what these laws are, and how they operate.

The consequence is that at this moment the great body of the people have no serious or practical conviction that

such a government exists ; and that even enlightened men have no systematic or self-consistent notions concerning the *mode* in which it is conducted. They acknowledge in words that there *is* a Divine government in the moral as well as in the physical world, and that it is by natural laws ; but here they have stopped, and most of them are silent concerning the *mode* of that government. In consequence of the exclusion, effected by science, of the notion that special acts of Divine interference now take place in human affairs, the religious teaching founded on that principle has become effete. It has not been formally given up, but it is no longer of practical efficacy. Hence we are at this moment really a people without any acknowledged, self-consistent, satisfactory, or practical notions concerning the moral government of the world—in other words, concerning the order of God's providence in governing the condition and actions of men, and educing from them the results which He designed.

How is this deficiency to be supplied ? Apparently in the same manner in which we have supplied other defects of our knowledge of the order of God's providence in the physical and organic kingdoms. Do we know intimately the machinery by means of which the government of the moral world is maintained and conducted ? The answer must be in the negative. Have we applied such science of the body as we possess to guide us in discovering the principles on which health, disease, and death are dispensed to man ? Have we any science of mind resembling in precision, minuteness, and certainty the sciences of astronomy and chemistry ! Monsieur de Bonald, in words quoted by Mr. Dugald Stewart, answers the question. "The diversity of doctrines," says he, "has increased from age to age with the number of masters and with the progress of knowledge ; and Europe, which at present possesses libraries filled with philosophical works, and

which reckons up almost as many philosophers as writers ; poor in the midst of so much wealth, and uncertain, with the aid of all its guides, which road it should follow— Europe, the centre and focus of all the lights of the world, has yet its *philosophy* only in expectation.”*

If the science of mind is as necessary to our understanding the *manner* in which the Divine government of human actions is conducted as is the science of matter to our comprehending the order of that government in the physical world, and if Monsieur de Bonald’s description of the condition of mental science be correct, there is no cause for surprise at the darkness which envelopes us in regard to the government of the moral world.

Let me ask, Why should we be so deeply in the dark concerning the laws according to which life, health, talents, dispositions, and individual and social happiness are dispensed to man ? This question may perhaps be answered by asking others. Do we know intimately the *causes* which produce health and disease ? The laws of action of these may regulate the endurance of life. Do we know the causes which give rise to the different dispositions and capacities of men ? The degrees in which these causes are combined may be eminently influential in determining individual endowments. Do we know the precise social effects which these dispositions and capacities are fitted, in the case of each person, to produce when permitted to act blindly, to act under false or imperfect information, or to act under a clear and correct knowledge of the real nature and relations of things ?

On the extent of this knowledge may depend our capacity to discern the causes of social happiness or social misery, and to augment or to diminish our own share of

* “Recherches Philosophiques,” p. 59; quoted in Stewart’s Preliminary Dissertation to the “Encyclopædia Britannica,” Vol. I., p. 230.

them. Do we know whether these causes and effects, whatever they may be, are to any extent subject to human control ; and if so, *how* we may control them ? If they are not subject to man's jurisdiction, do we know whether he has it in his power to modify, in any degree, his own conduct, in relation to their agency, so as to diminish the evil or increase the good which they are calculated to produce ?

To nearly all of these questions only a negative answer can be given ; and I suspect that in this ignorance lies the grand obstacle to the discovery of the mode in which God governs the moral world.

CHAPTER V.

LIFE AND DEATH.

LIFE and health are the foundations of human well-being on earth; and DEATH is perhaps the most solemn and momentous subject which can engage the consideration of man. According to the dogmas of most of the religious sects of Christendom, it is a penalty inflicted by God on all mankind for Adam's first transgression; and it is also the awful portal through which we are ushered into everlasting happiness or into everlasting misery. According to this view, death is a dire calamity, which we must submit to with all the patience and resignation we can command, hoping for heaven as a solace under its pressure, and as a refuge from its terrors. According to the prevalent dogmas, however, these consolations are reserved only for the true believers of each sect; the adherents of the other sects—those who believe in "soul-destroying errors"—and also all mankind who have not known Christianity, or who have not believed that interpretation of it which each sect holds to lead to salvation—being doomed inexorably to death on earth, and to never-ceasing misery hereafter.

At the time when these views were framed into dogmas, and were woven into the core of the religious emotions of Europe as Divine truths, there was no science of geology revealing the condition of the earth and its inhabitants during millions of years before man appeared; no science of chemistry unfolding the elements of which man is composed, and their relations to the things of this life; no science of physiology indicating the structure, functions,

and relations of the different parts of the organism of man, and showing their peculiar adaptation to this world. When we contemplate the facts brought to light in these sciences, we discover that death was an institution of Nature, reigning among the inhabitants of the earth through countless ages before the existence of man ; that there is a general resemblance between his structure and theirs ; that his organism is constituted to receive its origin from previously existing organisms, to increase by assimilating the chemical elements of organised bodies with its own tissues, to reach maturity, then to decay, and finally to die ; death being the resolution of its parts into their original elements.

According to the lights of science, therefore, death is an institution of Nature ; and this conclusion becomes more certain in proportion to our advance in knowledge of man's constitution, of that of external objects, and of the relations established between them.

Here, then, is a conflict between the prevailing dogmas of Christendom and science. Death viewed as a penalty is an incubus, a terror, and an affliction, calculated to darken the whole of life ; and to those whose self-appreciation is governed by conscientiousness, who can discover no reason why *they* should have been elected from all eternity to enter in at the straight gate, while countless millions of their fellow-creatures, equal, and some of them superior, to themselves in every estimable quality, should have been consigned to never-ending suffering—to such minds the dogmatic sequel to death unspeakably augments its terrors. The grand remedy presented by each sect for this overwhelming evil, which it has conjured into existence, is belief in its own dogmas ; and, according to them, no ray of consolation can be derived from any other source.

Viewed as a *natural institution*, death wears a different aspect. When we investigate the organism of man, we find it constituted in harmony with death. Organs of Destruc-

tiveness enable us, when in full health and actively employed, to live amidst the daily extinction of animal and human life without finding it appalling and overwhelming. We enjoy repasts composed of the flesh of dead animals, and are gay and joyous over them. By the appointment of Nature, they nourish us and replenish us with vigour to discharge our moral and intellectual duties. In a state of health we pass funerals in the streets, and look at the array, rarely stopping in our career of business or pleasure to moralise on the uncertainty of life.

The dogmas represent this indifference as sin ; science regards it as the adaptation of our mental faculties to the circumstances in which they are destined to act. Nature prevails, and man in health and activity rarely thinks of death with fear. The pulpit often recalls it to our recollection ; but, guided by dogmas which contradict Nature, the preacher only invests it with unauthorised terror, and by misdirecting our understandings, allows it to afflict us with evils which, under a system of sounder instruction, might be avoided. He discourses largely of death as the prelude to a day of terrible retribution ; but he is silent as to the causes of its premature occurrence, which, by separating husband and wife in the prime of life and in the full tide of domestic felicity, inflicts the deepest anguish on human affection ; or, by removing children in the dawn of their existence, spreads desolation in the parental bosom ; or, by cutting short the career of genius, or of manly vigour in its zenith, deprives society of all that the possessors of these gifts might have contributed to its welfare.

These constitute the grand evils of death, and they are to a great extent avoidable ; yet the preacher chants dirges over their occurrence, points to them as the punishment of sin, and refuses to recognise them as the temporal consequences of the infraction of the laws of health which, being of Divine origin, it is his bounden duty to teach and enforce—

while he calumniates as infidels those who attempt to shed light on so anomalous a state of things. To this line of conduct, there are, no doubt, admirable exceptions, worthy of all reverence and sympathy ; but I speak of the general style of preaching the dogmas of Christendom from the pulpit. One legitimate office of the pulpit, in relation to this subject, appears to me to be to warn us of our liability, by infringement of the laws of health, to bring upon ourselves the terrible sufferings that naturally accompany disease and produce premature death, and to teach us that it is a religious duty to study those laws, and to obey them.

As we proceed in our scientific investigations, we discover that the human organism, when soundly constituted at birth, and when placed in normal circumstances during life, is framed to act without pain or suffering for seventy years at least ; that after fifty a process of insensible decay commences, accompanied by changes in our feelings and desires preparing us for death ; and that when the extreme of life is reached, the harmony between our desires and death is complete. We do not then find death to be either a penalty or a calamity.

Viewed as an institution, death is obviously the means through which, in a world of limited space, the exquisite enjoyments of love between the sexes and parental affection are provided for ; and it is through death that the errors, prejudices, and obstructions which impede the civilisation and enjoyment of the race are removed, by introducing the young, ingenuous, and enterprising to mount higher and higher in the path of improvement. Regarded in this light, and deprived of its penal and portentous character, death is bereft of its most formidable features.

We of this generation, into whose minds its terrible aspects have been deeply engraven by our spiritual instructors, can scarcely form a correct idea of the light in

which it will appear to those who shall have been taught from infancy to regard it as an institution of God, not intended for our affliction, but a necessary element in His plan of government, and accompanied by innumerable advantages to ourselves, and, at the natural close of life, deprived of its terrors by the accommodation of our feelings to its approach.

The dogmas of theologians derive their chief support from the facts that death is instinctively dreaded by most people, and that it is sometimes the cause of the deepest afflictions that darken the lot of man. How, then, shall we reconcile these facts with the notion of death being a beneficent institution? The explanation appears to me to be this—It is death in youth and middle age that wears these aspects, and is attended with these sufferings; but such deaths are not natural institutions, but are accidents arising from human ignorance and regardlessness of God's laws. We have been endowed with intelligence to discover our position on earth, and the duties it requires of us; and in proportion as we shall adequately comprehend the one and fulfil the other, we shall find *premature* death and its general precursors, disease and pain, gradually diminishing.

So far as can at present be discerned, however, we cannot foretell the ultimate cessation of evil on earth; the power in our organism to repair casual injuries, and our faculties of Combativeness, Destructiveness, Cautiousness, and Secretiveness, appear to be constituted in direct relation to a world in which there shall always be a *liability* to evil; but, on the other hand, our moral and intellectual endowments, by giving the desire and capacity for progressive improvement, seem to indicate that advance in happiness is not only possible, but is part of the plan of our being. Let us, then, investigate the cause of disease and premature death, and try to discover in what circumstances they

occur, and what character they bear in the moral government of the world.

From an attentive study of our constitution, it appears that the Divine Ruler has conferred on man a system of organs of respiration, a heart and blood-vessels, a stomach and other organs of nutrition, and so forth ; that to each of these He has given a definite constitution ; and that He has appointed definite relations between each of them and all the others, and between each of them and the objects of external nature : and I now add that experience teaches us that *life and health accompany the normal and harmonious action of the whole ; while disease, pain, and premature death are the consequences of their disproportionate and abnormal action.*

The study of the structure, functions, relations, and laws of these organs, then, appears to me to be *the true mode of investigating the principles according to which God dispenses life, health, disease, and death in this world ;* in other words, *the mode in which He governs in this department of creation.** This view becomes more reasonable when we consider that hitherto there has not been discovered in Nature any institution the ultimate object of which is to produce evil ; that all known natural institutions appear to be calculated to produce a preponderance of good ; and that God has given us faculties which enable us, within certain limits, to observe, understand, and act according to the laws which regulate the forces that most directly affect our well-being.

Let us endeavour, then, to bring this idea to the test of observation and reason. With this view we may select the duration of life as the first subject of our consideration.

* In presenting this idea, my late brother, Dr. Andrew Combe, was my constant coadjutor and guide,

It is beyond the compass of our faculties to discover why the world was constituted such as it is ; but we must take the facts of Nature as they exist, and conclude that death in old age cannot be prevented by human intelligence and power. But that the duration of life, within prescribed limits, is subject to human influence appears undeniable. That it depends on regularly operating causes is rendered obvious by the records of mortality. The registers of burials kept in the different countries of Europe present striking examples of uniformity in the number of deaths that occur at the same ages in different years. So constant are these results while the circumstances of any country continue the same, that it is possible to predict, with nearly perfect certainty, that in England and Wales, of 1,000 persons between the ages of twenty and thirty, living on the 1st day of January in any one year, ten will die before the 1st day of January in the next year.*

Uniformity in the numbers of events bespeaks uniformity in the causes which produce them ; and uniformity in causes and effects is the fundamental idea of government. If, then, these deaths do not occur arbitrarily or fortuitously, but result from regularly operating causes, the following questions present themselves:—Are these causes discoverable by human intelligence ? If they are, can that

* I have selected the example of deaths from ages between twenty and thirty, because, as will afterwards be shown, during this interval the conditions of life seem to be, to a great extent, under human control. In later periods—from seventy to eighty, or eighty to ninety—they are not so. The human frame then obeys the law of its constitution—it decays and dies; but it does so under no inscrutable law. The causes of its decay are palpable, and the effects are obviously designed. The sufferer has, then, no duty but submission to the will of the Being who gratuitously conferred life on him at first, and who is entitled to withdraw it when the objects for which it was given have been accomplished.

intelligence modify them? If not, can we adapt our conduct to their operation so as to influence their effects? These questions are important equally in a religious and in a practical point of view. If the causes are constant and inscrutable, and if their action is irresistible, it follows that, in regard to death, we are subject to a sublime and mysterious fatalism: in short, that the Mahommedan doctrine on this subject is true. If on the 1st day of January in any one year 1,000 youths, in the vigorous period of life, know, with nearly positive certainty, that ere the clock strikes twelve on the night of the 31st of December, ten of their number will be lifeless corpses; and if, nevertheless, not one of them is able to discover who are to be the victims, or to employ any precautions to avert the blow from himself, what is this but being subject to a real fatalism?

If, on the other hand, the causes *are* discoverable, and if those subject to their influence possess also the power of modifying them, or of accommodating their own conduct to their action, and thereby of changing their influence on their own condition for good or for evil, Divine government will not only be discerned in the event, but that government will present a widely different aspect. Instead of a course of mysterious fatalism, it will be a system of causation, regular in its action, scrutable in its principles, designedly adapted to the physical, moral, and intellectual nature of man, and as such, presented to him for the cognisance of his intellect, the respect of his moral feelings, and the practical guidance of his conduct. In discovering the causes of the ten deaths, and their modes of operation, we shall acquire a knowledge of the principles on which God administers life and death to men at the age between twenty and thirty; we shall obtain a glimpse of the order of God's secular providence in this department of His kingdom. If this view is erroneous, there appears to be

no alternative to the conclusion that, in regard to life and death, we are the subjects of a despotic fatalism.

Let us inquire, then, whether the causes are scrutable, and whether human power is capable of modifying their influence.

If, for instance, we desire to know by what laws God governs the sense of hearing—that is to say, under what conditions He bestows this boon upon us, and continues it with us—we shall best succeed by studying the structure and modes of action of the ear, and by examining its relations to the air, to the constitution of sonorous bodies, to the brain, and also to the digestive, respiratory, and circulating systems of the body, on the action of which the sense of hearing indirectly depends. It is no abuse of language to say that, in studying those details we shall be studying the conditions under which, within certain limits, we may retain, forfeit, improve, or impair the sense of hearing pretty much at our discretion. In the structure, the functions, and the relations of the ear, we shall discern the manifestations of God's power and goodness, and a clear exposition of the principles on which He administers this sense. In the means by which we are permitted, within certain limits, to destroy or to preserve, to impair or to invigorate our hearing, we shall discover that His government is not a despotism or a fatalism, but is a system of regular causation adapted to our constitution and condition, and is presented to us for the investigation of our intelligence and the guidance of our conduct.

In the constitution of the sense, and in the appointment of its relations, which man cannot alter, God's sovereignty is made apparent. By connecting certain beneficial consequences with the actions done in accordance with that constitution and those relations, and certain painful consequences with actions done in discordance with them—which consequences also man cannot alter—the Divine

Ruler preserves His own sway over the sense, and over all who possess it ; while, by His endowing man with intellect capable of discovering that constitution and its relations, with religious emotions enabling him to respect it, and with power, within certain limits, to act in accordance or discordance with it, and thereby to command the favourable or the adverse results at his own pleasure, human freedom is established and guaranteed.

Man thus appears as a moral, religious, and intelligent being, studying the will of his Creator in His works, worshipping Him by conforming to His laws, and reaping the rich rewards of enjoyment destined to him as the consequences of his fulfilling the objects of his being. By those means the Divine government is maintained simultaneously with man's freedom.

The same remarks may be made in regard to all the other parts of the human organism ; and it seems to follow that God has revealed to man the laws according to which He dispenses life and health, and has actually invited him to take a moral and intelligent part in acting out the scheme of His providence for his own advantage.

The practical conclusion which I draw from these considerations is, that an intelligent man who knew the structure, the functions, and the laws of health of the vital organs of the human body—the quality (*i.e.*, whether strong or weak, sound or diseased) of the constitution which each of the thousand persons had inherited from his progenitors—and the moral and physical influences to which each would be subjected, could predict, with a great approximation to accuracy, *which* of the thousand would die within the year. If so, the ten deaths in the thousand, which, in the present circumstances of social life, appear like the result of a fatal decree, would become merely the exponent of the number of individuals in whose persons the conditions of health and life had *de facto* been so far infringed as to

produce the result under consideration ; without necessarily implying either that these conditions are in themselves inscrutable, or that the course of action which violates them is unavoidable. The sway of fatalism would disappear, and in its place a government calculated to serve as a guide to the conduct of moral and intelligent beings would be revealed—a government of which causation, regular in its action, certain in its effects, and scrutable in its forms, would constitute the foundation.

Moreover, it would follow that, in the administration of God's secular providence in consigning ten individuals out of a thousand to the grave, and leaving nine hundred and ninety alive, as little of favouritism as of fatalism is to be discovered. The only sentence that each man would find recorded regarding himself would be, that he must either fulfil the conditions of health, or suffer the consequences of infringing them.

It may be objected that it is impossible for any one individual to acquire all the requisite information ; but this is foreign to the question. The real point at issue is whether such knowledge exists and is necessary to our well-being during life. If it is necessary, we must teach it in schools and from the pulpit as Divine truth, and must train the young and counsel the adult to act on it in their habitual conduct.

The greatest obstacle to this consummation is found in the difficulty of persuading the public mind that this knowledge *is* Divine truth, and that the practice of it is a religious duty. One cause of this difficulty appears to consist in certain erroneous notions concerning the nature and object of the sufferings which attend infractions of the laws of Nature. The inflictions under *human laws* have no natural, and therefore no necessary, relation to the offence they punish ; there is no natural relation, for example, between stealing and mounting the steps of a treadmill. When,

therefore, it is asserted that under the Divine government a man, by infringing the laws of health, may incur disease and pain, and may bring himself to a premature grave, many regard this as teaching that the result is a *punishment* in the strict sense of the word—namely, an infliction imposed in vengeance of a crime; and when they think of their own deficient instruction, and of the difficulties in learning and obeying the laws of health, they are shocked by the idea of their being *punished* for this ignorance. But the difficulty disappears if we say *suffering* instead of *punishment*, meaning thereby the natural evil which follows the breach of every physical, organic, and moral law.

I regard the natural consequence of the infraction, not only as inevitable, *but as pre-ordained by God*, for a purpose; and that purpose appears to me to be to deter intelligent beings from infringing the laws instituted by Him for their welfare, and to preserve order in the world. Most people, when they think of physical laws, recognise their consequences to be natural and inevitable; but they do not sufficiently reflect upon *the intentional pre-ordination* of those consequences as a warning or instruction to intelligent beings for the regulation of their conduct. It is the omission of this element that makes of so little use the knowledge of the natural laws which is actually possessed. The popular interpretations of Christianity have thrown the people so widely out of the track of God's natural providence, that *His object or purpose* in this pre-ordination is rarely thought of; and the most flagrant and most deliberate infractions of the natural laws are spoken of as mere acts of imprudence, without any thought of the fact that the infringer is contemning a rule framed for his guidance by Divine wisdom, and enforced by Divine power.

In considering *moral* actions also, most people leave out of view *the natural and the inevitable*. Being accustomed

to regard human punishment as arbitrary, and as capable of abeyance or alteration, they view in the same light the inflictions asserted to take place under the natural moral law, and they fail to perceive *Divine pre-ordination and purpose* in the natural consequences of all moral actions. The great object which I have had in view in my work on "The Constitution of Man" is to show that this notion is erroneous, and that a pre-ordained natural consequence, which man can neither alter nor evade, is attached to the infringement of *every* natural law.

If, then, we could widely diffuse a just appreciation of these principles, would it, or would it not, be possible for an intelligent person to acquire from his parents, from his teachers, from the pulpit, from his medical advisers, from books, and from his own observation and experience, a knowledge of the conditions of life and health *in relation to himself*, sufficient for his guidance in the ordinary circumstances of life? And if thus instructed in these rules, if trained from his childhood to venerate and observe them as Divine institutions, and if supported in doing so by social manners and public opinion, could he not then, in an adequate degree, comply with the conditions of health, and escape from the supposed fatal list? I see no reason for answering in the negative. If, in the first hundred years after the members of any community began to act on these principles, one individual in the thousand would escape from the list, and would proportionally reduce the mortality, the principle would be established; and the question in subsequent centuries would be only how far this knowledge and obedience could be carried.

In point of fact, the records of mortality *prove* that the view now stated correctly represents the principle on which the continuance of life is granted by the Divine Ruler of the world. When read in connection with history, these records show that if the intelligence, morality, industry,

cleanliness, and orderly habits of a community be improved, there will be an increase in the duration of life in that people.

Thus, in 1786, the yearly rate of mortality for the whole of England and Wales was 1 in 42; or, in other words, 1 out of every 42 of the whole inhabitants died annually. In the Seventh Annual Report of the Registrar-General (p. 19), it is stated that the rate of mortality for the whole of England, on an average of seven years ending in 1844, was 1 in 46. In the Registrar-General's Report for 1854 (p. 16), it is stated that "in round numbers 24 in 1,000, or 1 in 43, of the people died in that year. This is greatly in excess of the average rate, which in the last seventeen years was 2·245 per cent. : that is, nearly 22 in 1,000, or 1 in 45, of the population. The excess in the mortality was produced by an epidemic of cholera." This I shall show subsequently was an avoidable evil. Allowing for some errors in the earlier reports and tables, the substantial fact remains incontestable that the average duration of human life is increasing in England and Wales, and from the causes here assigned.*

* The more recent reports of the Registrar-General do not show that the average duration of human life is increasing in England and Wales; but the causes which produce this result give additional force to the doctrines of the text. The average mortality varies from 16 or 17 in every 1,000 living in rural and healthy districts to 30 or 33 in every 1,000 living in crowded and unhealthy localities. Of late, the tendency of the population has been to increase in cities in a much higher ratio than in rural districts; consequently, a higher proportion of the people is now exposed to influences which act injuriously on their health, and the general mortality is thus increased. It has further to be taken into account that, in proportion to the population, the number of children born is considerably greater in towns than in the country; and as children are much more liable than adults to suffer from impure air, improper diet, deficient exercise, and other noxious agencies, they die in greater numbers, and in this way the average duration of life of the whole population is lowered.—ED.

Moreover, Professor Simpson,* in a pamphlet on the value and necessity of the statistical method of inquiry as applied to various questions in operative surgery, presents direct evidence in support of the proposition which I am maintaining.

The following table, he says, calculated from the bills of mortality of London, demonstrates statistically that, in consequence of improvements in the practice of midwifery (and I should say also, in consequence of the improved habits and condition of the people), the number of deaths in childbed in that city in the nineteenth century was less by one-half than that which occurred in the seventeenth century. The table is the following :—

*Average number of Mothers dying in Childbed in London
from 1660 to 1820.*

YEARS.	PROPORTION OF MOTHERS.
For 20 years ending in.....1680.....1	in every 44 delivered.
For 20 years ending in.....1700.....1	„ 56 „
For 20 years ending in.....1720.....1	„ 60 „
For 20 years ending in.....1740.....1	„ 71 „
For 20 years ending in.....1760.....1	„ 77 „
For 20 years ending in.....1780... ..1	„ 82 „
For 20 years ending in.....1800.....1	„ 110 „
For 20 years ending in.....1820.....1	„ 107 „

It is probable that, in the earlier years included in this table, the records were more imperfect than they were in the later years ; but, every reasonable allowance being made for errors and omissions, the grand result is still the same : a diminution of deaths from a more rigid conformity to the conditions according to which the Ruler of the world dispenses the boon of life.

* Sir James Young Simpson, Bart., the inventor of chloroform (1811-1870), Professor of Midwifery in the University of Edinburgh.

Further, the records of mortality, when arranged according to the different classes of society and the different localities of the same country, indicate the soundness of the same principle. The following results are presented by a report of the mortality in Edinburgh and Leith for the year 1846 :—

The mean age at death of the 1st class, composed of gentry and professional men, was	43½ years.
The mean age at death of the 2nd class, composed of merchants, master-tradesmen, clerks, etc., was	36½ years.
The mean age at death of the 3rd class, composed of artisans, labourers, servants, etc., was	27½ years.

It is a reasonable inference from, although not necessarily implied in, this table, that the third class furnished a larger proportion of the ten deaths in the thousand persons between the ages of twenty and thirty than the second, and this class a larger proportion of them than the first; and, as God is no respecter of artificial rank, that the differences in the proportions were the result of the individuals of the first and second classes having fulfilled more perfectly than those in the third the conditions on which He proffers to continue to them His boon of life.

One of the conditions of health is, that we shall breathe the atmosphere in that state in which God has prepared it, and has adapted it to the lungs and the blood. A combination of oxygen, nitrogen, and carbonic acid gas, in definite proportions, exists in the air, and is exquisitely adapted to our frame. A great increase or a great diminution of the proportion of any one of these, or the introduction of certain other gases, is fatal to health, and eventually to life itself.

Regardless, however, of this Divine arrangement, the inhabitants of Exeter, Liverpool, and many other towns, have, through ignorance and indolence, allowed the exhalations of decaying animal and vegetable matter to mingle

with that compound atmosphere adapted by Nature to their lungs and blood, and the consequence has been that many of them have suffered from disease, and have prematurely died. On the 8th of December, 1846, a public meeting was held at Exeter "to consider the sanitary condition of that city." A report was read by Mr. Terrell, which "analysed the mortality of Exeter, and showed that, while the deaths in those parts of the city where there was good sewerage and an ample supply of water were from 1·83 to 1·93 per cent. (per annum), in other parts, where the drainage was deficient, the mortality was 5 to 7 per cent."

Mr. Chadwick, who was present, observed that in infancy "life is more susceptible than at any other period—infants, as it were, live more on air." "Now, what is the mortality at Exeter compared with Tiverton? I find that, while one child out of every ten born at Tiverton dies within the year—and one-tenth is the average of the county—one in five dies at Exeter. And then, after its escape of the first year's mortality, it has not gone through all its chances. I find, farther, that while in Tiverton *twenty-six* per cent. die under the age of five years, in Exeter no less than *forty-five* per cent. die under the age of five years."

When we trace these effects to their causes, is it not clear that that purity of the air which, by the appointment of the Author of Nature, is necessary to the support of life had been destroyed by foul exhalations; that the human intellect was capable of discovering and removing the sources of that corruption; and that it was a duty which the inhabitants of Exeter owed equally to God and to themselves to apply their understandings and their wills to comply with the conditions of life? Can there be a more becoming theme for the combined exercise of the intellect and the religious sentiments than that which is presented by such occurrences as these, in which the voice of Nature calls aloud on parents to save their children by yielding

obedience to the Creator's laws? Yet what occurs in fact? Mr. Chadwick informs us: "Well," says he, "here, in this city, in one of the healthiest counties of the kingdom, with an admirable site, and with all favourable circumstances, you have an infantile mortality and slaughter that very nearly follows—very closely indeed—upon the infantile slaughter of Spitalfields, etc."

The same gentleman mentioned that, "about three years ago an epidemic raged in Glasgow, and there was scarcely a family, high or low, that escaped attacks from it. But at Glasgow they have an exceedingly well-appointed, well-ventilated prison, and in that prison there was not a single case of the epidemic; and, in consequence of the overcrowding of the hospitals, which killed some two thousand people, they took forty cases into the prison, and not one of them spread. In fact, there are so many classes of disease so completely within management, that medical men who have the care and custody of those who are in comparatively well-conditioned places, are in the habit of saying, in relation to cases in their private practice, 'Oh, if I had but that case in prison, I could save it.' Now, what has your mortality to do with that disease here in Exeter? I find that in Tiverton, while 23 out of 10,000 of the population are swept off by epidemic diseases, in Exeter no less than 103 are killed."

Here, then, we see a man of science, whose understanding is enlightened by the study of chemistry and physiology, clearly unfolding to the people of Exeter certain relations established by the Author of Nature between the composition of the atmosphere and the human body, in consequence of the disregard of which thousands of their fellow-citizens have perished prematurely. Yet these infractions of the laws of Nature were allowed to continue, year after year, under the eyes of the Bishop of Exeter, unheeded and unrestrained.

Not only so; but while his flock was thus dying from causes that were discoverable and removable, his Lordship

was engaged in warmly denouncing as irreligious the Irish system of National Education, because it proposed to teach, under the name of secular instruction, unmingled with the leaven of the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church, a knowledge of these very institutions of the Creator, a due regard to which would have enabled the people to save their own lives and those of their children !

I do not doubt that he and his clergy duly consoled the dying, read the burial-service over the bodies of the dead, and comforted the bereaved parents whose cherished offspring were thus prematurely snatched from them. But if these mournful effects followed by God's appointment from causes which were cognisable by human intelligence and removable by human skill, why did they shrink from teaching the people to reverence this connection, and to avoid the evils, by acting on the lessons which it was reading to their understandings? This would have tended in some degree to restore the sacredness of this universe, and that earnestness of the human mind, the disappearance of which religious men so grievously deplore.

So far from acting in this manner, these excellent and estimable persons not only treat the order of creation and its lessons with neglect themselves, but by their cries of "infidelity" they deter other men, who see and reverence its *sacredness*, from appealing to the nobler faculties of the mind with full practical effect in its behalf. What a soul-stirring theme did not the facts now detailed offer to Mr. Chadwick and his brother philanthropists for an appeal to the sentiment of Veneration of the people of Exeter, to induce them to bring these evils to a close! But no: science, divorced from religion, dared not trespass on such a field. Unfortunately, also, in the minds of the suffering members of the bishop's flock there was no adequate knowledge of science on which to found an appeal to their religious sentiments. The speakers, therefore,

could urge only the humbler motives of economy and prudence. "While," Mr. Chadwick said, "amidst this population of the Tiverton district (32,499), in Tiverton 610 die, no less than 920 die in Exeter. That makes an excess of deaths due to Exeter of 332 deaths in the year. The *expense of a funeral* is certainly not less than £5 on the average. Taking it at £5 *your expenses in funerals*, for the excess of funerals compared with Tiverton during the year, are £1,600 0 0

Every case of death involves at least 29 cases of sickness, which, at £7 per case, is an annual expense of 9,265 0 0

Besides that, you have a loss of labour of four years and eleven months by premature death, as compared with Tiverton, which, on the excess of this year's mortality, makes a sum, supposing wages to be 7s. 6d. weekly per adult, on the average (and a very low average), of 39,000 0 0

Making a total charge to this city of at least £49,865 0 0 Say £50,000 a year. And that does not take into account anything for the loss of the maintenance of the children that have been swept away, nothing for the extensive amount of premature widowhood, for the large amount of orphanage, you will find burdening your charities."

This is a *truly English* argument, employed to induce a people suffering from gross neglect of the order of Nature to remove the causes of pestilence and death from their dwellings! I greatly err in my estimate of the mental faculties of Mr. Chadwick if he is not as deeply impressed with the "sacredness of this universe, and of this human life itself," as he is obviously alive to the emotions of benevolence; and if he would not have felt his power over his audience greatly increased, had he found their under-

standings so far enlightened that he could have ventured to appeal to their religious sentiments in order to give weight and authority to his words. Not only, however, was the knowledge of Nature wanting in them, but an appeal to it, in connection with the religious sentiments, might have been regarded by religious men as infidelity, while by some men of science it would probably have been ridiculed as "cant and creed." Such is the predicament into which the teaching of the order of Nature as a guide to human conduct under the sanction of the religious sentiments has been brought by English education! No *safe* course was left to Mr. Chadwick but the one which he pursued: that of addressing the *lower faculties* of the people—their acquisitiveness and their fear!

I do not question the force of the arguments addressed to these faculties; because Nature is so arranged that when we depart from her paths in one direction, we are liable to fall into a multitude of errors, each accompanied by its own peculiar evils. Pecuniary loss is one of the natural consequences of bad health; but the consideration of that infliction is not one of the highest or most efficacious motives with which to rouse a well-educated people to remove from their hearths the causes of disease and death.*

* Instructive evidence of the possibility of diminishing the amount of premature deaths by compliance with the laws of health is presented in a letter of the President of the General Board of Health to the Home Secretary of State, and in a Report annexed to it, from Dr. Sutherland on Epidemic Cholera in the Metropolis in 1854. He mentions that "in the newly-constructed model dwellings and lodging-houses, all the evils and neglects existing in the same class of dwellings in other parts of the metropolis are as far as possible avoided. There are neither cesspools, ash-pits, nor nuisances; all the houses have water-closets; and there is an abundant water supply, and suitable means of ventilation are provided." Statistics are given which show that sickness and death were greatly less frequent than in inferior classes of dwellings.

Dr. Southwood Smith, in his instructive work on "The Philosophy of Health," shows the connection between longevity and happiness. "By a certain amount and intensity of misery," says he, "life may be suddenly destroyed ; by a smaller amount and intensity it may be slowly worn out and exhausted. The state of the mind affects the physical condition ; but the continuance of life is wholly dependent on the physical condition : it follows that in the degree in which the state of the mind is capable of affecting the physical condition, it is capable of influencing the duration of life.

"Were the physical condition always perfect, and the mental state always that of enjoyment, the duration of life would always be extended to the utmost limit compatible with that of the organisation of the body. But as this fortunate concurrence seldom or never happens, human life seldom or never numbers the full measure of its days. Uniform experience shows, however, that, provided no accident occur to interrupt the usual course, in proportion as body and mind approximate to this state, life is long ; and as they recede from it, it is short. Improvement of the physical condition affords a foundation for the improvement of the mental state ; improvement of the mental state improves, up to a certain point, the physical condition ; and in the ratio in which this twofold improvement is affected, the duration of life increases.

"Longevity, then, is a good, in the first place, because it is a sign and a consequence of the possession of a certain amount of enjoyment ; and, in the second place, because this being the case, of course in proportion as the term of life is extended the sum of enjoyment must be augmented. And this view of longevity assigns the cause, and shows the reasonableness of that desire for long life which is so universal and constant as to be commonly considered instinctive. Longevity and happiness, if not invariably, are generally, coincident.

“If there may be happiness without longevity, the converse is not possible: there cannot be longevity without happiness. Unless the state of the body be that of tolerable health, and the state of the mind that of tolerable enjoyment, long life is unattainable: these physical and mental conditions no longer existing, nor capable of existing, the desire of life and the power of retaining it cease together.”

The same conclusion follows from these facts—that life is administered according to regular laws, which some persons obey to a greater extent than others; and that knowledge of the causes which favour the endurance of life, and of those which produce disease and death, is a knowledge of the order of God’s providence in this grand department of the government of the world. Can we doubt, then, that the relations of cause and effect, in virtue of which life is preserved and death ensues, have been rendered by God cognisable by the human understanding, with the design of serving as guides to human conduct?

CHAPTER VI.

MORAL GOVERNMENT OF NATIONS.

IN the Bible we are told "to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God" : that is, to obey His commandments. We are desired also to love our neighbours as ourselves, and to do unto them as we should wish that they should do unto us. Are these precepts *practical* in this world, or are they not? and what is implied in their being practical? Before they can become practical, it must be shown that they are in harmony with, and supported by, the order of Nature : that is to say, that Nature is so constituted and arranged, that all the real interests of individuals and nations are compatible with one another, and that it is not necessary to rob and impoverish one, whether individual or nation, in order to enrich another ; not only so, but that all injustice, oppression, and spoliation, being in opposition to the order of Nature, must ultimately lead to evil and suffering to the perpetrator, or to those to whom he leaves the legacy of his spoils and his crimes.

If such is the constitution of Nature, then these precepts *are* practical. If, on the other hand, the order of Providence admits of individuals and nations profiting by injustice and oppression, and reaching and continuing to enjoy real prosperity and happiness through the systematic practice of crimes and violence, then are these precepts *not* practical in this world.

The history of all Christian nations shows that while they professed to believe in the Divine authority of the Scriptures, they were in a great measure sceptics as to the

Scriptural precepts being supported and enforced by the order of Nature. In their conduct towards each other, they have too often set them at defiance ; nay, each has striven to depress, spoil, and ruin its neighbour, as the most effectual means of raising itself to independence and prosperity. But not one of the nations has succeeded in attaining its ends by these means. The history of the treatment of Ireland by England affords an instructive lesson on this topic.

Six centuries ago, in the reign of Henry II., England conquered the sister isle, and ever since has continued to sway her destinies. From the first day of her conquest to very recent times, English statesmen have acted towards Ireland on principles diametrically opposed to the injunctions of the New Testament. They insulted the feelings of the Irish, placed shackles on their industry, excluded them from many of the most valuable rights of British subjects, placed the religion of the majority out of the pale of the constitution, prohibited its professors, under pain of banishment for the first offence, and of death for the second, to act as schoolmasters or tutors in the instruction of their own people ; and when at last Ireland, in a moment of her strength and of England's weakness, asserted her independence, and achieved a native legislature, English statesmen, in 1783, converted that legislature, by means of systematic corruption, into a new instrument of injustice and oppression.

England pursued this course notoriously with the view of providing for her own safety, prosperity, and power. Has she succeeded ? No. A calm survey of her history will show that from the first day of her oppression to the present time, every injury inflicted on Ireland has recoiled on her own head ; and that Ireland continued to be the source of her greatest weakness, anxiety, and suffering, until she amended her line of conduct. She has paid eight

millions sterling to save from starvation the victims of the system which she had pursued, but she does not yet see the end of the retribution which she has drawn upon her head.

During this long crusade against the course of Providence and the precepts of Christianity, the rulers and people of England professed to believe in the Divine authority of the Scriptural injunctions which they were trampling under foot. They had the Bible in their hands; they had catechisms, a liturgy, clergymen, and bishops—in short, all the means of learning their duty to God and to their fellow-men; but all did not suffice to lead them into the practice of benevolence and justice. What did they lack? They did not believe in the reality of a Divine government on earth; and if they ever imagined such a thing, they did not perceive that it was moral. Their religious emotions were entwined with dogmas which represented this world as a wreck of a better system, and the heart of man as “deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.” They believed in a day of judgment and in future reward and punishment; but this belief did not affect their conduct so as to lead them to practise what they professed to believe. If they had believed in an actual moral government of the world, their conduct would have been as insane as that of men who should sow corn in snow, and expect to reap a harvest from it in winter.

Cromwell and the religious men of his age did not recognise the order of Nature as supporting Christianity. On the contrary, they not only believed in a special supernatural providence, but when they were gratifying their own misguided passions, they complacently viewed themselves as the chosen instruments of God’s vengeance for punishing His enemies. Statesmen who were not religious either formed no deliberate opinion of any kind regarding

the course of Providence on earth, or considered it as arbitrary or mysterious, not cognisable by man, and not available as a guide to human conduct. Indeed, the great majority of Christian statesmen and people, while they are disposed to acknowledge the existence of physical laws of Nature, still show a practical disbelief in the government of the world by *moral* laws.

Another example of unbelief in the action of a moral providence in Nature is afforded by the author of an able and eloquent pamphlet: "The Case of Ireland Stated," by Robert Holmes, Esq. After detailing the wrongs of Ireland, he thus speaks of the proposal to employ "a moral force" as a means of her deliverance: "Moral force is a power, by the mere operation of reason, to convince the understanding and satisfy the consciences of those on whom the effect is to be wrought; that there is some particular moral act, within their ability to perform, which ought to be performed, and which it is their duty to perform; and also, by the operation of the same Divine principle only, making those free moral agents do the very thing required. The intended effect must be produced, and must be moral—the efficient cause must be moral, purely moral, unmixed, unadulterated by any mean or sordid views; reason, heavenly reason, applied with eloquence divine; no threat, no intimidation, no cold iron, no 'vile guns,' no 'villainous saltpetre digged out of the bowels of the harmless earth': nothing but the radiant illuminations of moral truth."

Mr. Holmes regards this as a mere "evaporation plan," adopted as a safety-valve to Irish discontent. "It seems," says he, "to be considered by the expediency men of the day as a first-rate contrivance"; but he regards it as pure "fudge," and seems to prefer "monster meetings" and displays of physical force, which may be used in case of need, as better calculated to accomplish "repeal of the Union," and the redress of Ireland's wrongs.

But Ireland had frequently tried to right herself by means of "cold iron," "vile guns," and "villainous saltpetre," and with what success her present condition shows.* It is obvious that Mr. Holmes does not comprehend the lessons contained in his own pamphlet, and is an unbeliever in the moral government of the world. He does not see that the advocates of justice to Ireland are backed not only by the "moral" but by the "physical" force of God's providence, in virtue of which they are able to demonstrate to England that every sordid act which she has committed against Ireland has rebounded in evil to herself, and that the Divine government is so thoroughly moral, so skilfully combined, and so unbendingly enforced, that the wisdom of all her statesmen, and the counsels of all her bishops, have not sufficed to turn aside the stream of suffering which she has drawn, and will continue to draw, upon herself, from every fountain of injustice which she has opened, or may hereafter open, in Ireland. What are the disappointments to avarice, the humiliations of baffled bigotry, the incessant consciousness of insecurity and weakness, and the lavish waste of treasure, which England so long experienced from

* I am no advocate of the doctrine of non-resistance. Faculties of Combativeness and Destructiveness exist in man, and they have legitimate spheres of activity, one of which appears to be to repel by physical force aggression which we cannot overcome by moral means. Armed resistance is one of the natural checks to injustice; but it is attended by a great disadvantage. The contests of force are governed by the laws of force. The most numerous, best appointed, best disciplined, and most ably commanded army, will gain the victory, irrespective of the moral merits of the cause for which it fights. High moral motives animating it will, no doubt, add to its discipline, its patience, and its devotion, and thus indirectly contribute to success; but they will not, in any other respect, supply the place of the ordinary sinews of war. Nature, however, has other modes of arresting injustice; and violence should never be resorted to until all better means have been tried without success.

her injustice to Ireland, but the sanctions of Nature's moral laws, and the punishments which give reality and efficacy to the doctrine of "moral force"?

One gigantic wrong to Ireland remains unredressed—the seizure of the property of her Roman Catholic Church, and the application of it to maintain a Protestant ecclesiastical establishment disowned by the great majority of the people. If not relinquished, this enormity will lead to the downfall of the Church of England itself. The transfer is grossly immoral, because the Church of England's creed is sacred only to the individuals whose religious emotions have been trained to reverence it, and the faith of the Roman Catholic is equally sacred in his estimation. (See page 25.) The conveyance of the property from the one Church to the other, therefore, was an act of pure oppression, perpetrated by the strong against the weak; and when the moral and religious emotions of the British people are emancipated from their present errors, they will discover the magnitude of this injustice, and ask if the faith of that Church *can be pure* which permitted its votaries to commit, and for so many centuries to maintain, such a spoliation, accompanied by all the demoralising influences on both Catholics and Protestants which have flowed from its polluted fountains. When this question shall be answered, a new Reformation will not be far distant.*

Mr. Cobden and his coadjutors carried repeal of the corn-laws by the use of moral force alone; but they understood its nature and sanctions: that is to say, they demonstrated to the religious public that free trade is implied in the Scripture precepts before quoted—to the moral public, that free trade is prescribed by the dictates of the sentiment of justice inherent in the human mind—to the merchant,

* The Episcopal Church in Ireland was disestablished and disendowed in 1869.—Ed.

the manufacturer, and the husbandman, not only that free trade is compatible with, and calculated to promote, their worldly interests, but that these cannot be permanently and systematically advanced by any other means. In short, they showed that every attempt of every class to benefit itself by unjust monopolies and restrictions had not merely failed, but had actually obstructed the attainment, through other and moral means, of the very objects which the monopolies were introduced to promote.

Unless all this be actually true, free trade cannot maintain itself even now when it is established; and it was the moral conviction that these views *are* true that first inspired Mr. Cobden with full confidence in the success of his agitation. Already we have evidence in the results that the principles of free trade are supported by the order of Nature.

The advocates of "moral force," therefore, who see a moral government of the world established and enforced by God, wield not only "reason, heavenly reason," as an instrument for attaining justice, but "threats" and "intimidation"—not the threats of "cold iron" and "vile guns," which may be employed in support of oppression and wrong as successfully as in vindication of right, but "threats" of evil from a Power which no human sagacity can baffle, and no might can withstand. Yet, if the threats *be* real, and if the inflictions be as certain as fate, what a strange condition of mind must Christian men be in when they imagine moral force to be a mere "evaporation plan," altogether unsupported when not backed by "vile guns and villainous saltpetre!"

Before, however, they can wield moral force with effect, they must be converted to a belief in the real, actual, and efficient government of the world by God's secular providence; they must understand the scheme, and search for the evidence of this government, and teach it to their

countrymen. The creeds and confessions of Churches must be revised and new-modelled into accordance with the order of Nature, and the Christian precepts must be allowed the benefit of Nature's support to give efficacy to their injunctions.

If the liberal members of the European community who desire to accomplish moral, religious, and political reforms, could be convinced of the reality of the moral government of the world, and could be induced to take up this doctrine as the basis of their operations, no political tyranny and no erroneous creed could withstand their assaults. While they rely on guns and bayonets as their means of resisting misrule, they stand at a disadvantage, for these are as available to defend error as to maintain truth; but when, abjuring these, they shall employ their higher faculties in discovering and demonstrating the combination of causes and effects by means of which that moral government is carried into operation, they will become conscious of a strength before which error in every form will ultimately succumb.

Mr. Holmes's blindness to the moral order of creation is evinced by another proposal which he advocates. While he admits that, during all the period of England's oppression, Irishmen were in general so destitute of moral principle, patriotism, and mutual confidence, that England at all times found among them willing tools to perpetrate her deeds of injustice, and Ireland never (except for a few months in 1782) found in her own population moral, intellectual, and physical resources sufficient to oppose or arrest them—he looks to repeal of the Union, and the delivery of Irish affairs into Irish hands, as the only panacea for her sufferings and her wrongs.

But if the view which I am now expounding is not a dream, the wrongs of Ireland will never be righted until her destinies are swayed by a moral and enlightened legislature;

and whether this shall hold its sittings on the one side of St. George's Channel or on the other, will matter little to either country ; for, as God's providence embraces both, and has rendered beneficence and justice the only road to permanent happiness and prosperity for either, that legislature will first redress her wrongs which shall first bow before the power of God, and enforce His laws as superior in wisdom and efficacy to any which their own selfishness and prejudices can substitute in their place.*

The conquest of India by the British nation is another striking example of disregard of the action of a moral providence in regulating human affairs. In "The Constitution of Man" I pointed out the inconsistency of our dominion in India with the natural laws which govern the moral world, and predicted disaster as the inevitable result. In 1857 a mutiny of the native army, raised and disciplined by the East India Company, broke out, and spread misery and desolation over the fairest provinces of that empire. On hearing of its occurrence, the British people, with painful unanimity, called aloud for the re-conquest of the country and the condign punishment of the mutineers. The Bishop of London actually composed a prayer to God for our success in this enterprise. Men who venerate the memory of Sir William Wallace, beheaded on Tower Hill as a rebel for resisting in arms the English invaders of his native land, and who celebrate King Robert Bruce as a hero for his expulsion of the English conquerors of his kingdom, called loudly for the punishment of the natives of India who were pursuing a similar course of action.

The atrocities committed by the mutinous soldiery

* These observations were written and first published in 1847. England has since partially changed her course of action towards Ireland, and already blessed fruits are visible in Ireland's peace and prosperity, and in England's tranquillity.

sicken the heart of humanity ; but the British are in India as conquerors and spoilers, and it is a gross self-delusion to believe that their leading motive is to civilise and improve the Indian people. They go there to amass wealth and earn pensions out of native industry, with which to return home and enjoy a comfortable old age. They cannot take root in India, and are never at home in it. Although, therefore, we may deplore the sufferings of men who are personally innocent of evil intentions, nevertheless we are forced to regard their sufferings as examples of the retribution which, sooner or later, invariably overtakes those who set at defiance the laws by which God governs the moral world. The guilt of the sufferers consists in their lending themselves, from selfish motives, to maintain a vicious system.

It is lamentable, also, to observe that those who regard Christianity as the fountain of mercy and justice are utterly blind to the inconsistency of national spoliation and conquest with its precepts ; or, if they perceive the discrepancy, are altogether unbelievers in the doctrine that Christian morality is practically enforced in the world by God. In the *Scotsman* of 15th August, 1857, there are two letters, dated in April of that year, from Lieutenant-Colonel Wheler, commanding the 34th Regiment of Native Infantry, in which he acknowledges that he preached the way of salvation through Jesus Christ to all persons who would hear him, including his soldiers, and declares that in doing so he was obeying his heavenly Superior. He was censured for using the privilege his rank gave him to proselytise the soldiers. He replied, that he renders unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and obeys his earthly superiors in all things temporal ; but, "when speaking to the natives upon the subject of religion," he says, "I am acting in the capacity of a Christian soldier under the authority of my heavenly Superior. In carrying out these

duties towards my heavenly Superior, I am reminded by the Saviour that I must count the cost, and expect persecution, &c., but I am promised grace and strength in every time of trouble and difficulty, and a rich reward hereafter." His regiment was the first to mutiny, under the apprehension that they were to be forced to become Christians; but this man was in the right if his religion is true, and those who condemn his conduct, and profess belief in the principles on which he boldly and honestly acted, are themselves deserving of condemnation for inconsistency and for acting on shams.

In the *Times* of 17th August, 1857, there is a very interesting letter, dated in 1850, from Sir Charles Napier describing the British misrule in India in both civil and military departments, and the cruel oppression and insulting injustice of their sway. So far, however, are these principles from being recognised as true, that in 1857 and 1858 our public press, with few exceptions, breathed the most fiery indignation against the native mutineers in India who rebelled against our yoke. It recorded slaughters and executions of them which made the blood run cold, as just retributions of their massacres of the British residents of both sexes and all ages. The press was blind to the fact that we were in India as *conquerors*, and that the right to national independence is indestructible. The religious press, clerical platforms, and pulpits, with equally few exceptions, justified our conduct, and invoked the blessing of God on our arms.

A friend who knew the House of Commons well, and who entertained views of our Indian rule similar to those now expressed, observed to me that if any member had risen and expounded the principles of a Divine moral government of the world, and applied them to India, he would have emptied the House, and destroyed his own reputation and influence for ten years to come. Such has

been the result of the philosophy and religion of our age combined !

Our whole course with regard to India has been a mistake. Self-esteem and love of approbation exist in the natives, and give them the love of independence. The dominion of a foreign people over them in their own land is repugnant to this feeling. The repugnance is natural, and we cannot extirpate it. When it is said that we rule so mildly and justly, that we shall educate, enlighten, and Christianise the natives, and thus attach them to our sway —there is a *felo de se* in the argument, because the more any people are civilised and enlightened, the more odious and intolerable does a foreign yoke become to them.

We are told that the natives, and particularly the Sepoys, swore allegiance to the British Government, and then treacherously rebelled. But William Tell and his band of Swiss patriots also swore oaths of loyalty to their Austrian lords, yet conspired and prepared in secret for their great effort of liberation. Do we blame them for this, or stigmatise them as perjured rebels ? When the Peruvians formed, a conspiracy to liberate themselves from the Spanish yoke which lasted for thirty years, and of which they all the time kept the secret inviolate, do we entertain any feeling except one of regret that their patriotic exertions were unsuccessful ? Why, then, should we in history condemn conquests of which we attempt to justify the parallels when perpetrated by ourselves ? And why should we in history applaud resistance to conquerors, and yet, when it is employed against ourselves, stigmatise and punish it as rebellion ?

The civilisation of the natives of India is naturally incompatible with the permanence of our dominion. If we intend to rule them as a conquered people, we must keep them ignorant and distracted, and divided into castes, in order to render them incapable of combining in a well-concerted effort to expel us ; for, whenever they are

enlightened, their desire to sweep us from their shores will grow with their consciousness of power. If, on the other hand, we should sincerely aim at raising them to a point of civilisation at which they could unite as one State, or divide into several free and independent communities, with the purpose of then amicably leaving them—what a gigantic task do we undertake! The very notion is utopian in the highest degree; and at what a cost of life and labour would the attempt be made!

But the idea is chimerical. The climate, the distance, the antipathy of race, the disproportion between the Europeans and the natives, and above all, the sword in our hand, render success impossible. In my judgment, then, the argument of benefit to the natives is sheer pretence. It is like the boast of the Spaniards that they conquered South America to Christianise and save the souls of the natives; like the defence of the English slave trade, that our object was to reclaim the Africans from heathenism; like the apology of the American slaveholders, that they are rendering their slaves happier than they could be in freedom.

There is partial truth in all these pretences when only one side of human nature is considered; but those who contemplate the whole faculties of man will understand why history shows that the rule of a native tyrant is preferred to that of foreign conquerors: why even war and its devastations among themselves in defence of independence is preferred by half-civilised races to a long reign of tranquillity founded on the extinction of national life. The wars of Europe are examples in point, and human nature is composed of the same elements in India and in Europe.

Another striking example of a people professing Christianity being utter unbelievers in the Divine moral government of the world is afforded by the legal enactment of slavery as a "domestic institution" in the Southern States of the American Union. Every principle of natural

humanity and justice condemns the gross selfishness of converting men into "chattels," compelling them to labour for the profit of others, and buying and selling them, irrespectively of all ties of kindred, place, and custom; and if there be a moral Providence at all ruling in the world, this "institution," being founded in iniquity, and being a flagrant and presumptuous defiance of the Divine laws, must lead sooner or later to terrible disaster to all who participate in it.* Nevertheless, it is a melancholy spectacle to see ministers of the Christian religion, after being driven from every position of reason and morality in attempting to defend it, falling back on the authority of Scripture as the last and strongest tower of strength by which to maintain its odious existence.

The advocates of the inherent moral disorder of the world, however, will probably point to history, and to the actual condition of the human race in every country, as affording demonstrative evidence that this supposed moral government is a dream. The past and present sufferings of mankind cannot be disputed; but in what age or nation have the religious instructors of the people been believers in an actual moral government of the world by God? Where and when have they expounded the natural arrangements by means of which this government is accomplished? and when and where have they directed the religious sentiments of the people to reverence and follow the natural laws as the roads to virtue and prosperity?

Ever since the promulgation of Christianity, has any nation discovered, and practically fulfilled, the natural conditions by which the precepts of this religion may be supported and enforced? Not one example is known of such conduct. Need we, therefore, be surprised that the results

* The author's prediction was fulfilled, perhaps sooner than he expected, in the Civil War of 1861-65.—ED.

are such as history discloses and as we ourselves perceive? The evidence of past and present experience certainly demonstrates that mankind, by shutting their eyes to the order of Providence in the world, by trampling the dictates of morality and religion under foot, and by seeking prosperity and happiness under the guidance of unsound religious dogmas and of their own selfish propensities, have never realised the objects of their desires; but it does not prove that no scheme of moral government adapted to their nature exists. It shows that they have not discovered such a scheme; but neither had they discovered the steam-engine, railroads, or the effects of chloroform, until very recently. They have been, and generally speaking continue to be, ignorant of their own nature, of the adaptations of the external world to its constitution, of the principles on which the order of Nature is framed, and of their own capabilities of conforming to it; and thus many of their sufferings may be accounted for.

The most intelligent, moral, and industrious nations are the most prosperous and happy; the most ignorant, idle, self-seeking, turbulent, and aggressive are the most miserable and poor. These undeniable facts afford strong indications that a moral government of the world by natural laws exists; and if it does so, is not the discovery of its scheme an important study, claiming the serious attention of man? I cannot too often repeat that unless the Christian morality be sustained and enforced by the order of Nature, it is in vain to teach it as a rule of conduct in secular affairs.

And how can this study be commenced and prosecuted, how can new truths be turned into practical account, except by reverencing Nature and her adaptations as Divine institutions, by teaching them to the young, and by enforcing them with the authority of the moral and religious sentiments? If man is a moral and intellectual being, it appears not to be inconsistent with this character that his mind

and body have been constituted in harmony with external nature, and that he has been left, in the exercise of his discretion, to work out to a considerable extent his own weal or woe. The fact that man, through ignorance and the misapplication of his powers, has hitherto suffered much misery, affords no conclusive evidence that by more extensive knowledge, and stricter obedience to the laws of his nature, he may not greatly improve his condition.

CHAPTER VII.

THE WORLD AN INSTITUTION.

Is this world, as it now exists, an Institution, or is it the wreck of a better system? By an Institution I mean an object formed apparently according to a plan, and designed for a purpose. By the wreck of a better system is meant a state of things in which order and design may be inferred to have once existed, but in which they no longer appear. In it, dislocation of parts has destroyed consistency of plan, and abortive results indicate defeated design. To which category does this world, such as it now exists, belong?

In attempting to answer this question, we may begin with the Planetary System. Apparently *it* is an Institution: for, so far as has yet been discovered, its parts are systematically arranged, and design is discernible in its objects. Our Earth is a member of this system; and the place it holds there is therefore systematic and designed. One feature of its position is the inclination of its axis at an angle of 23 degrees to the plane of the ecliptic; and among its phenomena is its annual revolution round the sun. These, therefore, are portions of the plan of the solar system, and the effects which they produce must be regarded as designed.

One of these effects is the production of Summer and Winter, with arctic, temperate, and torrid zones, and all the enjoyments and sufferings arising therefrom. Surveying these regions, we discover men and animals constituted with qualities adapted to each of them: the reindeer and the walrus thrive in regions of ice and snow, and could not

live within the tropics ; while the camel and the dolphin flourish in heat, but would perish in the arctic zone. The Hindu and the Negro would become extinct in Lapland ; and the Laplander on the plains of Bengal, or in the interior of Africa.

Pursuing our observations, we might at first imagine the vast expanse of ocean, in which none of the higher forms of vegetable or of animal life can exist, to be the result of some hideous catastrophe which had befallen our planet, and had defaced its original fairer features. But if we investigated the constitution and the relations of the ocean more closely, we should probably be led to view it in a different light. Experience, for example, shows that the soil requires water to render it fertile, and that the higher forms of animal and vegetable life are absolutely dependent on its fertility for their existence.

Although man has discovered that water can be produced by combining oxygen and hydrogen, no process has yet been observed in active operation in Nature for providing a constant supply of water by this method. Indeed, such a process could not be permanently continued in operation without sooner or later producing a deluge, unless a counter-acting process for resolving the water back into its elements were also provided ; and such processes, continued on the gigantic scale necessary to irrigate the whole earth, would have produced great fluctuations in the proportions of the gases which constitute our atmosphere, on the permanent relations of which the continuation of animal and vegetable life depends.

The actual order of Nature has been to form water sufficient for supplying moisture for the land ; to collect it in huge basins ; and to endow the air with properties for absorbing it, for carrying it to great distances, and for depositing it in the form of dew and rain where it is wanted. In process of time, after having fertilised the ground, and helped to

nourish animal and vegetable life, it finds its way back by rivers into its original ocean bed, whence it is again absorbed, again travels on the wings of the wind, again irrigates the plains, the valleys, and the mountains, and thus continues to perform an endless series of beneficent revolutions, without increasing or decreasing in quantity, and without deranging any other part or process of Nature.

Moreover, we find the ocean replete with animal life, and the forms in which it exists adapted not only to the watery element itself, but to its temperature in the different zones.

Viewed in this light, then, does the ocean present itself to our minds as the result of a catastrophe, or as an Institution formed on a plan, and designed for a purpose? To me, the latter appears the rational inference; yet, while these arrangements are the sources of innumerable enjoyments, it is undeniable that they are also accompanied by contingent evils.

Natural History also shows that unity of plan is discernible in the formation of the organisms of man and the lower animals. Goethe, in his theories on the morphology of plants, Oken, a German physiologist, and Geoffroy St. Hilaire, a celebrated French writer on the same science, are considered to have demonstrated this proposition. Structures so various, so extensive, and adapted to such different *habitats* as earth, ocean, and air, all characterised by similarity of plan, seem to proclaim design, and not the wreck of a higher system.

Geological investigations, again, have demonstrated that the order of Nature, instead of retrograding, has been advancing. Lower conditions of physical, vegetable, and animal existence have passed away, and have been succeeded by higher states; and there is no reason to suppose that the limit of improvement has been attained. But in all the changes we perceive the organic adaptation to the inorganic conditions of the earth. At present, we are incapable of

penetrating fully into either the plan or the design of the constitution of the earth and its occupants ; but wherever our knowledge of Nature is exact and tolerably complete, we are led to the conclusion that, with all its unexplained anomalies and apparent imperfections, it is not only an Institution, *but an advancing Institution*, rather than the wreck of a higher order of things. The work of Paley on "Natural Theology," and the "Bridgewater Treatises,"*

* The authors of the "Bridgewater Treatises" do not attempt to render the admirable and beneficent structures, agencies, and adaptations of Nature which they so eloquently unfold *religious truths* by entwining them with the religious emotions ; nor do they draw from them, for the guidance of human conduct, rules invested with the authority of Divine wisdom and power. These omissions apparently had their source in the fact that the writers were restrained by the existing dogmas of religious faith from proceeding to such applications of the truths which they unfolded. The consequence, however, has been, that their works remain barren of practical fruits. They are read and admired, and help to elevate and liberalise the minds of their readers in a general way ; but here their influence ends. Nobody acts on them. The authors of "Typical Forms and Special Ends in Creation" appear also to have laboured under a similar restraint ; for while they have brought into a focus a mass of interesting elucidations of the prevalence of design and adaptation in Nature, they do not venture to apply to practical religion the grand truths which they exhibit. Bishop Butler, too, appears, in his Sermons on "Human Nature," and "Upon the Love of our Neighbour," to have made such a near approach to the practical doctrine of the present work, that I am led to think that the dogmas of his creed also restrained the full and free exercise of his profound and comprehensive understanding, and prevented him from pursuing the subject to its legitimate conclusions.

If some future patron of human progress should offer a premium for a work carrying forward, by correcting and enlarging, the views which I am now feebly presenting in general outline, truths might be elicited which would prove eminently practical, and which, by being entwined with the religious emotions, would become highly influential in action.

afford strong evidence in support of this proposition ; and in "The Constitution of Man" I have endeavoured to show that the chief object of all the well-known arrangements of Nature is beneficent.

Extending our inquiries to the human constitution and its adaptations, we discover that man is composed of chemical elements, and is brought into existence as a sentient, intelligent, moral, and religious being, according to fixed laws, and endowed with faculties adapted in the most striking manner to the condition in which the earth now exists: his muscles to the force of gravitation, which is a planetary force ; his eye and his faculty of Colouring to the sun's rays ; his lungs to the air ; his stomach to the vegetable and animal productions of the soil and sea ; his skin and sensitive nerves to the actual temperature of the earth and air ; and his mental faculties to the whole objects of the arena in which he is destined to live and act. The preceding pages are devoted to expositions and proofs of these propositions, and it is unnecessary to recapitulate them in detail. The facts appear to indicate that man, as he now exists, is part of an Institution. One remark, however, remains to be added.

In "The Constitution of Man," I have attempted to show not only that the world has been instituted for benevolent purposes, but that even the contingent evil of pain has beneficent objects. When that Work appeared, it was objected that pain is the punishment of sin, inflicted in consequence of Adam's first transgression ; and the statement of the contrary was represented as an infidel denial of the authority of Scripture, in which the pains of child-birth are said to have been inflicted on Eve and all her sex as a retribution for her share in that unfortunate transaction. The argument, that as those pains are not suffered by all women, and are not equally severe in all whom they visit, they could not justly be regarded as an essential

portion of the order of Nature, was urged in vain. In the course of time, however, sulphuric ether, chloroform, and other chemical compounds have been discovered, which, when inhaled, have the power of suspending sensibility to pain, without interrupting respiration and destroying life. The consequence is that child-birth and severe surgical operations are now accomplished without suffering.

The inference to be drawn from such facts is well stated by Dr. Symonds, Physician to the Bristol Infirmary, in a letter published by him in the "British and Foreign Medical Review" for 1846 (Vol. XVII., p. 557):—"Art, after all," says he, "is but Nature in a new form—a *fresh arrangement of the forces of Nature, compelling them to work under new conditions.*" He adds: "I am not fond of arguments from final causes; *but can it be doubted that the various medicines we possess were, as such, a part of the plan of the universe designed to have a relation to morbid states of living organisms, as much as esculent matters to healthy conditions?*"

The organism of man and animals possesses, up to a certain point, the power of repairing injuries which it may sustain; and this power remains latent until called into action by the wants of the lacerated parts. If esculent matters have been adapted by God to the healthy condition of the human organism, does not this indicate that our digestive and assimilating organs, and their relations to those substances, are Institutions? But if that organism itself possesses a power of repairing injuries which are only prospective and contingent, and if there are also substances in Nature adapted to remove its morbid states when they occur, it is not a just inference that *liability* to disease also is a part of this Institution: pain and disease are *not* direct, essential, designed, and therefore inevitable elements of it,

The adaptation of one portion of physical nature to another, by which man is benefited, also proclaims that this world, as it now exists, is an Institution. Coal and mineral beds are familiar examples; and Dr. Lyon Playfair presents another which is not so generally known. "In 1842," says he, "I had the pleasure of travelling with the Dean of Westminster and Liebig over different parts of England. Among other places, we visited a limestone in the neighbourhood of Clifton, where in former times saurian reptiles had been the pirates of the sea. There, along with the relics of the fishes on which they had preyed, were their own animal remains. Coprolites existed in great abundance, and proved the extraordinary number of the reptiles which must have existed. The interesting question arose as to whether these excretions of extinct animals contained the mineral ingredients of so much value in animal manure. The question was, in fact, not yet solved by the chemist, and we took specimens, in order to confirm by chemical analysis the views of the geologist.

"After Liebig had completed their analysis, he saw that they might be made applicable to practical purposes. 'What a curious and interesting subject for contemplation! In the remains of an extinct *animal* world England is to find the means of increasing her wealth in agricultural produce, as she has already found the great support of her manufacturing industry in fossil fuel—the preserved matter of primeval forests—the remains of a vegetable world! May this expectation be realised! and may her excellent population be thus redeemed from poverty and misery!' I well recollect the storm of ridicule raised by these expressions of the German philosopher; and yet truth has triumphed over scepticism, and thousands of tons of similar animal remains are now used in promoting the fertility of our fields. The geological observer, in his search after evidences of ancient life, aided by the chemist, excavated

extinct remains which produce new life to future generations." *

In regarding this world as an Institution, I do not pretend to solve all the difficulties which this view of it presents. Man, apparently, has advanced but a little way in his career of study and discovery, and probably is also far from the highest attainable improvement of his own physical and mental endowments. All that I aim at, therefore, is to direct, if possible, future inquiries into the right road of investigation, and to animate them with faith in a rich harvest of beneficial results, as the reward of studying Nature in the spirit of religion and truth.

It is obvious that other objects than human instruction must have been contemplated by the great Author of the universe when He subjected animals to pain and death before man existed, and when He continues the same system in regions beyond the reach of man's intelligence and control. In "The Constitution of Man," I have endeavoured to show that, in regard to man, suffering is chiefly incidental, that it is not the *object* of any portion of his organisation, and that, by obedience to the natural laws, it may in a great degree be avoided. In regard to the lower animals also, it appears to me that the suffering is not the normal, but the exceptional, condition of their being, and that destruction of individual life, which forms such an important element in the system of Nature, opens the way, directly and indirectly, to enjoyments which more than compensate the evils attending it.

The dogmas of the most numerous and influential sects of Christians represent man's condition in this world as the wreck of a better system; and many of them consider physical and animal nature also to have been involved in the catastrophe which befell him.

* "Records of the School of Mines," 1852. The author was raised to the peerage as Baron Playfair in 1892.

The following description of the nature of man, and of his relations to God, is given in the Larger Catechism of the Church of Scotland, which was ratified and established by *Act of Parliament*, dated 7th February, 1649—which the members of that Church are taught to venerate as an unquestionably just and correct interpretation of Scripture—and which, being thus entwined with their religious emotions, constitutes the basis of their religion:—

“Q. 13. What hath God especially decreed concerning angels and men ?

“A. God, by an eternal and immutable decree, out of His mere love, for the praise of His glorious grace, to be manifested in due time, hath selected some angels to glory ; and, in Christ, hath chosen some men to eternal life, and the means thereof : and also, according to His sovereign power, and the unsearchable counsel of His own will (whereby He extendeth or withholdeth favour as He pleaseth), hath passed by and foreordained the rest to dishonour and wrath, to be for their sin inflicted, to the praise of the glory of His justice.

“Q. 14. How doth God execute His decrees ?

“A. God executeth His decrees in the works of creation and providence according to His infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of His own will.

“Q. 15. What is the work of creation ?

“A. The work of creation is that wherein God did in the beginning, by the word of His power, make of nothing the world, and all things therein, for Himself, within the space of six days, and all very good.

“Q. 16. How did God create angels ?

“A. God created all the angels spirits, immortal, holy, excelling in knowledge, mighty in power, to execute His commandments, and to praise His name, yet subject to change.

“Q. 17. How did God create man ?

“*A.* After God had made all other creatures, He created man, male and female ; formed the body of the man of the dust of the ground, and the woman of the rib of the man ; endued them with living, reasonable, and immortal souls ; made them after His own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, having the law of God written in their hearts, and power to fulfil it, with dominion over the creatures ; yet subject to fall.

“*Q.* 18. What are God’s works of providence ?

“*A.* God’s works of providence are His most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all His creatures ; ordering them, and all their actions, to His own glory.

“*Q.* 19. What is God’s providence towards the angels ?

“*A.* God, by His providence, permitted some of the angels, wilfully and irrecoverably, to fall into sin and damnation, limiting and ordering that, and all their sins, to His own glory, and established the rest in holiness and happiness ; employing them all, at His pleasure, in the administration of His power, mercy, and justice.

“*Q.* 20. What was the providence of God toward man in the estate in which he was created ?

“*A.* The providence of God toward man in the estate in which he was created was the placing him in paradise, appointing him to dress it, giving him liberty to eat of the fruit of the earth ; putting the creatures under his dominion, and ordaining marriage for his help ; affording him communion with Himself ; instituting the Sabbath ; entering into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of personal, perfect, and perpetual obedience, of which the tree of life was a pledge ; and forbidding to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, upon the pain of death.

“*Q.* 21. Did man continue in that estate wherein God at first created him ?

“*A.* Our first parents being left to the freedom of their own will, through the temptation of Satan, transgressed the

commandment of God in eating the forbidden fruit ; and thereby fell from the estate of innocency wherein they were created.

“ Q. 22. Did all mankind fall in that first transgression ?

“ A. The covenant being made with Adam as a public person, not for himself only, but for his posterity, all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation sinned in him, and fell with him, in that first transgression.

“ Q. 23. Into what estate did the fall bring mankind ?

“ A. The fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery.

“ Q. 24. What is sin ?

“ A. Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, any law of God, given as a rule to the reasonable creature.

“ Q. 25. Wherein consisteth the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell ?

“ A. The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell consisteth in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of that righteousness wherein he was created, and the corruption of his nature, whereby he is utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite unto all that is spiritually good, and wholly inclined to all evil, and that continually ; which is commonly called original sin, and from which do proceed all actual transgressions.

“ Q. 26. How is original sin conveyed from our first parents unto their posterity ?

“ A. Original sin is conveyed from our first parents unto their posterity by natural generation, so as all that proceed from them in that way are conceived and born in sin.

“ Q. 27. What misery did the fall bring upon mankind ?

“ A. The fall brought upon mankind the loss of communion with God, His displeasure and curse ; so as we are by nature children of wrath, bond-slaves to Satan, and

justly liable to all punishments in this world, and that which is to come.

“Q. 28. What are the punishments of sin in this world ?

“A. The punishments of sin in this world are either inward, as blindness of mind, a reprobate sense, strong delusions, hardness of heart, horror of conscience, and vile affections ; or outward, as the curse of God upon the creatures for our sakes, and all other evils that befall us in our bodies, names, estates, relations, and employments ; together with death itself.

“Q. 29. What are the punishments of sin in the world to come ?

“A. The punishments of sin in the world to come are everlasting separation from the comfortable presence of God, and most grievous torments in soul and body, without intermission, in hell-fire for ever.”

“Of old,” says a writer in the *North British Review*, “the earth was regarded as itself the centre of a system, and the heavenly bodies as moving round it. Even when there was no direct reference to this erroneous theory of the nature of celestial objects, it imparted a false light or colouring to every idea of terrestrial things.” (Vol. XVII., p. 68.) This correctly expresses what appears to me to be the inevitable effect of the doctrine that this world, such as it now exists, is not an Institution, but a wreck. It imparts “a false light or colouring to every idea of terrestrial things.”

In the Catechism, then, there is a direct contradiction to the notion that this world, such as it now exists, is an Institution. If the evidence before adduced is sufficient to support the latter hypothesis, then the hypothesis of a wreck is necessarily excluded ; if not, we must embrace *it* with all its consequences. The solution of the question is of momentous importance. Before the religious sentiments and the reflecting intellect of the people can be

induced to reverence and obey the precepts of God addressed to them in the order of Nature, they must be taught that Nature is still such as God made it, and that wherever it has been thoroughly understood, it appears to reflect wisdom and goodness.

There *can be no sacredness* in Nature, if it be intrinsically disordered. In studying it, we cannot come into communion with God, if, through either its inherent derangement or our own natural obliquity of mind, His wisdom and goodness are *not* discernible in it; while, if they *are* discernible, it cannot be justly said that man has lost communion with his Maker. If the Divine institutions and adaptations in Nature are calculated to promote the enjoyment of man, and to instruct, improve, guide, and elevate him as a moral, religious, and intellectual administrator of this world, he cannot be truly said to be under God's "wrath and curse."

Further, if the practical efficacy of religion in guiding human conduct depends on its harmony with the order of Nature, then this representation of the world and its relations to God is not only speculatively erroneous, but constitutes a positive and important obstacle to the progress of Divine truth. It tends to blind the intellect, and to mislead the moral and religious sentiments of the people, and thereby to retard their advance in practical religion, virtue, and civilisation.

Incredible as it may appear, there are millions of excellent persons whose religious emotions have been so interwoven with the doctrines of this and similar Catechisms that they are painfully affected when they hear the doctrines called in question. When we point out to them that the facts brought to light by geological researches and comparative anatomy contradict the dogma that the present constitution and condition of the lower animals are the consequence of "the curse of God upon the creatures for our sakes";

that chemical, anatomical, and physiological facts show that the ground and the human organism are adapted to each other in beneficent relationship, and contradict the text, "Cursed is the ground for thy sake" as it has been generally interpreted; and when we assure them that the authority on which they believe the contrary doctrine is only that of a Church, and of a Catechism compiled by fallible men, all of whom were ignorant of the sciences of Geology, Chemistry, Comparative and Human Anatomy and Physiology, and the physiology of the brain, and many of whom were unacquainted with any other natural science—we only give them pain and provoke their anger.

Did not evil consequences to society flow from this belief, it might be unjustifiable to assail it: but persons thus trained fear science, from the suspicion that it is at variance with their creed, and openly or covertly resist its introduction into schools. In Scotland, they insist that their Catechism shall form the basis of instruction in national schools; and as they would be affronted were we to assert that they deliberately intend to teach contradictions, they must mean to twist all natural science into apparent accordance with its doctrines, or to exclude scientific instruction altogether.

The latter is the course hitherto generally pursued. Nevertheless, the dogma that human nature is wholly corrupt contradicts the facts that every faculty has a legitimate sphere of action, and that vice and crime are only abuses which, to an extent at present unascertained, may be prevented by more thorough and practical instruction and training. Being opposed to a natural fact, it forces the individual who embraces it either to shut his eyes against the true order of Nature, and thus to mistake at once his duty to himself and to society, or to attempt to believe in contradictions: a process which perverts the moral faculties, paralyses the intellect, and renders consistent

action impossible. By giving a false direction to our intellectual faculties in searching for the path of duty, by maintaining our feelings, opinions, and practical habits, either dissociated from our religious emotions, or, if joined with them, then in some degree at war with God's natural institutions, it brings upon us many of the miseries which it describes—viz., the natural penalties of error—and by this means supports its own authority and prolongs our degradation.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SACREDNESS OF NATURE.

IF this world is an *Institution*, and if God is its Author and Governor, it appears to be the duty and the interest of man to regard it with reverence, to study its arrangements, and, as far as possible, to act in accordance with the rules which it indicates for the guidance of his conduct. We must cease to be affronted with it because it and our own organism are material; to revolt from it because our bodies and those of the lower animals appear to be constructed on one plan, to run similar courses on earth, and to be adapted by surpassing wisdom, each species to its circumstances, and all to the general laws of Nature. We must approach Nature in the spirit of little children, humble, eager for instruction, and willing to obey. To reach this state of mind, we must lay aside that practical atheism which blinds us to the laws of God's providence, manifested in Nature, and devote our best energies to discover the Divine Will revealed in that record. Having discovered that Will, we must entwine it with our religious emotions, constitute it our religion, and make obedience to it the business of our lives.

If we approach the consideration of the world in this spirit, we shall find that every faculty stands in admirable adaptation to external nature, to the other faculties, and to God; and that enjoyment, improvement, and elevation of character are the objects of the whole, while pain, sorrow, and premature death are only contingent consequences of abnormal conditions.

Man is ushered into life not only naked, but with an organism that imperatively demands clothing and shelter ; with digestive organs that constantly require new supplies of food ; and with faculties that desire property, social consideration, and multifarious productions of skill and industry for their gratification. The dogmas represent this state of things as a "curse" inflicted in consequence of Adam's first transgression. Viewed as a designed Institution, it wears a widely different aspect. The earth is endowed with properties calculated to yield products which man may call forth by the application of his skill and labour, and which he may fashion into food, clothing, houses, ships, and innumerable articles of utility and ornament, for his own gratification.

God has bestowed on him bones, muscles, and a nervous system which generate strength within him, and render labour agreeable. He has given him pleasure, recurring several times a day, in repairing, by the use of wholesome food, the waste of organic substance occasioned by the exertions of labour. He has given him intellectual faculties which enable him to acquire knowledge and skill, and also moral and religious emotions to refine, elevate, and direct him in fulfilling the duties which he is appointed to perform on earth. Among these are faculties of Ideality, Wonder, Veneration and Hope, Causality and Comparison, which, carrying him beyond this earthly sphere, enable him to penetrate to some extent into the regions of boundless space and endless time, there to trace the power and wisdom of God, and to expand his own nature by intercommunion with the greatness and the glories of the universe.

Man's faculties enable him also to explore the depths of the earth and sea, the summits of the mountains, and the recesses of rocks ; and there, in the minutest as in the grandest forms of Nature, he discovers design, order, beauty, and adaptation. When properly trained and directed, his

religious emotions are capable of investing all these minute and stupendous objects, their properties and modes of action, with a holy reverence, as manifestations of Divine power, wisdom, and goodness ; and when things are so viewed, the inherent adaptation of his faculties to them all renders it a gratification of the highest order to enter into this temple of the Most High, to act as ministering servants in fulfilling the Divine designs, and to reap the joys which have been connected with obedience to the Divine laws.

When viewed in this light, labour ceases to be regarded as a "curse," and becomes holy and honourable, a privilege and a boon. The understanding then willingly tries to discover the *conditions* which must be observed to invest it with its pleasing and beneficial qualities, and how to avoid the course which renders it painful or abortive. If the world is an Institution, if physical nature is benevolently and wisely adapted to man's bodily and mental qualities, and these to it, then, when labour is attended with suffering, aberration from the proper conditions of that relationship may be safely predicated, and we should be taught, trained, and encouraged, in reliance on Divine wisdom and goodness, to search out the sources of our errors, and, if possible, to dry them up.

To turn our thoughts in disgust from labour as a "curse," to regard its inconveniences as a punishment, and to leap at once in imagination into another sphere of existence in which there shall be neither toil nor sorrow, as a refuge from the evils which our unskilful arrangements produce in this life, is not religion nor honour to God, but is really indulging in a maudlin sentimental egotism.

If labour is not a curse, but a boon, all our necessary duties and occupations, when fulfilled in conformity with the Divine law, become not only useful and pleasurable, but morally right and religious, and the whole aspect of the world is changed from one of gloom and misery to one

of hope and encouragement to virtuous exertion. The grand objection to the proposition that this world is an Institution is founded on the sufferings which have afflicted humanity in all ages and conditions of life. It is said that the individual is racked with pain or becomes the victim of sorrow : that the young, loving, and happy husband and wife are engulfed in irremediable poverty, or are separated by death : that their hearts are wrung with anguish by the death of their beloved offspring : that ruin's stern ploughshare often levels in the dust the fortunes that should have been the reward of the toils of life, and the comfort of declining years : that friends forsake us, scoundrels betray us, fire consumes our property, and floods extinguish our lives, and that hence all is vanity and vexation of spirit. We are told that all this misery has only one great object—to wean our affections from the earth, and to concentrate them on God and heaven.

As declamation, this objection appears formidable ; but when the facts on which it is reared are more closely investigated, their weight is greatly diminished. In surveying the phenomena of life, it is difficult to forget the observation of Mr. Robert Forsyth, in his Work on “Moral Science,” that as this world is the only one of which we have experience, it is illogical to infer from *its disorders* that God has made *a better world* in which to compensate us for the evils which He has appointed us to endure in this. It appears more respectful to our Maker to doubt whether we are rightly understanding His institutions, and are acting properly our own part under them, before we condemn them in this querulous tone, and fly to heaven as a refuge from the alleged imperfections of earth.

I beg leave, therefore, to direct the attention of the reader to the exposition of the sources of some of our chief sufferings given in the preceding pages, and to solicit his serious consideration of the question, whether it is within

the power of man in any degree to mitigate or avoid them --and if so, to what extent they are the results of our own imperfect knowledge and erroneous modes of action, or of inherent imperfections in the constitution of Nature. There are--

1st, Our sufferings from the operations of physical nature.

2nd, Our sufferings from disease and death.

3rd, The sufferings that arise from misdirection of our emotional faculties, and from failure in our plans of life.

4th, The evils that arise from placing individuals in situations for which their natural qualities do not fit them. In "The Constitution of Man" I have endeavoured to throw light on these and similar objections to the doctrine that Divine benevolence pervades the order of Nature.

This work is not designed as a full investigation of the difficult and important questions which present themselves to a reflecting mind on surveying the phenomena of life : but merely as an exposition of a useful method according to which, in my opinion, this inquiry might be conducted. I shall here add only a few observations on the provisions made by Nature for the mitigation of some of the sufferings to which man is liable when they have actually, and from whatever cause, overtaken us.

I have adverted to a process which an injury to our bones or muscles calls into play in our organism, in order to repair the injured tissues, and restore the part to health and strength. An analogous provision is instituted in the case of our mental afflictions. Every faculty receives pleasure from the presence of its objects, and suffers pain on their removal. No one objects to the first alternative, but many object to the second ; yet, it is difficult to imagine how the first could exist without liability to the second. The effect of this order of things is to bind us to the objects of our desires by a double tie--the pleasure of enjoyment and the

pain of deprivation. The mother's joy in her healthy, beautiful, virtuous, and intelligent child is intense : but her grief in losing it is commensurately great. Our philosophy and our religion must embrace all the phenomena of Nature, and must not shrink from investigating their causes. To some, accordingly, the death of offspring by disease or accident is a dire calamity ; by others it may be secretly felt as a pleasure. It is differences in the constitution of the individuals, influenced by their circumstances, that give rise to these differences in feeling.

In the human mother, in whom Philoprogenitiveness is strong and the Moral Sentiments are deficient, there is an intense love of her children while they are young, but it decreases as they grow older, and almost entirely ceases when they become men and women. At that age they become the objects of the moral affections, which in her are feeble ; and hence her indifference. This is no theory, but the statement of a fact which I have repeatedly observed. It shows that by the order of Nature parental love decreases in women, and finally disappears when the object of it no longer requires its exercise.

It is in virtue of the same benevolent arrangement of Nature that active and laborious individuals suffer less from mental afflictions than the luxurious and the idle. The mother whose duties call on her for constant exertion of muscular strength and intellectual thought is sooner relieved from the pain that attends the loss of her child than another who, nursed in the lap of luxury, has no imperative calls to excite her physical powers or her mental faculties.

By the decay of power and activity in the brain and the nervous system as age advances, Nature diminishes our attachment to the objects which we shall soon be called on to leave. From year to year the circle of our interests contracts ; in reading the newspapers, for example, we first

pass over the scientific and abstract discussions ; next we omit the foreign intelligence ; by-and-by we care little about distant occurrences even in our own country ; and we end by confining our attention chiefly to the incidents of our neighbourhood and of our private sphere.

The same benevolent preparation of our feelings to meet our destiny is apparent in the case even of premature death. I have heard physicians who had passed forty years in practice remark that they had rarely met with patients who were unwilling to die. The changes which take place in the constitution, and which end in death, are attended by a corresponding influence on the mind. Its energy is weakened, interest in its objects diminishes, and thus we become prepared to die. Many years ago I asked one of the gentlemen who accompanied Sir John Franklin in his first expedition to the Arctic regions how he felt when strength for further exertions had failed, and when the party were seated before what appeared to be their last fire : " Did you think painfully of the friends whom you expected never to meet again, of the home which you had left, and which contrasted so strongly with the frozen wilderness in which you were perishing ? What sustained you in that hour of trial ? " His reply was : " Home and the moon possessed equal interest in my feelings. We were so completely exhausted in mind and body by cold, starvation, and fatigue, that our whole interests were concentrated in the fire. My chief distress arose when it came to my turn to rise and place fresh timber on it to support the combustion. We knew that a party of Indians had been sent from the nearest settlement to search for and to succour us, and that on their finding us before our fire was extinguished depended our only chance of life. This, although nearly a forlorn hope, was still possible ; but, nevertheless, the pain attending the effort to rise and move the timber extinguished all other considerations."

A narrative closely similar was given by the captain of the American ship *Oswego*, which was stranded on the coast of Africa. He was made captive by the natives, stripped naked, placed on the back of a camel, and taken across the desert under a burning sun. For three or four days his misery was so intense that he searched for the means of committing suicide, but could not find them. After that time, a stupor came over him; and during three months' travelling and living in the same circumstances, he had consciousness only of existence and of passing scenes, but little suffering. He was at length given up at an English settlement on the coast, and many months elapsed before his nervous system fully recovered its usual powers.

These instances show that Nature sets a limit to our sufferings, whether the causes of them have been avoidable or unavoidable, and does not leave us in hopeless misery when no further sources of enjoyment are open to us.

In the prevailing religious creeds little or no notice is taken of the benevolent provisions of Divine wisdom and goodness; and in consequence, the benefits of a religious alliance on the prospective mitigation of our sufferings which they are calculated to afford are to a great extent lost.

We need a new Reformation; and if the views before presented have to any reasonable extent a foundation in Nature, natural religion may now assume a new form, and come forth with a degree of beneficence and power which it has never hitherto possessed.

The reader is referred to the elucidation given in Chap. II. of the complex character of religion, and to the evidence there adduced that it is constituted by entwining intellectual ideas with the religious emotions, and that these ideas may possess almost any character, provided they are not in flagrant discord with the predominant mental condition of the people.

If these two propositions are sound, it appears to follow that instead of the Christian, the Mahomedan, the Hindu, and other religions resting on the sacred books which are represented as their foundations, they repose on the basis of the natural religious faculties of man ; and that the books are the mere embodiments of the views of God, man, and the world, entertained by certain individuals who aspired to give specific forms and directions to the religious emotions of the people. The soundness and usefulness of the intellectual ideas which by this means they formed into religious dogmas will be correctly measured by the extent to which they embody, or harmonise with, the institutions and laws of God in Nature. Wherever the founders of these religions have converted false views of God, or erroneous interpretations of the course of His administration in Nature, into religious dogmas, and have thereby constituted them sacred articles of faith and rules of conduct, to be believed and followed—but never to be questioned or tried by any appeal, except to the sacred books themselves—they have misdirected the understandings and corrupted the principles of action of the people whom they professed to guide and instruct.

Before sound, useful, and practical intellectual ideas can be associated with the religious emotions, so as to constitute a really true religion, we must possess correct notions of what we are capable of understanding concerning God, and His mode of governing the world ; and also sound views of our own nature, and of our relations to Him and His institutions. When this knowledge is entwined with the religious emotions, it becomes sacred and religious ; and, from being thus a hallowed embodiment of the real order of Nature, it is highly practical. It enlarges and improves, as knowledge of God's laws advances ; it harmonises with all truth ; and if God be at once the Author of Nature and the Creator of the human body and mind, such a religion

must be wisely adapted to the wants, wishes, and welfare of man.

The knowledge now alluded to must rest on evidence that is open to observation. At present, mental science, as generally taught, is a chaos, and cannot be used with advantage in religious investigations.

Another important—indeed a fundamental—portion of such a faith is a correct notion of what our minds are capable of conceiving concerning God. If we form erroneous notions on this point, and embody them as dogmas in our religion, we confound, bewilder, and mislead the weak in mind, and outrage and repel the strong.

If we were permitted to discover the intimate consciousness even of excellent, sincere, and intelligent persons, we should find that extraordinary discrepancies of views and feelings exist in their minds on the subject of God and religion, and that an elucidation of the range of the human faculties in this and all other departments of knowledge is as indispensable to a sound religion as to a true and useful philosophy.

I have already remarked that the Bible does not *reveal* God, but commences by *assuming* His existence. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” Subsequently, several descriptions are given of Him and His attributes ; but none of these do more than ascribe to Him human qualities, enlarged, purified, and exalted to the utmost stretch of our imaginations. Thus, man exists in time, and God exists in endless time : *i.e.*, He is everlasting. Man possesses some power, God unlimited power—He is almighty ; man exists in limited space, God in unlimited space—He is everywhere present ; man knows some things, God knows all things ; man is benevolent, God is long-suffering and merciful ; man has a sentiment of truth and justice, God is perfect truth and perfect justice. In the Old Testament, human passions even are ascribed to God ;

He is jealous, angry, placable, and so forth. It is in vain to condemn descriptions of the Divine Being ascribing to Him human qualities, for we cannot conceive any object or being that does not lie within the limits of cognition of our faculties. The inquiry, therefore, which I have attempted to institute—"What is man capable of discovering and comprehending concerning God?"—is not a barren speculation, but one of a practical and important nature.

Dr. Johnson defines the substantive "Worship" to mean "Adoration; religious act of reverence"; "to worship" is "to adore; to honour or venerate with religious rites." Again, "to adore" is "to worship with external homage." Now, the external rites in which we embody our "worship," "reverence," or "homage" will obviously bear a relation to our motives in worshipping; and these will be influenced by our opinions of the character of the Being whom we adore. Tribes who ascribe the lower passions to their deities institute immoral rites and ceremonies in honour of them. Those nations who regard God as cruel and revengeful sacrifice animals, and some of them men, to appease Him. Others who ascribe to Him self-esteem and love of approbation (their own predominant qualities) offer Him praise and glorification, and try to please Him by expressing their own consciousness (generally with much exaggeration) of abject meanness and unworthiness.

If I am right in saying that although God has not given us faculties fitted to comprehend Himself, yet He has given us powers which enable us *to understand His will in relation to ourselves, and to other beings over whom He has given us some degree of influence and control*, and that in the order of Nature He has revealed duties which we are capable of performing, then we may reasonably consider whether the rites of our religious worship should partake of the character of attempts to please God as a Being possessing human qualities, or be directed to do Him honour, reverence, and

homage by studying, expounding, and obeying His will as thus revealed to us. All existing forms of worship should be tried by their relation to what we can comprehend of the nature of God, and of His will.

If without irreverence I might borrow an illustration from the relation between man and the lower animals, I should remark that it appears possible for one being to comprehend portions of the will of another, although he cannot conceive adequately the nature of that other. The dog, for instance, cannot comprehend the nature of the shepherd, but he can learn the shepherd's will to be that he, the dog, should tend the sheep; and that the dog, without attempting to know more of the shepherd's nature than this portion of his will, may obey it and preserve the flock. The horses which in our circuses are trained to dance, to fire pistols, to fetch tea-kettles, and to perform other feats of a like kind, do not comprehend the nature of the men who teach them to do these things, nor apparently do they understand the object or design of the actions themselves; but they seem to understand the will of the men so far as it relates to the actions required of them, for they do the things they are taught.

We should all agree that the dog sadly mistook his own capacities and his relations to man if, instead of hearkening to the shepherd's voice, obeying his will, and guarding the flock, he turned a deaf ear to the one and set the other at defiance, and commenced a grand speculation on the *nature* of his master, and his *attributes*. We should be still more astonished at the want of a due sense of his own deficiencies and position if the dog, in the midst of his speculation on this, to him, incomprehensible subject, and of his neglect of duty, ever and anon turned up his eyes and raised his fore-paws to his master, and muttered indications of intense admiration and veneration for him, calling him a being possessed of every faculty which canine consciousness can

admire in the highest state of perfection and in unlimited degree.

And yet, ignorant and superstitious men do something analogous to this when, instead of "walking humbly" with God, studying His Institutions, and obeying His will, they ascribe to Him their own qualities, praise Him, and implore Him to protect them as His devoted worshippers; they all the while violating His laws. In the words of Dr. Fellowes, "The only use which some religionists make of their understanding is to perplex it by inquiring into the nature of God. They leave the easy and feasible, to attempt the impossible. They forsake the clear and the simple, to lose themselves in a region of clouds and darkness. For how can the finite hope to comprehend the infinite, the material the spiritual, the temporal the eternal? God can be known only in His works. *THERE* His agency is seen. *THERE* His will may be traced; there His laws be developed. But what His nature is, or how He exists, must ever be past finding out. It is enough for us to know that He exists; but *how* He exists, it is vain, and indeed presumptuous, to inquire."*

Christian believers institute forms of worship in honour of God corresponding to their peculiar notion of His character, derived from the Bible. In 1839 I visited, on a Sunday, the establishment of Shaking Quakers at Niskayuna, near Albany, in the United States of America. Visitors were freely admitted as spectators of their worship.

The service began by one of the men delivering some sensible moral precepts; after which, as the day was warm, the men stripped off their coats and laid aside their hats; while the women took off their shawls and bonnets. They then commenced singing and dancing; at the same

* "The Religion of the Universe," etc., by Robert Fellowes, LL.D. London, 1836.

time waving their hands, which they held in the attitude of the fore-feet of the kangaroo. While singing, they knelt occasionally; and at other times several of them took their station in the middle of the floor and sang, while the rest danced round them. Their tunes were merry measures, with strongly marked time, such as are played in farces and pantomimes. By-and-by some of them began to bend their bodies forwards, to shake from side to side, and to whirl round. A favourite motion was to let the trunk of the body drop downwards, with a sudden jerk to one side, care being always taken to recover the perpendicular before the equilibrium was lost. The head and trunk were drawn up with another jerk. In all their shakings and contortions they never lost the step in their dance, nor ran against each other.

During these gesticulations some of the strangers laughed. One of the male Shakers singling out a young lady whom he had observed committing this breach of decorum, addressed her thus: "Young woman, you laugh too much. We are a-worshippin' God: we want you to be quiet; that's all we desire." ("Notes on America," Vol. II., p. 302, and Appendix, No. II.)

This, then, was worship calculated to do honour to God and benefit to man, according to the notions which these people had formed of the Supreme Being. It will be observed that there is no *natural* relation between these ceremonies and the religious emotions of man; and that their sacred character as acts of worship was only communicated to them by artificially associating them with the natural emotions.

Do I greatly err in supposing that had their leaders expounded to them the order of God's government on earth, and enforced obedience to His laws as rules of conduct revealed in His works, and thereby called forth in their minds holy, reverential, and grateful emotions towards

God, and more earnest desires to discharge their own duties, the worship would probably have been not less acceptable to God, and perhaps more edifying and beneficial to themselves? In St. Peter's magnificent cathedral in Rome, and in splendid churches in other cities, I have often been a spectator of the celebration of High Mass and other gorgeous ceremonies of the Roman Catholic religion. These, too, were acts of Divine worship, intended to do honour to God and to lead the people to holy living. But here also the sacred character as worship was not inherent in the ceremonies, but was communicated to them by training.

Were I to ask a sound Scotch Presbyterian whether, in his opinion, such a substitute as I have supposed to be made for the worship of the Shaking Quakers would be admissible in their case, he probably would not be greatly shocked, but would calmly consider the merits of the question. If, however, I were to hint that his own worship consists in the expression, in prayers, psalms, and sermons, of the dogmas quoted above, and other similar notions of God and man; to suggest that there is no inherent sacredness in them, and to ask whether they so completely accord with the highest views attainable of the character of God's administration on earth, and are so perfectly calculated to do honour to Him, and to direct the moral, religious, and intellectual faculties of the people towards holy, pure, and beneficent conduct, that such a substitution would in this case also be admissible—I should probably be accused of profanity, and call forth a storm of indignation.

And why so? Because in youth these dogmas and forms of worship had been entwined with the religious emotions of the Presbyterian, had become sacred in his mind, and now constitute his mode of expressing love, reverence, gratitude, obedience, and every other holy emotion towards God. Why do not the same feelings arise in his mind wher

it is suggested that the substitute proposed might be an improvement on the worship of the Shakers or Roman Catholics? Simply because *his* religious emotions have never been entwined with *their* ceremonies, and he is able to judge *of them* by his unbiassed reason. In point of fact, all forms of Divine worship derive their existence and efficacy from their being expressions of the longings and aspirations of the religious emotions inherent in the human mind; and their power over the devotee depends, not on their conformity to absolute truth, but on the degree in which the intellect is satisfied with the dogmas, forms, or ceremonies through which its activity finds expression.

If this view be correct, it will be as impossible to extinguish religion as to supersede music, painting, sculpture, dress, or any other thing which is desired in consequence of wants, and supplied by the activity of faculties inherent in the human constitution; and the only important consideration is, What kind of worship stands in the truest and most direct relationship to the whole faculties of man in their most cultivated and enlightened condition? Is it such dogmas and ceremonies as have just been mentioned? or a service based on the laws of God and on our relationship to Him and them as revealed in Nature?

Mr. Angus Macpherson, in an excellent little work on "English Education,"* asks "those who maintain the *indispensability* of the Greek and Roman classics in education": "Is it not *more probable* that the proper and legitimate means for training the intellect co-existed with the intellect itself, not since the period of the rise and fall of the Greek and Roman empires, *but since the beginning of the world?*" In a like manner I ask whether, if there is a God, and if He has conferred religious emotions on man, it is not probable that He has constituted the order of this

* Glasgow: David Robertson; 1854.

world in harmony with these emotions, and fitted His natural Institutions, and the lessons which they teach, when regarded as manifestations of His will to become objects of reverential respect and obedience, and thus to constitute elements in Divine worship?

It would be a strange contradiction equally to our moral, religious, and intellectual emotions and perceptions if the case were otherwise, and if such ceremonies as I have described were sacred, and God's will revealed in Nature were profane; nevertheless, the religious dogmas of all nations repudiate this view! The only explanation of this rejection that I can conjecture is—that until the order of external Nature and the functions of the mind, by means of which the adaptation of the world to our faculties becomes manifest, were discovered, the relationship of Nature to our religious emotions, although in all ages felt and recognised as existing, could not become the foundation of a practical religion.

It is objected, however, that if we adopt rules of conduct founded on the order of Nature, God and religion become equally unnecessary; and that knowledge of these rules, and obedience to them, for the sake of the good consequent on obedience, is all-sufficient for our welfare. In answer, I remark—1st, That men in whom the religious emotions and the intellectual faculties are developed to an average extent, believe intuitively in the existence of a Power and Intelligence above and beyond Nature;* and 2nd, That there is abundant evidence in Nature that this Being has constituted the human faculties in relationship to Himself and His works; among which faculties are religious emotions.

This will be regarded by some readers as begging the whole question; but, as I have already stated the grounds on which these views are entertained, I shall here only

* See page 39.

apply them in answering the foregoing objection. The objectors, although they dispense with a God and with religion, will probably admit that we are placed in this world to discharge duties to ourselves and our fellow-men. Well, then, the *more* numerous and the *higher* the motives which can be supplied to induce us to discharge these duties, the greater will be the probability of their being *well discharged*.

It is the duty of a soldier, for example, when so commanded, to storm a fortress, at the peril of life and limb. He is under military discipline, which provides that if he refuse he shall be shot. This is one motive, and it might be supposed to include all others. But if we add to it the desire of the applause of his officers, his comrades, and his country, constituting together the love of glory, we raise and strengthen his resolution by another and higher motive. Add a sense of moral duty to his country and his king, and a third, and a still higher, motive comes into play.

And those who believe in God say : Add the religious emotions, which infuse new fire into the other faculties, elevate them, and render them holy, and you will then kindle in the soldier a great moral and religious excitement, before which death and danger will lose all their terrors. An army composed of men in this condition of mind, if equally numerous and as well fed, equipped, drilled, and commanded, as an opposing force, animated by no motive but the fear of the Provost-Marshal, would sweep it from the field like a whirlwind. In the late war* the Emperor of Russia appealed strongly to the religious emotions of his people ; and in the Ironsides of Cromwell's army we may see the effects of such an influence on the soldier's courage.

The foregoing illustration is applicable to all the duties and trials of life. The religious emotions appear to me to

* The Russo-Turkish War of 1855-56.

have been bestowed to sanctify, elevate, invigorate, and ennoble every act of our other faculties ; and although hitherto they have never been so applied with due intelligence, and therefore have not been applied successfully, I can discover no adequate reason for despairing that this will yet be accomplished. The grand obstacle in the way is the existence and deep-rooted influence of the prevailing dogmas ; but, if the views now advanced are founded in truth, these will be gradually superseded by sounder and more practical interpretations of Scripture.

It is further objected, that if we should base religion upon the will of God manifested in Nature, there could be no general agreement in doctrine and practice, because every one sees Nature through the medium of his own faculties, and these differ in relative power and cultivation in different individuals. This objection is to some extent well founded ; but it is equally applicable to religion founded on a supernatural revelation, as is demonstrated by the different interpretations put upon the Bible by the different Christian sects.

It is certain that the impressions which each individual receives from the external world are modified by the condition of his own mental constitution. Light does not exist to a man born blind, nor melody to one in whom the sense of Tune is very deficient ; colour is not fully and accurately perceived by one in whom the sense of Colouring is small, nor is the beauty of Nature discernible by an individual in whom Ideality is very imperfectly developed. Neither does one in whom the moral and religious emotions are weak, but in whom those of the animal propensities and intellectual faculties are strong, on surveying external Nature, receive vivid impressions of benevolence and goodness as characteristics pervading it. On the contrary, the representations of it and of man's condition embodied in the Catechism quoted above, appear to him to be nearer the truth.

The only answer that can be given to the objections against Nature, urged by persons thus constituted, is that men with better developments of mind and more cultivation receive higher impressions from it, and that the presumption is stronger in favour of its being really such as these perceive it, than of its being defective. There *is* a sun, although the man born blind does not see it.

If, then, the qualities of things, and their relations, modes of action, and results, are real, and bear evidence of design in the intelligent and moral Power which instituted and upholds them ; and if our intellect perceives the design, and also forms rules of action from the perception of it : then we need only to train the sentiments of Veneration and Wonder to hallow these as rules revealed through Nature to our understandings by God, and they will become *religious*—and to train the sentiments of Benevolence and Conscientiousness to recognise them as embodying duties prescribed by God, and they will become moral ; and thus the laws of Nature will furnish us with a basis of religion and morality.

I cannot over-state the importance of our keeping in view that all existing religions have been formed by associating intellectual ideas about God and His will (in some instances drawn from polluted sources) with the religious emotions ; and that there is no natural obstacle to our associating with these emotions the conceptions of God and His will which we derive from the study of His works, and thus constituting a religion in harmony with our knowledge of existing things and their relations. It is presumable that such a religion would excite, gratify, cherish, and improve all the faculties of our mind. It would necessarily also embrace a code of systematic morality.

CHAPTER IX.

RELIGIOUS DISCIPLINE OF NATURE.

ANOTHER advantage which would follow from acknowledging Nature to be sacred would be the introduction of an efficient religious discipline into life. Discipline consists in prescribing rules of action, and enforcing observance of them, by motives that strongly influence the will. The soldier, as I have said, affords a striking example of its efficacy. I knew a dirty, slovenly, ill-conditioned lad, who used to drive coal-carts, and who in a fit of drunkenness enlisted as a soldier. Three months afterwards I saw him again, and scarcely recognised his identity. He was then clean in person and attire, he walked erect, and his manner was decided, yet respectful. Discipline—in other words, commands strictly enforced, but accompanied by instruction how to obey them, and the example of obedience in others—had produced the change. In the case of the soldier, discipline accomplishes much more than this. It renders the individual alert, obedient, resolute, and all-enduring in the discharge of his duties ; still the mainspring of its influence is command strictly enforced.

Now, we have a discipline of this sort in Nature if we only open our minds to understand it. If we know the structure, functions, and laws of health, of the digestive and respiratory organs, we shall perceive that temperance, cleanliness, exercise, the breathing of pure air, and other observances, are prescribed to us by a command that is absolute in authority : that of God Himself, and enforced by a discipline that is irresistible. On the one hand, we

have health, enjoyment, efficiency, abundance, and length of days as the rewards of observance ; and, on the other, disease, pain, incapacity, mental misery, physical destitution, and premature death, as the consequences of disobedience. Every organ and faculty, bodily and mental, acts under similar conditions ; and a work which should elucidate each organ, in its structure, functions, and modes of action, and the natural and inevitable consequences of its use and abuse, would reveal a system of philosophy, morality, and practical wisdom, which might be indissolubly combined with religion ; for it would proceed from, and be enforced by, a discipline instituted by God. All these advantages are lost by our obstinate refusal to regard Nature as sacred, and by the exclusion of her authority and teaching as practical rules from our literature, our schools, our pulpits, and our legislative assemblies, either ignorantly, or out of deference to the dogmas of a dark and semi-barbarous age.

It is only by regarding Nature as an Institution and God as its Ruler that religion can be successfully introduced as a sanctifying influence and an element of discipline into daily life ; and this is not only possible, but is so obviously practicable when earnestly and intelligently attempted, that only the misdirection of our faculties by the dogmas can account for its being so long neglected and resisted.

I have been favoured with the perusal of the outlines of a series of lessons on Social Economy given privately by my friend Mr. William Ellis, of Lancaster Terrace, London, in which he has demonstrated that by the order of Nature every line of conduct—in the pursuit of wealth whether by farming, manufacturing, navigation, commerce, or by the practice of professions—in order to be successful must be moral ; and that success follows skill, industry, and morality, as failure follows ignorance, sloth, and immorality, with the same certainty that a rich crop of corn

follows from skilful ploughing, manuring, sowing, tending, and reaping.

The dogmas, on the contrary, represent a state of war as existing between God and Mammon; but Mr. Ellis shows that when this is understood to be a condemnation of the pursuit of wealth, it must be a mistake; because, as the production of wealth is indispensable to human well-being, and also to the practice of morality and religion, there must be modes of pursuing it which are in harmony with morality and religion. Now, surveying in detail all trades and professions, and the specific acts by means of which their objects—namely, the acquisition of wealth, social distinction, power, influence, and other enjoyments—are most successfully attained, he shows that morality must pervade and form the basis of them all.

For example—The commercial maxim to buy in the cheapest and to sell in the dearest market is generally condemned as breathing the concentrated spirit of selfishness, or Mammonism. But let us try this condemnation by the rules of reason and morality before we acquiesce in its justice. In Odessa, for instance, after a good harvest there is a superabundance of wheat, more than its inhabitants can consume; in consequence of which its price is very low. In the same city, however, there is a scarcity of cotton, and woollen cloths, and cutlery, in consequence of which the prices of these necessaries of life are very high. The people of Odessa would feel greatly relieved if some benevolent person would bring them a supply of these articles, and would take in return a portion of their superabundant corn. But in Liverpool, in consequence of a bad harvest, there is a great scarcity of wheat; while, owing to the untiring industry of Manchester, Leeds, and Sheffield, there is a superabundance of woollens, calicoes, and broad cloths, which lie unsold, because the people are forced to lay out their money in large amounts in buying the scarce, and

therefore high-priced, corn. The people of these towns desire, above all things, that some kind friend would bring them wheat, and exchange it for these goods that are lumbering their warehouses.

Now, a merchant who owns a ship and has abundance of capital, buys in Liverpool the manufactured articles at the prices at which their owners are anxious to sell them—they are cheap, because they are superabundant. He fills his ship with them, sends it to Odessa, sells them there at the price which the inhabitants offer to give for them, and with that money he buys the wheat with which they are encumbered, and pays them the price they ask: it is a low price, because they have more wheat than they can consume. The ship carries this cargo to Liverpool, and there it is eagerly purchased, because it lessens the scarcity of food: one of the greatest evils with which human beings can be afflicted.

But on counting the results of these transactions, the merchant finds that he has gained a considerable addition to his capital. This stimulates him and others to repeat the same course of transactions. And what is the ultimate effect? The inhabitants of Odessa are at length relieved of much of their superfluous wheat, to their great contentment; while the supply of the manufactured articles has become abundant, also to their great advantage. Turning to England, again, what has ensued? Wheat has been imported so largely that it has fallen in price, and the poor rejoice; while hardware, woollens, and calicoes have been purchased, paid for, and exported to so great an extent that the warehouses are empty, prices have risen, and the manufacturers are again in full employment at remunerating prices.

These results are all the direct consequences of Divine Institutions, which give differences of climates and products to different parts of the globe; and the gains of the

merchant are the rewards furnished by Divine wisdom and goodness to those who intelligently, honestly, and diligently apply their knowledge, skill, and capital in removing the wants and increasing the enjoyments of their fellow-men. Viewed in this light, as the fulfilment of a Divine appointment, buying in the cheapest and selling in the dearest market passes from the dominion of Mammon into that of God, and becomes not merely a moral, but a religious act.

Similar observations will be found to hold good in regard to all the other necessary acts and duties of life, whenever we shall consent to view this world as a Divine Institution, and turn our whole faculties to discover its laws, and to act conformably to them. It is from the *pursuit of wealth by immoral means*, and the *application* of it to immoral or useless purposes, that the evils erroneously ascribed to it arise. As, by the fiat of Nature, wealth is indispensable to human welfare, the sin even of the miser, who makes his property his god, consists not in accumulating and investing, but in something else. The wealth he has saved is so much capital gained to the society in which he lives, and when he invests it on good securities, he lends it to men of skill, enterprise, and industry, who apply it in still further augmenting the capital of their country, by which all are benefited; for capital is an indispensable element in the production of the necessaries and comforts as well as the luxuries of life.

The miser's sin lies in his neglect of all the personal, domestic, and social duties which are incumbent on him as the possessor of riches. It is by such conduct that he becomes the slave of Mammon and the contemner of God. The profligate spendthrift who dissipates an inherited fortune in immoral indulgences cannot be called a worshipper, but a contemner of Mammon, yet he is equally a contemner of God; for, so far as lies in his power, he

wastes the products of the skill and industry of his more virtuous predecessors, deprives himself of the means of discharging his personal and social duties, and impedes the progress of his country by destroying the fund for promoting the industry and rewarding the skill and intelligence of his fellow-men.*

Mr. Williams and I taught the laws of health and social economy on these principles in a school kept by him in Edinburgh for the children of the working classes ; and while we were calumniated by excellent evangelical persons as inculcators of infidelity, the more intelligent children understood, rejoiced in, and profited by the lessons ; and even the less gifted were interested, so that no blows or chastisements were needed : exclusion from the lessons was felt to be the severest punishment that could be inflicted.

It has been objected to these views that they omit altogether the higher or spiritual life—the grand aspirations of the soul after eternity and universal knowledge, its longing after the everlasting progress of our spiritual being, its desire of a more intimate communion with God, and so forth. But what really is this higher life ? In St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome, I have seen the most ignorant of men and women kneeling before the images of the Virgin Mary and the saints, and in the outpouring of their devotional emotions towards them enjoying the higher life. It was unmistakably expressed in their eyes, features, and attitudes. I have observed the widow and the mother, broken down with sorrow for the loss of a

* These principles are successfully expounded in several Works on "Social Economy" by Mr. William Ellis, published by Smith, Elder & Co., of London. The latest is entitled, "Where must we Look for the further Prevention of Crime?" and is both interesting and instructive. 1857.

beloved husband or child, there unburden their souls of grief, and depart relieved and comforted.

I have seen a Swedenborgian congregation in possession of the higher life as the religious emotions soared through their spiritual world, while they drew joy and hope, peace and consolation, from the communications which they thence received. The congregation of Shaking Quakers, before described, were seen rising into ecstasies, and almost sinking into convulsions, under the influence of their higher life, elicited by their chants, their songs, and their dances. I have listened to the Calvinist describing his higher life, unfolding its glories, its consolations, its inspiring hopes, and its strengthening grace, all elicited by his contemplation of the length and breadth, the height and depth of the love of Christ in giving Himself up as a Sacrifice for sin. I have heard the Unitarian pour forth his vivid experience of the higher life, founded on his deep apprehension of the all-embracing benevolence, wisdom, and justice of God, on his perceptions of God's overflowing love, pervading all beings, time, and space. And were we to visit Turkey, Persia, and Hindostan, there also should we find thousands of ardent worshippers, each in the blaze of enjoyment of his own higher life.

Now, what is the true meaning and explanation of these phenomena? One circumstance characterises them all—the organs of Veneration, Wonder, and Hope are intensely active, although directed differently in each devotee. The emotions and the pleasure accompanying their activity are natural, and constitute the higher life; but their direction to particular objects is accidental, and depends on what they have been trained to venerate.

It thus appears that it is not the *absolute truth* of religion—*i.e.*, its truth in the sight of God—that gives it the power of producing in believers what is called the higher life, with all the hopes, joys, consolations, and feelings of

resignation and endurance which accompany it ; but that these depend primarily on the force with which the faith stimulates the religious faculties of the devotee. To do this effectually, the faith and ritual used as exciting instruments must be in harmony with, or at least not violently in contradiction to, the state of enlightenment of his other faculties. Hence, the lower the moral and intellectual development and instruction of the worshipper, the further may his creed and ritual deviate from reason, and from the dictates of benevolence and justice, without impairing their emotional influence on him.

But conversely, the more powerful the intellect, and the higher its instruction, and the more extensive and beneficial the sphere in which the moral faculties have been trained to act in any individual, the more pure, rational, beneficent, and self-consistent must a creed and ritual become before they will be capable of satisfying the demands of his faculties, and of eliciting in him that fervid action of the religious emotions which constitutes the higher life.

If the view be correct that man cannot comprehend the nature and mode of being of God, because the finite cannot comprehend the Infinite, it follows that the only rational conception we can form of the Divine Being consists of a concentration and personification by our own minds in Him of all the power, wisdom, and goodness discernible in Nature ; and if so, then the more we know of the manifestations of these qualities, the higher must our conceptions of the attributes of that Being become. And if the "highest" life consists in the highest exercise and condition of our faculties, it follows that, in proportion to the enlargement of our knowledge, we shall augment the means of vivifying our emotional faculties, and of bringing them into harmony with the Institutions of God, and shall thereby approach the highest point of improvement permitted to man.

It is often stated as a reproach to science that it makes

men infidels. The real fact is, that by carrying their intellectual and moral faculties to a higher state of development and cultivation, by giving them larger and truer views of God and His works, it renders the creeds and rituals of a less enlightened age, with their barbarous dogmas and conflicting propositions, repugnant to their minds, and incapable of exciting and satisfying their religious emotions. The greater the number of other faculties in addition to the religious which any faith and worship are able to excite and satisfy, the greater will be their influence over practical conduct; and their power of leading to beneficial results will diminish, and will ultimately cease, in proportion to the extent to which they become isolated from the other powers.

This will hold good whether the discrepancy between the faith and ritual and the other faculties arises from the improvement or from the degradation of the latter. The creeds of the sixteenth century do not now exercise the same influence over men's minds which they did when, through a corresponding ignorance and barbarism, the whole faculties were in harmony with them.

The longing after the Infinite, which is at present regarded by many persons as the grand foundation of religious life, when traced to its source, does not appear to merit this distinction. Each propensity and sentiment, from producing a mere desire or emotion, is constitutionally indefinite in its longings and aspirations. It needs the intellect to limit and guide it. If we ask the most exalted devotees of every religion and of every sect to define their higher life, and if we analyse their definition, we shall find that indulgence in boundless aspirations proceeding from the religious emotions constitutes its essential element.

The higher emotional faculties are the sources not only of religious devotion, but of the purest morality and the

sublimest poetry. In the present state of human knowledge, however, when the moral, religious, and political opinions of most men rest on a confused basis of the natural, founded on experience, and of the supernatural, drawn from Scripture, the preacher, author, poet, orator, and political agitator, who is capable of strongly exciting not them chiefly, but the lower propensities also, wields a stupendous power over his fellow-men. The emotions yield to his passionate and thrilling calls ; intellect stands aside ; and his hearers glow with his fervour, give up their souls to his impulsive guidance, and embrace his propositions. But because the means of attaining the real, permanent, and only desirable gratification of the emotional faculties are fixed and regulated by a power which does not yield to human impulses ; and because these means can be discovered and employed only by the intellect enlightened by observation and experience ; the schemes of even the most eloquent orators, whenever they partake of the vagueness of the emotional faculties, or are based on erroneous or imperfect views of the natural means of achieving good, fail, and end in disappointment.

What, then, should constitute the higher life in natural religion ? The answer is—vivid action of the religious emotions, combined with that of the moral sentiments and of the intellect, enlightened by the highest attainable knowledge of God's will manifested in Nature, and all directed to the attainment of a pure, holy, and beneficent state of being. The ecstatic delights of fervid devotion and undoubting faith ; hope, joy, and resignation ; consolation in affliction, and strength to endure and persevere in the dark hours of life, may all be drawn from these sources at least as copiously and as certainly as from the fountains from which, in many countries, they are now sought to be derived. According to this system, God's institutions are the basis of our judgments, and His will is the rule and standard of

our actions. The framework of our bodies and the endowments of our minds are ascribed to Him. Every relation in which we stand is viewed as of His appointment. In the language of Scripture, therefore, "Whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we do all to the glory of God," when we apply every function of mind and body to its legitimate uses, from deference to His will, as well as from the conviction that by this means alone can we reach our own happiness.

In reference to personal and social improvement, religion severed from the laws of Nature stands in the same predicament as pure mathematics do when they are unapplied to practical objects. Ask the profoundest mathematician who had never studied navigation or served on board a ship to steer a vessel to China, and his mathematics would be perfectly inadequate to enable him to execute the task. To his abstract science he must add a practical knowledge of ships, and of the mode of applying mathematics to direct their course at sea. Ask a pure mathematician to construct a railroad or a steam-driven spinning mill, and he would be equally helpless ; because his science needs to be embodied in practical forms before it can become useful. In like manner, religion—which, in itself, is a sentiment or emotion—must condescend to borrow aid from Nature before it can accomplish any practical earthly purpose whatever. All personal and social improvements have been made by the Ruler of this world to depend on physical and physiological conditions. Health and life depend on them, wealth and destitution depend on them, mental vigour, even the ability to pray, depends on them ; and when the brain is incapable of action the religious emotions vanish. I repeat, therefore, that before religion can accomplish its highest objects—the glory of God and the well-being of man—it must include an embodiment of the will of the Infinite, as manifested in His institutions.

Tracing the condition of the religious emotions through the savage, the barbarous, and the modern stages of society, we perceive that the higher the enlightenment of the intellect, and the more perfect the cultivation of the moral sentiments, the more pure and beneficent has religion become, and the more effectually has it operated on the minds of its votaries as a stimulus to social improvement. The same results will probably distinguish its future course. The present prevalent creeds of Europe appear to be at war with its science, and in consequence to be retarding its progress. Religion is employed as the instrument of priests and sovereigns to maintain themselves in authority and to repress the moral and intellectual life of nations.

The Christian religion, however, possesses one great advantage. It stands apart from all personal and social *secular* action. The Jewish, Hindu, and Mahommedan faiths have elevated certain personal acts, such as ablutions, eating particular kinds of food prepared according to prescribed rules, abstinence from marriage out of the pale of the creed, separation of society into sacred and secular orders or castes, and other regulations, into substantial elements of their religions. These practices and usages form part and parcel of their duty to God or Vishnu ; and whenever they are at variance with the order of Nature, they present almost insurmountable obstacles to the social improvement of the people. The Christian religion embodies no similar observances as constituent elements of its Divine service, but announces certain moral and religious principles to guide personal conduct and social action ; and it thus leaves the path open to reason and science to discover and unfold the order of the Divine government in Nature. It will be the duty of all who sincerely desire to maintain its influence to show that it contains principles which, if rightly interpreted, will combine gracefully with the religious precepts revealed in Nature.

But, practically, this freedom is attended with some disadvantages. Ambitious men seek to found social distinctions on adherence to particular dogmatic interpretations of Scripture, whence arise dominant and endowed churches, and dissenting associations of gigantic magnitude and influence. All of these agree in treating the Divine precepts revealed for human guidance in Nature as destitute of a religious character, while they invest their own conflicting tenets with this sanction. Thus fortified, the leaders of the sects convert their associations into instruments of power. They first bring the minds of their adherents into a state of subjection to their dogmas and forms of Church government and worship, and then they employ them as instruments to maintain the conflicts which each sect wages with its rivals. These conflicts of clerical leaders for power distract the public mind, and obstruct many enlightened measures of improvement.

It seems incredible, however, that when the religious emotions, freed from the trammels of barbarous ages, shall in future centuries ally themselves with the knowledge and morality of an advanced civilisation, a richer harvest of individual enjoyment and social happiness shall not be reaped from their action.

Mr. John Stuart Mill, in the Sixth Book of his *Logic*, states, in his own language, that our desires of improvement proceed from the propensities and sentiments, but that these give mere desires, and cannot tell us *how* to satisfy them. This depends on knowledge, and knowledge on intellect. The intellectual state of any nation is, therefore, says he, the best index of its real civilisation; and in the history of the world, every great intellectual discovery was the precursor, and the indispensable precursor, of a great stride in material civilisation. "Every considerable change, historically known to us, in the condition of any portion of mankind," continues Mr. Mill, "has been

preceded by a change of proportional extent in the state of their knowledge, or in their prevalent beliefs. From this accumulated evidence we are justified in concluding that the order of human progression in all respects will be a corollary deducible from the order of progression in the intellectual convictions of mankind : that is, from the law of the successive transformations of religion and science."*

These remarks are equally profound and true.

* The views entertained by eminent divines on the authority of the law of Nature in reference to morals and religion have been collected and published in a learned and instructive work by Robert Cox, entitled "Sabbath Laws and Sabbath Duties considered in Relation to their Natural and Scriptural Grounds," &c. (Edinburgh, 1853), pages 202-7, to which I beg leave to refer.

CHAPTER X.

THE BONDAGE OF DOGMA.

THE bearing on Christianity of the views of the Divine government before stated is an important consideration ; but I do not enter into it in detail, because Christians are divided into so many different sects, each of which maintains that its own views constitute the true religion of Jesus Christ, while it denounces those entertained by other sects as “ soul-destroying errors,” that it is difficult for a layman to select a view of it which will not be widely disputed. The evangelical Protestants, for example, often apply these words to the Roman Catholic faith ; while at the same time they denounce Unitarians as infidels.

Their own doctrines, on the other hand, are described by some of their opponents in terms not less reproachful. By John Wesley, for example, the doctrine of election is described in the following words :—“The sum of all this is : One in twenty (suppose) of mankind are elected, nineteen in twenty are reprobated ! The elect shall be saved, *do what they will* ; the reprobate shall be damned, *do what they can*. This is the doctrine of Calvinism, for which Diabolism would be a better name, and in the worst and bloodiest idolatry that ever defiled the earth there is nothing so horrid, so monstrous, so impious as this.”* (Southey’s “Life of Wesley,” 3rd edit., Vol. I., p. 321.)

* See other striking examples of the way in which the adherents of the different sects speak of each other’s views of Christian doctrine, in Mr. Cox’s “Sabbath Laws and Sabbath Duties,” before referred to, pp. 54, 55, 127-9.

If a majority is entitled to decide, then the Roman Catholic faith has the best claim to be considered as the true exposition of the religion of the New Testament ; but in religious questions we cannot admit numbers as decisive of truth.

I confine myself, therefore, to the dogmas taught in the standards of the prevailing Churches of Christendom, and I use the expression “doctrinal *interpretations*,” because nearly all that passes in the world for Christian faith really consists of systems of doctrine founded upon particular texts, interpreted in a particular manner by particular individuals or conclaves of men ; and, in point of fact, the Bible contains no systematic exposition of religious doctrine which all men must necessarily acknowledge as Divine revelation. It is chiefly as expounded in catechisms and creeds that the Christian religion is now practically operating on social well-being ; yet if a dozen men, possessed of the highest order of mind, and thoroughly instructed in the ancient languages and in the modern sciences, were to read the Bible without previous bias, and were they commissioned to produce an authoritative interpretation of it, I doubt very much if they would present to the world a *facsimile* of any existing creed or articles of faith.

Miss Joanna Baillie, in her “View of the General Tenor of the New Testament regarding the Nature and Dignity of Jesus Christ,”* remarks that the three leading systems of doctrine on this subject “stand far and far apart.” If, besides these, there are very many minor doctrinal interpretations of Scripture embraced by large and intelligent bodies of men, it is clear that none of these can, on the ground of their perfect infallibility, be logically accepted as Divine revelation, calculated to guide the faith and practice of all mankind in reference to time and eternity. Instead of

* Longman & Co. 1831.

progress being made towards unity of belief, the process is the reverse.

During the last fifteen years, I have resided for periods of greater or less duration in the United States of America, in Germany and Italy, have visited France, and been a good deal in England; and from the nature of my published works, I have been brought into familiar and confidential communication with many able and highly instructed individuals of all faiths and sects; and my conclusion is, that Christianity, as taught in the prevailing creeds, is already undermined in the convictions of very many men and women of great capacity and attainments, and unexceptionable moral character. Archbishop Whately remarks that, "Force, together with fraud, the two great engines for the support of the Papal dominion, have almost annihilated sincere belief in Christianity among the educated classes throughout a great portion of Europe."

According to my observation, the obstinate and arrogant adherence of the clergy to Protestant articles of faith, at variance with the science of the age, has to some extent produced a similar effect in countries that are not Roman Catholic. Indeed, I have found that even where belief in some form of doctrine is still professed, the greatest liberties are often taken with it, one individual rejecting one point of faith, and another another; so much so, that had I written down the views of some dozens of professed believers, and published them, they would have presented a spectacle of extraordinary conflict and inconsistency.

This statement, I am convinced, will be confirmed by most persons who have enjoyed similar means of observation both at home and abroad. Those, on the other hand, who travel wrapped up in an impenetrable conviction of the infallibility of their own opinions will rarely find other men inclined to disclose to them their true sentiments on religious subjects.

There are, indeed, liberal sects, and many high-minded individuals, who reject the extreme doctrines of Church standards, and see in Christianity only a religion of love to God and goodwill to man, and who regard its Founder as a sublime Instructor, teaching us by precept and example how to live and how to die. To their views of Christianity my objections do not apply. But these sects and individuals are still so few in number, and so feeble in social influence, and many of them so deficient in courage to proclaim their convictions, and to support them by open and active efforts, that practically their interpretations of Christianity exert little influence on society.

The views embodied in the standards of the predominant Churches appear to me to be now acting as great obstacles to social progress and civilisation. The grand principles there represented are all supernatural; and the revelations of the Divine will in Nature, as a basis of morals and religion, are excluded from schools, colleges, churches, and social consideration; and thus these interpretations are chaining up the moral, intellectual, and religious faculties of many superior minds. The earnestly religious are truly the salt of the earth; their aspirations are high, their motives pure, and the objects at which they aim transcendently important. It is grievous, therefore, to see so many of them trammelled by the fetters of narrow sectarian creeds wasting their lives and their substance in wars with each other; opposing now one alleged error of doctrine or form, and now another; clearly observing the mote in their neighbour's eye, but never discerning the beam in their own; while God's fair world of mind and matter lies before them, inviting in vain their highest efforts to improve it, and to render it a scene of greater goodness, more fervent piety, and purer happiness than it now exhibits.

The Divine laws of religion, morality, and practical conduct revealed in Nature are nearly banished from the pulpit,

and few attempts are made to harmonise them with Christianity. In England, disquisitions about the real presence, prevenient grace, the efficacy of baptism, the communication of the Holy Spirit by ordination, and so forth, usurp the place of God's revelations in Nature ; while in Scotland the dogmas cited above* are made to play a similar part.

The prevailing dogmas rest on the Fall of man as their basis. The religion of Nature appears to contradict this assumption ; for if the human constitution, bodily and mental, has been adapted to external Nature such as it now exists, and Nature to it, then apparently man never was essentially different from what he now is.

The next dogma is that the Fall brought sin into the world, and all its woes ; and that the Second Person of the Trinity, Himself God, assumed the form of man, suffered the penalty of that sin, atoned for it, and thereby restored the human race to the favour of God. And as a corollary, it is said that it is only through faith in that atonement, and through the influence of the Holy Spirit, that the moral taint introduced into man's nature by the Fall can be removed, and that the punishment due for it and for each individual's actual transgressions can be averted.

The doctrines of the Fall and the Atonement are rejected by some sects as unsupported by sound interpretation of Scripture ; and they are entertained by other sects and individuals under various modifications. Into these questions it is not my province to enter, and, therefore, I confine myself to observing that, according to the views before expounded, moral evil arises from abuse of our bodily and mental functions, and the natural mode of averting it is to give to all the organs of body and mind the best possible constitution and a proportionate development, and then, by instruction in the laws to which God has

* Pages 107-110.

subjected them, and which are real indications of His will in regard to their uses, to direct the whole to their highest objects.

If this be the true view of man's nature and relations, the dogmas must be tried by this new standard, and the remedies proposed by them for human evils must be reconsidered in reference to this exposition of their causes. Modern science and the physiological constitution of man, and the consequences which flow from them, were undoubtedly unknown to the earnest, but ignorant, men who compiled the dogmas from Scripture.

Lastly, the dogmas represent the Gospel to have brought "life and immortality to light," and to teach the resurrection of the body from the dead, a Divine judgment, and the final consignment of all human beings either to heaven or to hell—that is, to an eternity of happiness or of misery—according to their good or their bad conduct in this world, or, as is the doctrine of many sects, according to their having believed soundly or unsoundly in points of faith, or even according to an eternal decree consigning them to the one or to the other of these destinations, passed on them before they came into existence.

Those doctrines lie beyond the limits of science ; and I shall, therefore, confine my remarks to what appear to me to be serious abuses of them. In regard to heaven : It is generally allotted to the true believer, who shows the soundness of his faith by his good works ; but some sects maintain that faith alone suffices to ensure salvation. Now, the capacity of an individual to believe anything, and to do any works, depends on the development and condition of his mind, and on the training and instruction he has received. The higher his moral and physiological endowments, the better is he qualified to believe and to act rightly ; and the lower, the less so. These conditions are determined chiefly *for* the individual, and little *by* him. Moreover, by the

order of God's moral government, as before explained, highly-endowed individuals have the fewest temptations to resist, and the fewest struggles to maintain, in this life; and, as a general rule, they enjoy the greatest share of happiness allotted to humanity. These are great and precious boons conferred on them by their bountiful Father; but the best use which they can make of such gifts appears to me to give them *no claim* to heaven—their trust for it should rest exclusively on the will of God.

Further, they are called on, by their gifts, to use all the means in their power to raise themselves and their less-favoured brethren higher in the scale of improvement, by seeking truth, abandoning error, and removing personal and social evils, and by endeavouring in all things to conform to the Divine laws. Instead of doing so, many highly endowed persons teach only catechisms and dogmas in schools and from the pulpit, and too generally leave the people the prey of bad habits, foul air, intemperance, and destitution, without instructing them how to make adequate efforts to remove the natural causes of these evils.

No spectacle is more common than to see an unhappy individual, after a life of immorality, which society regards as so flagrant that his existence can no longer be tolerated on earth, assured by his spiritual guides that his repentance in prison, accompanied by unhesitating faith in the atonement of Jesus Christ, will prove sufficient to transmit his soul from the gallows to heaven, where he will enjoy through eternity the society of God, angels, and just men made perfect. The felon who thoroughly believes this, declares—apparently with good reason—that the day of his ignominious death is the happiest of his life; but surely this is an abuse of the Scripture doctrine.

In reference to hell: It is generally assigned to unbelievers, to misbelievers, and to evil-doers. But erroneous belief and evil deeds arise chiefly from a deficient develop-

ment, or an unfavourable constitution, of the moral faculty, or from these combined with deficient training and instruction. These evils are generally inherited, and not voluntarily selected by individuals. According to this view, the tendency to vice, crime, and sin appears to be a misfortune, and the remedy for it seems to be removal of its natural causes. To consign individuals thus constituted, and thus placed, to eternal misery for conduct which is mainly the natural result of their faculties and circumstances, appears at variance with benevolence and justice; while, to assure them of heaven as the result of a prison-inspired repentance and belief, seems to be equally opposed to all sound views of a moral government of the world here or hereafter.

The abuses of the doctrine of heaven and hell* appear to me to be subversive of all efficacious discipline of the human mind. For example: A banker passes a long period of his life in genteel society, making great professions of evangelical religion, and abounding with prayers. At length he is discovered to have been all the while robbing his customers, feloniously selling their securities, and applying the price to his own uses. By this conduct, he plunges many honest and industrious families into irretrievable ruin, and casts a deep shade of suffering over their remaining days. Under the dogmas, the sufferers, in their ire, thank God that there is a day of future judgment and final retribution, in which canting hypocritical scoundrels, who make a cloak of religion to cover their crimes, and who embitter the lives of the honest and the good, will receive their reward in condemnation to eternal misery. The prospect of future punishment is thus believed to exercise a grand protecting influence to save society from such catastrophes.

But let us turn to the prison cell. There the condemned

* See Appendix No. I., "Heaven and Hell."

felon finds consolation in the dogmas which teach that "the human heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked"; and that he has been left to feel the truth of this representation, and to act it out in deeds, in order to subdue his obdurate heart and to bring him into a state of grace. Thanks to the mercy of God, he now looks "to the Rock that is higher than I"; believes in the atonement; finds all his iniquities forgiven; the gates of heaven thrown open to him; and the angels singing songs of joy over the great sinner who has repented!

The dogmas, when thus applied, be it observed, not only lead to these inconsistent consequences, but blind men's understandings to the real order of the Divine government on earth. I venture to say, after forty years' observation and experience, that the development of the moral and intellectual organs in individuals who are not insane, affords an indication of their natural strength of virtuous resolution, or of their natural proclivity to dishonesty: and that while society spurns and neglects this great fact in the Divine government of the world, these substitutes for it are feeble as gossamer webs to protect us against the crimes of ill-constituted minds placed in unfavourable circumstances.

On the other hand, such individuals themselves, if placed in favourable situations in which scope is afforded for all the talents and moral qualities they possess, and in which no strain, in the form of temptation or opportunity, is applied to overpower their weaker faculties, would find this discipline more effective than that now applied. It would leave them at liberty, in ignorance of their own deficiencies, and amidst severe temptations, to follow the dictates of their own ill-balanced desires; restrained only by the criminal law on earth, and by the prospect of a final judgment in the world to come. The former they hope by dexterity to evade; while they are taught that a

condemnatory sentence in the latter may at all times be avoided by means of repentance and faith.

But the abuses of this doctrine reach their acme in obstructing the social improvement of man. In almost all the kingdoms of Christendom the governments have allied themselves with the priesthood to prevent the people from pursuing their own happiness by the development and free exercise of their mental faculties. The government of the Pope is highly injurious to his subjects. (1857.) He excludes the study of natural science, and of all moral, religious, and political subjects that might by any possibility conflict with the dogmas of which he is the fountain, or might teach his people to scrutinise the uses he makes of his temporal and spiritual power.

He places books suspected of such tendencies on his *Index Expurgatorius*, and he prohibits his people, under the peril of future condemnation, and also of temporal punishment, from reading them. It is the belief in the mass of his subjects that he and his Church actually hold the keys of heaven and hell, that gives him his tremendous power ; while it is the consciousness on his part that the knowledge of the real order of God's government on earth, if attained by his people, would blow his dogmas to the winds, and hurl him from his throne, that prompts him to repel this information as his most formidable enemy. The temporal interests of the subjects of the Pope are sacrificed with the most unhesitating alacrity to the interests of his spiritual authority, and a degree of physical and moral degradation reigns in his territories unexampled in the worst parts of Europe.

Next to the Pope stands the King of Naples, who rules on the same principles, and with the same results. Austria follows a similar course. Her Emperor has recently concluded a concordat with the Pope, the object of which is to place all moral and religious training and social action

under the trammels of the priesthood of that country. They are the tools of the secular government, which again seeks to maintain its own power and permanency by using them as instruments for suppressing moral and intellectual enlightenment, and free thought and action in the people.

Nor is this abuse of spiritual power confined to Roman Catholic sovereigns. The King of Prussia is labouring to circumscribe the illuminating and improving influence of the public schools of his kingdom, established by his more enlightened predecessors, because their tendency has been to foster the desire for political freedom and social improvement. He is doing all that lies in his power to diminish the amount of instruction in natural science in the schools, and to augment belief in the dogmas of the Calvinist sect, there called "Pietism."*

The clergy of our own country may be divided into two classes—men of high moral, religious, and intellectual

* [Since this passage was written the Pope has been deprived of his temporal power; the progress of public opinion has materially modified the policy of the Emperor of Austria; and political necessities have compelled Prince Bismarck to exercise a counteracting influence on the pietistic tendencies of the King of Prussia, now Emperor of Germany. As yet, it is impossible to say to what extent the consolidation and independence of Italy, and the political changes brought about by the Prussian and Austrian, and Prussian and French wars, will lead to an improvement in the education and training of the people, and to their greater civil and religious freedom. History shows too clearly how difficult it is to uproot long-established forms of thought, to permit us to indulge very strongly in the hope that sudden improvement will be effected. The aristocratic element is too powerful in Germany to warrant us in believing that the old rulers will part with their power without a struggle; and the people, both there and in the greater portion of the rest of Europe, are still unfit to be trusted with the control of their own destinies. Everything will depend upon the direction now given to education.—ED.]

endowments, imbued with the pure and benign spirit of Christianity, who preach it from the pulpit, and exhibit it in their lives—and persons who have chosen the clerical profession from inferior motives, and who never rise to a full comprehension and experience of the sources and nature of its vital power. These latter take Catechisms, Confessions, and Liturgies for their rules of faith, preach the letter of them, and employ them as ladders of ambition, or as engines of war with which to assail other sects.

It is of this class that I here write. Many of them are the determined opponents of the introduction of science into schools, while they maintain that the Catechism and other expositions of the dogmas form the only safe basis for education. It is their influence that prevents the legislature from giving pecuniary assistance to schools in which the order of Nature is taught as a revelation of the will of God to man in regard to his terrestrial conduct. It is they who lead the people's religious emotions away from the recognition of Nature as sacred, and of its Divine laws as worthy of reverence. They, too, have their *Index Expurgatorius*, their list of *dangerous books*, not to be read without peril to the soul and displeasure from the pastor. Their object is the same as that of the Pope, the Emperor, and the King—to retain the people in subjection to the spiritual power of which they are the depositaries on earth; and it is the promise of heaven and the threat of hell that enables them to succeed in these unholy and most injurious schemes.

The countries in which political freedom shows its most benign influences are those in which the government rests on the power of the people, and in which the administrators are purely secular. England, Switzerland, and the United States of America are examples in point.

Most English Protestant readers will acknowledge the evils here described to be true results of Papal ascendancy;

but I beg to remark that the Pope, Emperors, and Kings, and all their clergy, who thus abuse religion, hold the Bible in their hands all the while that they are thus perverting it. The Bible, therefore, when unsupported by knowledge of the laws of God's government on earth, has not proved sufficient to conduct even educated and talented men to a sincere practice of its principles. They have so interpreted it as to convert it—by the prospects which it holds forth of future rewards and punishments not exclusively for good and bad actions, but *for belief*: belief in their dogmas and in their infallibility, or superior wisdom, as guides to heaven—into a tremendous instrument for degrading the people and obstructing their social improvement.

It appears to me, therefore, in vain for man, after eighteen hundred years' experience of the insufficiency of the Bible to protect itself from abuse, when unaided by knowledge of the order of God's providence in Nature, to hope to prevent it from being turned into an instrument for gratifying the lust of power, to the injury of the world. Something obviously is wanted to render it incapable of being thus misapplied ; and it is worthy of consideration whether an interpretation of it in harmony with Nature may have this effect.

The way in which the dogmas act in supporting despotism is not generally understood. By excluding secular knowledge, they render men timid, and as incapable as children.

Tyranny, for example, is the direct result of a low moral and intellectual condition of the people. A kingly tyrant has the strength only of one man, and cannot imprison and torture his liberal subjects by his personal strength. He is served by ministers whose moral condition is so low that they voluntarily lend him their aid in wickedness for the sake of honours and pay. They, however, do not personally execute his decrees. They find police-officers whose morality

is such that, for pay, they voluntarily arrest, imprison, chain, and degrade whomsoever the king and his cabinet desire them so to treat. Even these men are not sufficient to do these disgraceful deeds with their unaided strength. Officers and soldiers are so destitute of patriotism, and of all high principle, that they lend them the aid of their physical force and discipline to support and protect them in the exercise of their odious vocation. The kingly power thus obviously rests on the low moral condition of the subjects.

Why cannot Queen Victoria order a subject to be imprisoned and chained? Because the moral and intellectual condition of her people is such, that even if she had the inclination (which we know is the reverse of the fact), her subjects would not lend her their moral and physical power to gratify malignant propensities. No officer of the law would voluntarily execute her warrant without the signature of a Secretary of State; and no Secretary would, to gratify her, encounter a fearful storm of public indignation and resistance, and risk his neck on impeachment, by subscribing such a document—hence tyranny, like that recently ascribed to the King of Naples, is morally impossible in England. But the reason it is so, lies in the moral and intellectual condition of the people.

The United States of America and Switzerland afford similar examples. Let the President of the one, or the Federal Chief Officer of the other, issue warrants of his own authority to apprehend, and, without trial, to imprison, chain, and torture any citizen of these countries for political offences, and let him even find a Secretary of State to countersign them, the moral energy of the people would hurl both tyrants and secretaries to destruction.

The Divine law, therefore, is, that social well-being shall be the direct result of widespread individual intelligence, morality, and religion reduced to practice. The dogmas, by

holding out heaven as the reward to despots for maintaining the true faith, and through it, social order; and by giving the people the solace of revenge in their sufferings, by the thought that there is a day of future retribution awaiting their oppressors: distract the minds of both parties from perceiving the fundamental truths that knowledge of, and conformity to, God's laws in Nature, afford the only secure basis for individual and social prosperity; that these laws are moral, and may be rendered religious by training; and that, if honestly acted on, they will conduct both kings and subjects to the highest state of improvement attainable on earth.

Nature, however, will proceed in her course whether we ignore, or study and reverence her ways. The only difference will be in our course of action. If we regard the principles advocated in this Work as having any pretensions to truth, we shall reform our religious creeds, our criminal laws, and our treatment of all individuals who labour under moral deficiency; and apply the true principles of the moral government of the world to the regulation of individual and social conduct. If we regard them as false, we shall adhere to our present opinions and line of action. In religion we shall continue to view the order of God's providence in relation to mankind in general in the light in which it is represented in the dogmas, and which continues to be earnestly inculcated by men of great talent and influence.

Of this, the following extract from an exposition of "The Book of Genesis," by Dr. Candlish, is an example. He has been speaking of the fate of Sodom, and, referring to Luke xvii. 28-30, he continues:—

"What will all their vain expedients for dissipating thought and pacifying conscience avail the unjust then? They have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; they have nourished their hearts as in a day of slaughter.

They have been reserved unto that day ; shut up, so that none could escape.

“ Thus viewed, what a spectacle does the world, lying in wickedness, present ! A pen in which sheep are making themselves fat for slaughter ; a place of confinement ; a condemned cell, in which sentenced prisoners are shut up ; sinners held fast in the hands of an angry God !

“ Yes, you may run and riot as you choose ; you may drown thought in drunkenness, and lull conscience asleep ; hand may join in hand, and you may say one to another— a confederacy—let us shake off superstitious fear—let us dispel gloomy forebodings—let us eat, drink, and be merry. You may struggle as you can, and strive to get rid of God ; but here you are in His keeping—under lock and key. He has you safe, reserved until the day of judgment ; and you cannot escape—no, not though you call on the rocks and mountains to fall on you, and cover you from the wrath of the Lamb.

“ Have you no knowledge, ye workers of iniquity ? no consideration, no sense or feeling ? What hollow mockery of laughter is that which rings through the vaults of the dungeon ? Prisoners at their sports ! men doomed to die, taking their ease and making merry ! What infatuation— what madness is this ? Will none of you be sober for a moment ? Will none of you—enclosed, shut in, reserved as you are for judgment, so that you cannot escape—will none of you, ere the fatal day dawns and its sun rises on the earth, pause and be persuaded to relent, to submit, to sue out the freely-offered pardon, to believe and be saved—saved now—saved in that day—saved for ever ?” (Pages 95-96.)

In future times, when society shall recognise the true causes and preventives of criminal action, in all classes of men, they will discover that the denunciations and promises of the dogmas are slender and inefficacious substitutes for the true means of dealing with the evil which God has

presented to them in Nature, but from the use of which these erroneous opinions at present induce them to shrink with aversion. This doctrine does not affect the distinction between right and wrong.*

* See "Criminal Jurisprudence Considered in Relation to the Physiology of the Brain," by Marmaduke B. Sampson. 3rd Edition, revised; London, Highy and Son, price 2d.; "Lectures on Moral Philosophy," by George Combe, Lectures XII., XIII., XIV.; and "The Principles of Criminal Legislation and the Practice of Prison Discipline Investigated," by George Combe.

CHAPTER XI.

CONVICTION AND BELIEF.

THE prevalent interpretation of the doctrine of heaven and hell, if not supported by Nature, must be fraught with tremendous evils to mankind. It is the grand instrument by means of which the clergy hold sway over the laity, and have acquired a temporal power which enables them in many instances to control or embarrass the legislature ; to substitute their own interpretations not only for the Bible itself, but for the order of Nature, in the instruction of the people ; and to prevent the public mind from entering honestly and independently into the consideration of many departments of natural science, and from drawing unbiassed conclusions from them.

A writer in the *Edinburgh Review*, after making some observations on conventional hypocrisy, proceeds as follows : "Then there are the deliberate dishonesties of the learned, imposing upon the people what they do not believe themselves, for the sake of the end it is supposed to answer. Sir Charles Lyell, in his 'Second Visit to the United States of North America,' Vol. I., p. 222, adduces at length the text of the three heavenly witnesses, which no scholar, since Porson's investigation of it, professes to believe genuine, but which is still, nevertheless, retained in our Bibles, and also in those of the Episcopal Church of America, notwithstanding their opportunity of expunging it when the American Episcopalians revised the Liturgy and struck out the Athanasian Creed. This disingenuous timidity has

long been a reflection upon all our religious teachers. It is now becoming extremely dangerous to their influence and authority.

“There is no meeting an age of inquiry except in the spirit of perfect candour. The question which lies at the root of all dogmatic Christianity is the authority of the letter of Scripture; yet, strange to say, that question is neither a settled nor an open one even among Protestants. All the clergy of almost all sects are afraid of it; and the students of Nature, intent only upon facts that God has revealed to our senses, have to fight their way against the self-same religious prejudice which consigned Galileo to his dungeon. The geologists, following in the track of the astronomers, have made good some very important positions, and number among them many eminent churchmen of unquestioned fidelity to their ordination vows. It is now, therefore, admitted that the text is not conclusive against physical demonstration.

“Is the text conclusive against moral induction and metaphysical inquiry? Let a layman put that question, and an awful silence is the least forbidding answer he will receive. No minister of a parish, no master of a school, no father of a family in England feels himself free to pursue any train of instruction that seems in conflict with a familiar text or a dogmatic formula, excepting only the subject of the opening verses of Genesis. He is either fearful of the ground himself, or he cannot clear his own path for others without opening a discussion which is discountenanced on all sides and branded with reproachful names. He, in spite of himself, must take refuge in evasions and reserve, and close a subject of perhaps the liveliest interest to the most reverential minds, lest the works of God should *seem* to be at variance with His word.

“Here is the dilemma which will be found at the bottom of the education question of England. This is what is

consciously or unconsciously meant in many important quarters by the cry against secular instruction. This is why the natural sciences were so long frowned upon in our grammar-schools and colleges, and ancient knowledge preferred to modern, as a sounder and a holier lore. The theology of the Vatican was at home among the pagan mythologies, the Aristotelian physics, and the Hebrew cosmogonies; yet stood in awe of 'the Tuscan artist's optic glass'; and the spirit of the ancient Church has ever since been true to that instinct. But Protestantism, we say again, and printing have admitted the light of Nature into the schools; and, in the unlimited ecclesiastical freedom of the United States, religion and education go hand in hand."

Few persons conversant with the state of religious opinion in Great Britain will question the correctness of this representation: especially of that part of it which follows the question, "Is the text conclusive against moral induction and metaphysical inquiry?" Let us look, then, into the cause of this humiliating and injurious condition of things.

There is a distinction between conviction and belief. To convince a person is to lead his intellect by evidence and logical induction to acknowledge a truth previously unknown, or to admit a contested proposition. By teaching him Astronomy, we may convince him of the rotation and revolution of the globe. By showing him the facts of Geology and the logical deductions from them, we may convince him that the earth has existed for a longer period than six thousand years; and so forth. In these and similar instances, we present facts to the observing faculties, and employ the reflecting powers to judge of them; and as, when these faculties are normally developed, active, and cultivated, they act with precision and uniformity, the results which they reach are not voluntary, but are

the natural consequences of their action. In other words, conviction depends on evidence presented to the observing and intellectual faculties, and is involuntary.

On the other hand, there are two sources of belief. By the constitution of our minds we believe, *intuitively*, in the existence and qualities of certain things when they are presented to our observation : we believe also on credit or persuasion. Thus, to believe is to credit upon the authority of another ; to put confidence in the veracity of some one ; to have a firm persuasion of anything. In attaining this kind of belief, the intellect does not come directly into contact with the thing believed, but reaches it through the medium of testimony.

The tendency to credit testimony depends primarily on the emotional faculties. A person endowed with the faculty of Wonder feels pleasure in believing in marvellous incidents and narratives ; one endowed with much Hope and little Cautiousness is pre-disposed to believe in a happy state, here or hereafter ; one possessing much Cautiousness combined with deficient Hope is constitutionally prone to believe in a disastrous future. In these instances the emotional faculties appear to lead the intellect to embrace whatever views are most consonant to their likings, and to believe in them. Thus, we had believers in witchcraft ; and now we see many believers in ghosts, clairvoyance, spirit-rapping, and other mysterious phenomena. The causes of these phenomena are not cognisable by the intellectual faculties ; and hence, in common language, we call those who embrace them "believers in them."

Among the definitions of "belief" given by Dr. Johnson is this : The theological virtue of faith ; firm confidence of the truths of religion. But I have endeavoured to show above* that belief may be formed by associating, in childhood,

* Chapter II., page 20

almost any form of religious doctrines or opinions with the emotional faculties of Veneration and Wonder, and that this process is actually carried on with great success by the priests of many religions acknowledged by us to be false. The rise and establishment of Mormonism, in our own day, is an example in point.

Keeping this distinction in view, let us next remark that the rigid dogmatists of nearly every Christian sect attach the stupendous reward of heaven to belief, and the awful punishment of hell to unbelief, in man-concocted articles of faith. The promise of heaven is a lure to all the animal, moral, and religious faculties, while the threat of hell is an appalling appeal to our selfish feelings. They are, therefore, engines of tremendous power for forming and maintaining belief.

I have used the expression man-concocted articles, because history tells us that the Roman Catholic, and the Protestant, and almost all other sectarian articles of faith, were drawn up by councils or assemblies of fallible men who interpreted Scripture with their human faculties, and with such human lights as their own ages afforded, which we know were scanty enough, compared with the duty they had upon hand : viz., to fix the articles which they themselves and all their posterity should believe as their passport to heaven and their protection from hell.

Not only so, but we know that many of these articles were the subjects of vehement dispute among the members of these councils and assemblies, and that several of them were admitted into the code of Divine truths by narrow majorities ! Nevertheless, it is to belief in articles of faith thus enacted that strict dogmatists of every sect assign heaven, and to unbelief in them, hell. The Protestants may be heard vehemently denouncing the Roman Catholic faith as soul-destroying error, while the Pope prohibits, under the severest penalties, every one from

teaching his subjects Protestant Christianity, and for the same reason. In his opinion, *it* is soul-destroying error. Moreover, every sect, when it sends forth its missionaries to convert the heathen, gives them a commission to teach its own doctrines as the only certain way of salvation.

Few sects assign salvation to those who conscientiously study the Scriptures, and interpret and believe them as their own unbiassed understandings dictate, whether the results be orthodox or not; and fewer of them still allow an entrance into heaven to conscientious men who cannot believe in any recognised form of Christianity. The Protestants profess to grant freedom of inquiry; but how, if they sincerely did so, could they consistently proclaim the conscientious interpretations of any human being to be soul-destroying errors?

When we contemplate a body of intelligent men who are cognisant not only of these facts, but of the great difficulties attending the questions of the authenticity and inspiration of the books of the Old and New Testaments, and of the inroads which science is making on the established interpretations of them*—I say, when we contemplate men in such circumstances day by day, and with unhesitating confidence threatening hell as the punishment of unbelief, and promising heaven as the reward of belief in their own peculiar doctrines, we are astounded at

* Astronomy has overturned the belief of educated men in Joshua's commanding the sun and moon to stand still, and in God's fearing that men should reach heaven by building a high tower: the Tower of Babel. Geology has shaken the credibility of the Hebrew account of the Creation, and also of the Deluge. Natural History has demonstrated that the ark could not contain all the animals of the world; for many of them did not exist in the region where Noah embarked, and others could not live in an ark. These sciences, combined with Physiology, have shaken the doctrine that death was introduced in consequence of Adam and Eve eating the forbidden fruit.

their boldness, and are thrown back upon a variety of hypotheses to account for the spectacle.

These threats and promises, too, be it observed, are publicly addressed to many laymen who are perfectly cognisant of all that is here stated. If the clergy could only hear the comments which such hearers make on their discourses, they would pause in their career. Some persons may be heard remarking that the preacher is only discharging a professional duty, like a lawyer pleading a cause; and that, his own convictions going beyond the narrow boundaries of his creed, he has no liberty of independent thought and action; and where there is no freedom there can be no responsibility. But what an appalling supposition, to imagine a human being who believes in a God at all consciously investing doctrines with Divine authority, and enforcing belief in them on others, by means of heaven and hell, merely as a professional exercise, regardless alike of their human origin, and of the uncertainty which he knows to exist as to their absolute truth!

Another supposition, frequently hazarded, is that the preacher employs these portentous engines of belief from habit, without much consideration of their import. This I can readily suppose, for few men could indulge in proclamations of eternal misery if they formed an adequate conception of all that it implies.

During the war between Great Britain and France, a near relative of mine happened to go with a friend into Edinburgh Castle on some business, when they observed a regiment forming in a circle within the walls. They stopped to see what the movement meant. It was preparatory to a military punishment. The two civilians were led, by an irresistible curiosity, to watch the subsequent proceedings. It happened that, before this occurred, my relative had frequently discussed the subject of the eternity

of future punishment with his friend, who maintained sternly the orthodox opinions on this point. They saw the culprit tied up; the lashing commenced; the blood flowed, and they heard acute cries of agony. They became sick, and left the scene in disgust.

As they retired, my relative said to his friend, "What amount of sin, in your opinion, would justify that infliction continued through eternity?" The reply was, "Good God! no human being could, in a whole lifetime, incur guilt that would justify that torture for a week!" This individual never afterwards believed in the eternity of hell torments. He had here the means of comprehending what human torture really is, and his whole being revolted from the idea of its endless duration. Previously, hell was to him little more than a word, but now he could form some definite notion of the horrors implied in it.

The grand cause, however, of the prevalent use of future reward and punishment to support belief in man-coined articles of faith, appears to me to be this. By laying down the corruption of human nature as a fundamental proposition in religion, and founding on it the doctrine of man's natural aversion to holiness and virtue, and his natural incapacity to discern Divine truth, the dogmatists deprive themselves of a secure resting-place in science and in human nature for religion and morality. Some time ago I heard a sermon preached by an able divine on the text, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." In answer to the inquiry, *How* shall we be able to love our neighbours as ourselves? he said that the philosophers present us only with motives of prudence or of selfishness, which can never produce disinterested goodness; and that the only means of becoming capable of fulfilling the precept is to obtain the influence of the Holy Spirit, in answer to prayer. "Ask, and it shall be given unto you." The Holy Spirit alone, said he, can plant in the human

mind true Christian charity and brotherly love ; secondary means may cultivate it after it is so planted, but can do nothing to produce it.

But I ask, If God instituted the world, and endowed man with all his functions, may we not truly say that all our gifts proceed from Him, and that secondary means can only cultivate, improve, and direct them ? Further, if the feeling of pure disinterested goodness, prompting us to love our neighbour as ourselves for the sake of making him happy, without any selfish object of our own, is communicated to us when an active organ of Benevolence is bestowed on us : is not this an example of God's grace producing the emotion in a way which those misinterpreters of Scripture and repudiators of Nature erroneously deny ?

According to the doctrine now referred to, all religious attainments and hopes rest on belief in doctrines of which the clergy are virtually the interpreters. The original records are not directly accessible to the laity, and hence it is impossible for them, generally speaking, to reach *conviction* in regard to the basis on which morality, religion, and salvation are said to rest. *Belief*, therefore, is the only alternative left to them ; and belief being, in the dogmatical view, indispensable to salvation, and salvation being transcendently important, some of the clergy act as if they thought all appliances to produce belief justifiable. If any inquirer desires to reach *conviction* rather than to rest satisfied with *belief*, he is not referred to Nature and to legitimate inductions from it, but to books written in dead languages, and to volumes of disputation concerning the authors of these books, the genuineness of the text, the degree in which the text is inspired, and, finally, the soundness of discordant interpretations of it, on belief in which salvation is said to depend.

On all these points the difficulties are increasing, instead

of diminishing, with the advances of scholarship and science.* If personal and social well-being depend on the fulfilment of *natural* conditions instituted by God, then no religion resting exclusively on belief in dogmas which ignore these conditions *can* be thoroughly practical. Moreover, I have attempted to show that the order of the Divine administration of this world is unfolded to man by means of the instruments through which it is conducted ; that it is addressed equally to the intellectual and to the emotional faculties ; and that, therefore, before a religion of conviction—*i.e.*, a religion based on discernible manifestations of Divine wisdom, goodness, and power, cognisable by the intellect, gratifying to the moral and religious emotions, and conducing, practically, to the well-being of the race—can be attained, we must resort to the records of these manifestations in the Book of Nature, and from them extract elements for the formation of our faith.

In every religion we shall find that, in proportion to the importance attached to pure belief is the extent of superstition in its followers, and of domination in its clergy. The Hindu, Mahommedan, Roman Catholic, and Protestant religions may be selected as examples. The priests of the first and second exact belief without a shadow of free investigation, and their flocks are their blind fanatical puppets, and are also the recipients of every degrading superstition the priests choose to teach them. The Roman Catholic priesthood, also, require unreasoning belief, and their power is proportionally great, and their peculiar doctrines proportionally distant from reason. The Protestant

* See "An Inquiry Concerning the Origin of Christianity," by C. Hennell. 2nd Edition. "The Creed of Christendom," by W. Rathbone Greg. "The Essence of Christianity," by Ludwig Feuerbach; 1854. Prize Essay—"Christianity and Infidelity," by S. S. Hennell. London: Hall, Virtue and Co.; 1857.

laity are nominally allowed freedom of inquiry, and in proportion to the use they have made of this privilege is their religion rational, and their subjection to clerical dominion mitigated.

It is necessary only to refer to the sects which have renounced the most appalling of the dogmas cited above,* as containing the most independent thinkers and least priest-ridden portion of the Christian laity. The clergy of those sects, having lost their priestly power, appeal to reason, and to man's moral and religious emotions, as the means of guiding their flocks. They substitute *conviction* for *belief*, and so train the laity to mental independence, and to become the sincere friends of human progress.

The practice of founding religion on dogmas which cannot bear the investigation of reason, is attended with another great evil. It is the cause why the Christian clergy, like Levites among the Jews and the priests in idolatrous countries, constitute a class apart from the laity. The Scotch advocate formerly mentioned, who had been educated as a clergyman in the Church of Scotland, but subsequently embraced the legal profession, mentioned to me that so completely are the clergy a separate class, that were two of them, one from John-o'-Groat's House, and another from Gretna Green, to meet for the first time in their lives, even at an inn, they would in a short time enter upon an interchange of opinions upon religion and Church government, and Church politics, far more confidential than either of them would venture to indulge in with his own lay father or brother.

The same reserve infects the laity in their communications with their spiritual guides. When I visited Boston, in the United States of America, I happened to mention to the Rev. Dr. Channing some opinions which I had heard

* Pages 107, 110.

discussed the previous day at a dinner party, consisting of lawyers, physicians, and merchants, when he observed, "This is very interesting to me. But for you, a stranger, I should never have learned that such views are entertained; and yet it is of great importance to clergymen to know the real sentiments of the laity on religious doctrines. I have often told my lay friends that I desire nothing more ardently than to hear their true convictions; and I have assured them that whatever these may be, if I am satisfied that they are honestly entertained, the holders of them shall not forfeit my esteem. But," he added, "it has been all in vain. They fear to hurt my feelings by contesting my opinions: they erect a barrier of good breeding between themselves and their clergy, which no skill of mine has been able to break through."

This is a grave charge against the laity, and, in my opinion, it is well founded. By concealing their real opinions concerning the doctrines and worship sanctioned by the standards of their Churches, they render it impossible for the most upright and enlightened members of the clerical profession to move a step towards reformation. No clergyman *can* proclaim doubts in the soundness of the dogmas which, probably in the immaturity of his understanding and in the absence of experience, he has vowed to preach, while the laity continue ostensibly to uphold them. The movement towards reformation *must commence with the laity*. By expressing openly and honestly their dissatisfaction with things as they stand, they will afford the clergy, many of whom are groaning in creed-imposed fetters, encouragement and opportunity to declare whatever changes the increase of learning and the evolution of scientific truths may have produced on their convictions. The laity act an unmanly and dishonourable part in secretly condemning what they publicly support.

How strongly do such cases indicate unsoundness in the

creeds which lead to such reserve : yet it arises exclusively from the dogmatic elements introduced into our religion. As before mentioned, Christian theology is to the laity an occult science, resting on interpretations of Hebrew and Greek records ; and *belief* in certain doctrines is the foundation of all their hopes. There is no common ground, therefore, on which the ordinary layman and his pastor can meet to discuss the merits of their faith. It stands apart from Nature and secular experience ; unbelief and misbelief involve eternal perdition ; and there is thus no alternative left to the layman but to surrender his conscience and understanding to his spiritual master, or to encounter (as he thinks) the risk of losing his soul. The Pope and his clergy proclaim this as the natural result of their faith, and they act consistently in doing so. The Protestant clergy, on the other hand, *de facto* exercise the same authority over the unlearned laity, while they profess to acknowledge the right of individual judgment.

These considerations are urged with no hostile design against religion. They are presented with an earnest desire to strengthen its foundations and to extend its usefulness. The *Edinburgh Review* for October, 1840, expresses wonder that there should be so small a proportion of sermons destined to live : that, out of the *million* and upwards preached annually throughout the empire, there should be a very few that are remembered *three whole days after they are delivered*—fewer still that are committed to the press, scarcely one that is not in a few years absolutely forgotten. One explanation may be given of these facts. As the sermons are preached by the best educated men in the country, and by men of at least average abilities, the subjects of them must be such that they do not stand in a natural relation to the human faculties, and therefore, even when supported by the religious emotions, do not permanently interest or edify their hearers.

How then, it may be asked, do the sermons continue to be listened to with even the appearance of devotion? The answer is: the dogmas, having been entwined with the religious emotions of the people from infancy, are regarded as Divine truths; and the preachers, by repeating them, excite the emotions, and thus listening becomes an act of Divine worship. But in this monotonous practice there is no progress towards a higher development of human intelligence, virtue, and happiness. In consequence, the Christian religion, as now interpreted, actually stands still: nay, it is the boast of the adherents of the dogmas that it must necessarily do so, until it shall bring all opinions under its sway. But this standing still in the midst of a host of assailants striving—and not altogether without success—to undermine its very foundations, and in the midst of a rapidly advancing stream of scientific knowledge at variance with its dogmas, cannot fail to sap its strength.

It has been stated above* that when the intellectual faculties furnish the emotional faculties of Wonder and Veneration with knowledge of the qualities and phenomena of Nature, the two sets of faculties acting together generate an intuitive belief in the existence of a supernatural Power and Intelligence. We can give no account of the origin of this belief, except by assuming that the faculties of normal men are so constituted in relation to Nature that it excites it in them. But we learn by observation that where knowledge of Nature is so deficient that the mind cannot comprehend the order and the lessons of Nature, the religious emotions, in seeking for the supernatural, are liable to go astray into gross superstitions, and that the intellect then invents idols, demons, witches, and other monstrous objects or imaginary beings to which the emotions cling. The

* Page 29.

supernatural, therefore, in one form or other, appears to be indispensable to their satisfaction.

Accordingly, we find that the founders of the Hindu and Mahomedan religions based them on alleged supernatural communications. Belief in their sacred books was not produced by reason and evidence, but by the aid of authority, the promise of reward, and the threat of punishment. The assurance of a Divine origin was accepted by the people, because, in the actual condition of their intelligence, it satisfied their love of the supernatural. Being communicated to the young from generation to generation, and supported by public opinion and many social advantages, these religions have had an abiding endurance.

Both natural and communicated religions, therefore, appear to rest on the basis of the supernatural, real or pretended : for although it may appear paradoxical, it seems nevertheless true that it is the intuitive belief that all the qualities and phenomena of Nature manifest a supernatural Power that fits the rules which they reveal for human guidance to become religious laws. If this view be sound, religious belief founded on the objects and phenomena of Nature cannot be shaken, because these objects and phenomena are constantly present as sources of conviction, and the human faculties are all adapted to receive as Divine the lessons logically deducible from them.

The Hindu religion does not possess this quality of stability, and hence it requires, and has received, support from external motives. In consequence of this weakness, it is in constant danger of being subverted by the revelations of Divine truth in Nature : but much less so, by another communicated faith, however much superior it may be to itself. When the Bible is presented to its votaries, they examine it with their intellects alone, and in general it does not appear to them to possess the character of a Divine message. Their minds are pre-occupied by their own

supernatural communications. As these have not been embraced from reason, but from authority and training, and as they have been supported only by the authority of their priests, by the law, and by public opinion, Christianity has not yet succeeded in extinguishing this faith and in taking its place.

Ida Pfeifer informs us that the Christian villages or communities in India are composed of orphan children left utterly destitute by visitations of the cholera, who were collected and clothed, fed, educated, and trained by Christian missionaries : in other words, training has made them Christians as it had made their fathers Hindus. But generally speaking, the Hindu people, satisfied with their own religion, continue to reject the religion of their conquerors.

The missionaries find it extremely difficult to undo the connection formed in their minds between the doctrines of that faith and their religious emotions. The Rev. Dr. Duff, a missionary from the Church of Scotland to Bengal, perceived the obstacles to his success presented by this state of things, and begged of the Church to send him the means of instructing the Hindus in Natural Science, in order to prepare them to receive Christianity. In his pamphlet, entitled *The Church of Scotland's Indian Mission*,* he says of the Hindus, that with them the argument for Christianity from miracles is utterly powerless. "They retort that they themselves have miracles far more stupendous. And, doubtless, if mere *gross magnitude* is considered, they say what is true : for in this respect *their* miracles set all comparison at defiance. Besides, with them the *original* miracles form an *inherent* part of their *theology* ; and they have no notion of what is meant by an appeal to them in order to authenticate a *doctrine*. And *modern* miracles

* Page 3 (1835).

they have in such abundance, that they are exhibited on the most trivial occasions, and become matters of daily occurrence."

The means of teaching Natural Science have been supplied in Bengal, and have been largely taken advantage of by intelligent young Hindus ; but, according to my information, they apply the knowledge thus acquired to refute the Bible. Be it observed that the missionaries and the Christian laymen who have taught them Natural Science have abstained from investing it with a sacred character : have not represented it as revealing rules of practical conduct which are directly related to the moral and religious faculties of man, and therefore, calculated by teaching and training to become moral and religious truths. The consequence is the production of unbelief in all religions. Surely natural religion would be less dangerous than none.

The Greeks and the Romans had no written records professing to proceed directly from their gods. Their religion was traditional, and rested on physical representations of their deities in statuary, and on temples, rites, and ceremonies. We have seen how obstinately Christianity is resisted by the Hindus in consequence of the pre-occupation of their religious emotions by a religion which they believe to have proceeded from a supernatural source. When the Christian religion was presented to the Greeks and the Romans, it did not meet with any obstacle of this kind, for they had no Divine records. Its success among them was, therefore, proportionately easy and great ; and it spread also among all those nations whose brains were well formed, and who had no previous sacred books to pre-occupy them. Among most of the tribes of the native American Indians it failed, apparently because their cerebral organs were so defective that they could not comprehend it.

These facts appear to show that it is much more difficult to subvert a religion alleged to rest on a supernatural basis

than to infuse a new faith, claiming such an origin, into minds not pre-occupied by belief in supernatural communications. Might not a religion, founded on the rules of belief and conduct revealed to us by God in the agencies and phenomena of Nature, aid us in rooting out superstitions which we find it so difficult to exterminate merely by presenting another supernatural revelation, however superior in truth and practical utility? If the missionaries would teach the dictates of science for human guidance as religious as well as intellectual truths to the Hindus, they might bring them at least nearer to Christianity.

CHAPTER XII.

THE DOGMAS AS PRACTICAL RULES.

IN Legislation, also, the obstructive effects of the Dogmas may be observed. If this world is an Institution, it follows that personal and social prosperity can be reached only by studying the agencies of Nature, and by conforming to the rules of conduct which they prescribe. In this view, the function of the human legislator is simply to discover and apply the rules of action dictated by the Divine Lawgiver. In my opinion, science has already made such progress that valuable rules have been demonstrated, conformity to which will aid us in securing healthy constitutions at birth, and in preserving them unimpaired by disease throughout life ; also in the production and distribution of wealth ; in the elevation and refinement of our mental faculties ; in the attainment of social distinction and other objects of legitimate ambition : in short, in the improvement of our minds and bodies, and the augmentation of our happiness, as individuals ; and more emphatically still, in reaching national prosperity.

No human legislature *can* produce any beneficial results, private or public, except by acting in conformity with the order of Nature ; while it may, and often does, call forth floods of suffering and disappointment by enacting and enforcing laws in opposition to it. Yet the mere suggestion of such an idea in the British Parliament would probably call forth shouts of laughter and derision. There is no more recognition of a Divine government of the world in our legislature than there was in that of Greece and of

Rome ; and religion is never heard of, as a basis of legislation, except when some miserable sectarian interest demands the aid of Parliament for its aggrandisement or its protection.

And what is the cause of this untoward state of things ? The interpretations of Scripture embodied in our prevailing dogmas, which have usurped the place of Christianity, represent this world as a wreck, and as incapable of improvement, except by supernatural means, which can be evoked only by conduct in conformity with the dictates of Church standards and catechisms ! The national mind discerns no actual intelligible Divine government in the world, and practical men find the principles laid down as Divine in the dogmas little applicable to secular affairs. Hence comes the exclusion of the recognition of God's government of the world from our legislature, and also of all religion whatever ! Hence, also, the exclusion of instruction in the rules of this government from schools, colleges, churches, and literature !

What are the substitutes in Parliament for knowledge of these rules ? In all but a few great minds, we have only crude and conflicting notions about the laws of commerce, health, crime, education, and all the natural agencies which are producing the weal or woe of mankind. Hence, finally, government by party combinations, in supporting which, men of honourable character do not hesitate, when in opposition, to maintain in debate that a principle or a measure is wholly wrong, which, when in power, they defended as entirely sound and beneficial, or *vice versa*. When a Divine government shall be recognised, such conduct will become indicative only of intellectual weakness or of moral dishonesty, and this stigma on our national reputation will cease.

In the legislation of the despotic countries of Europe, the effects of ignoring a Divine government of the world are

still more disastrous. The Sovereign claims to reign by Divine right, and uses the dogmas to banish from the minds of his subjects every notion that he exercises only a delegated power, and that he and they live under laws enacted by an Authority which controls every act of his legislation, and produces good or evil from it, irrespective of his intentions or wishes.

The Emperor of Russia, for example, appears not to perceive that, by the order of Nature, an empire can attain the necessaries, comforts, and luxuries of life, which are indispensable to the enjoyment of the people as individuals, and to their strength as a nation, only by employing labour and skill in the development of their natural resources; and that knowledge, morality, and economy are necessary to their success. Apparently he does not believe that national greatness does not consist in mere length and breadth of territory and numbers of subjects; or that the extension of his sovereignty over comparatively barren regions and barbarous men has the natural tendency to distract his attention from raising the physical and moral condition of his people, as well as to weaken the central power, by stretching it over too wide a space, and thereby to lead to feeble and corrupt government, thence to anarchy, and finally to the dissolution of his empire.

His religious dogmas have taught him that he is the vicegerent of God in his own dominions; but apparently he does not perceive that Divine rules of conduct are prescribed by the order of Nature, and he acts as if they had no existence. Hence, he desires to augment his dominions by absorbing into them Circassia, Turkey, Persia, and other barbarous countries, wholly blind to the inevitable exhaustion of the wealth, and destruction of the welfare, of the most civilised and industrious, and therefore the most estimable and valuable, portion of his subjects in gratifying this unwise ambition. From not perceiving

that these projects are immoral, and that, by the law of Nature, nothing that is immoral is permanent and strong, he does not discern the certain disastrous future which he is now providing for his empire.

By a patient exposition of the modes of action of the natural forces, physical and moral, which determine human well-being or suffering, these results, in my opinion, might be demonstrated; and yet religious dogmas exclude even the attempt to investigate the rules of conduct which they dictate, and discountenance their application to practical purposes!

Another disastrous effect of the dogmas is seen in their influence in obstructing the education of the people. Many religious men denounce the teaching of science as "godless education." While they are thus nearly unanimous in practically rejecting the course of Providence in Nature as a source of instruction, each places in the hands of the young its own Catechism of doctrines, its Liturgy, its Confession of Faith, or its other articles of belief; and with the most pertinacious assiduity labours to imprint these indelibly on the memory, and to embed them in the affections of its pupils. Meanwhile, many of the sects denounce the catechisms, liturgies, and confessions of certain others as unsound and unscriptural, and as dangerous to the eternal welfare of the people. Here, then, is a record unquestionably Divine, in so far as we read it rightly, superseded and set aside for books of human compilation, denounced as unsound by large masses of the community.

The effect of this on education is described by Mr. Horace Mann* in the following words:—"After the particular

* "Report of an Educational Tour in Germany and Parts of Great Britain and Ireland," by Horace Mann, Esq., Secretary of the Board of Education, Massachusetts, U.S. With Preface and Notes, by W. B. Hodgson. London: Simpkin, Marshall and Co.; 1846.

attention which I gave to this subject (religious instruction), both in England and Scotland, I can say, without any exception, that in those schools where religious creeds, and forms of faith, and modes of worship were directly taught, I found the common doctrines and injunctions of morality, and the meaning of the preceptive parts of the Gospel, to be much less taught and much less understood by the pupils than in the same grade of schools, and by the same classes of pupils with us," in Massachusetts, where the teaching of all sectarian doctrines in common schools is prohibited by law. Is not this sacrificing Christianity itself at the shrine of sectarianism?

The elements of which a sect is composed are the points in which it differs from other sects; and its existence depends on the success and assiduity with which it infuses a knowledge of and reverence for these into the minds of the young. It represents them as subjects of the utmost importance to their temporal and eternal welfare. In the estimation of its zealous leaders, they greatly surpass in practical as well as religious importance the order of Nature. If any sect were to cease investing its points of difference with the highest reverence in the estimation of its pupils, and to begin to magnify the truth and utility of the doctrines in which all are agreed, it would commit *felo de se*. Its dissolution and fusion into the general body of Christian believers would be inevitable and speedy. The more completely, therefore, that the different sects obtain the command of education, the greater will be the obstacles to the introduction of the order of Nature into schools.

The points on which all Christian sects are agreed *must* constitute the essential substance of Christianity; because it is on these that Christian men of all denominations act in the business and relations of life. Pious, honest, and benevolent men abound in them all; and this common

excellence must spring from a common source. The points on which they differ, although forming the life-blood and the bonds of union of sects, cannot constitute Christianity; because, if they did, the Christian religion would really have scarcely any form or substance. It would consist of abstract disquisitions, discernible only by microscopic eyes, and inapplicable to all beneficent ends. Who shall say that the points of faith in which the Church of England differs from the Congregationalists—or the views of Church government in which the Free Church differs from the Established Church of Scotland—or the Secession Church from the Free Church—or the Scotch Episcopalian Church from them all—are the essential elements of Christianity?

And yet it is for the sake of maintaining these distinctions from generation to generation, and of transmitting to the remotest posterity the bitter contentions which have so frequently vexed the spirits and alloyed the happiness of this age, that we are called on to exclude instruction in the course of Nature, as a guide to human conduct, from our schools; to reject a system of education founded on the points in which all are agreed; to prostrate the national mind beneath the car of sectarianism, and to allow it to be crushed and distorted by its unhallowed wheels!

Practical Christianity, on the other hand, and the laws of Nature, physical, organic, and moral, present the same instruction and recommend the same line of action to all, and are, therefore, destructive of sectarianism. Hence the cry of infidelity which all sects raise against them! Obedience to them is calculated to bind man to man, and nation to nation, by the ties of reciprocal interest as well as of affection and duty, and to bring all into communion with God. Our knowledge of them grows with the growth of science, and their influence increases with the augmentation of the prosperity which obedience to their dictates yields.

Every motive of duty and interest, therefore, calls on

the laity and the Legislature to disenthral education from the dominion of sects, and to allow to God's providence a fair field for working out its beneficial ends. Disguise the fact as we will, the order of Nature—in other words, God's secular providence—is a power which in this world shapes our destinies for weal or for woe; while the peculiar doctrines of sectarianism only exalt the consequence and the power of clerical teachers, and of the few zealous laymen who constitute their staff.

To vote money, therefore, as was done under the Minutes of Council of August and December, 1846, to every sect, to enable it to educate its own members in its own religious doctrines, is actually to endow discord. It is deserting the shrine of reason and of moral and religious principle, and bowing at that of prejudice and bigotry. It is renouncing all reverence for God's providence, as revealed in the course of Nature; for every one of the sects, if it does not exclude, deny, and denounce the order of Nature as a source of practical instruction to the young, at least practically treats it as a matter of small importance compared with its own peculiar dogmas. To give them the public money to enable them to pursue this course of instruction more effectually is to encourage them to place their own wisdom high above that of the Creator.

Nor is this the worst feature of the case. To make the teaching of God's order of providence in Nature *as religious truth*, if the dogmas are not taught along with it, an insurmountable objection to granting public aid to secular schools is actually treating the Divine laws as dangerous, and, however unintentional, with contumely; yet this was the rule of the Committee of Council on Education.*

Truth alone can benefit a nation, and the doctrines of

* See Appendix, No. IV.

all sects cannot possibly be true; to give each of them public money, therefore, to teach its own tenets is to endow equally truth and error. It is tantamount, in physics, to setting in motion antagonistic forces; in cookery, to paying one man to pour wormwood, and another sugar, into the cup of which the nation is to drink. By all means allow the men who prefer wormwood to fill their own bowl with it, and those who prefer sugar to fill theirs with sugar; but let not the Government, which superintends the cup out of which all must drink, pay men with national money to destroy the contents of that cup, and thus to render them a potion which no human palate can endure. To pay all sects, who are teaching solemn contradictions, implies an utter disbelief in any intelligible order of God's providence on earth. It deliberately supersedes the teaching of it, and plants conflicting catechisms, liturgies, and confessions in its place. If the heads of the Government cannot discern in science an exposition of the order of Nature, or, in other words, of the course of God's providence on earth, they may at least so far defer to Divine Wisdom and Intelligence as to believe that God's providence, however dark, must be self-consistent, and that it does not promise to prosper contradictions!

Will not the men of intellect and science who see this to be the case assume courage, speak out, and help to stem the torrent of sectarianism which overflows the land? They have it in their power at this moment to do their country an invaluable service, for which she would one day rear monuments of gratitude to their names. Will they, through fear of a little temporary obloquy, desert the standard of truth, of God, and of the people? Let their own consciences answer the appeal, and let them act as their consciences dictate. Will no teachers arise, imbued with knowledge of the order of Nature, as unfolded in science, and, with faith in its adaptation to the human faculties, communicate it,

under the sanction of the religious sentiments, to the young, as a help to guide them through the thorny paths of life? Yes! Such teachers exist, and they lack only the countenance of the enlightened laity to follow the strong impulses of their affections and understandings, and accomplish this great improvement in secular instruction.

Moreover, under the sectarian system, not only is the advancing intelligence of the people shackled by the consecrated errors of the dark ages, but the most vigorous and profound thinkers among the clergy of all denominations are subdued and held in thralldom by their feebler brethren. The men of inferior endowments and inferior intelligence take their stand on the accredited dogmas, which they cherish because they are in accordance with their own narrow and prejudiced perceptions; and they resist every liberal idea and study that has the most remote appearance of conflicting with their pre-conceived ideas. As they exert a great influence over a half-educated people, trained to regard their doctrines with holy reverence, the more powerful minds too generally retire from the field, and leave to the sectaries an undisputed sway.

The best interests of society suffer from this unhappy state of things; whereas if Nature were taught, as the harmonious ally of a sounder interpretation of Christianity, the men endowed with the profoundest intellects, and with the purest and most elevated emotions, would lead the general mind, and we should constantly advance. In the present time, the leaders of the Calvinistic sects are strenuously exerting themselves to bring back the public sentiment to the opinions of the middle of the seventeenth century; and if they do not succeed, it is science alone that will prevent this consummation of their labours.

From the neglect of Nature by the sects, and the paramount importance which they attach to their own peculiar

doctrines, they languish when not excited by contention among themselves. Dr. Candlish illustrated this fact when he called on the Free Church to renew and proclaim its "testimony;" in other words, constantly to obtrude on public attention the peculiar views which distinguish it from all other sects. He assigned, as the motive for doing so, the danger of decay with which he felt it to be threatened, from its distinctive characteristics being forgotten, seeing that its standards, doctrines, and discipline are identical with those of the Established Church of Scotland. There is no perennial source of activity and progress in any doctrine that is not in harmony with and supported by the course of Nature. A scheme, on the contrary, founded on Christianity interpreted in conformity with God's natural laws, will enjoy an inherent vitality and a self-rectifying energy that will cause it constantly to flourish and advance. It will in time root out sectarian errors, and unite all classes in the bonds of harmonious truth.

In advocating a non-sectarian system of national education, I do not propose to deliver over scholars and teachers to Government officers, with power to mould their minds into whatever forms our rulers may prefer, as some advocates of sectarian instruction pretend. The United States of America have set us a bright example in this enterprise. They have divided their country into convenient spaces, and designated them as school-districts. The existing law of Massachusetts (Revised Statutes, 1835, title x., chap. 23) ordains that districts containing fifty families shall maintain one school—districts containing one hundred and fifty families shall provide two schools; and so forth—"in which children shall be instructed in reading, writing, geography, arithmetic, and good behaviour by teachers of competent ability and good morals." Larger districts, again, are required to maintain a school "in which the history of the

United States, book-keeping, surveying, geometry, and algebra shall be taught." And if the locality shall contain four thousand inhabitants, the teacher shall, "in addition to all the branches above enumerated, be competent to instruct in the Latin and Greek languages, general history, rhetoric, and logic." The law requires the inhabitants to raise money by taxing themselves for supporting these schools, and ordains them to appoint committees annually for managing them.*

We are told, however, by some able opponents of the educational scheme introduced by the orders of Council, that Government has no right to interfere with the secular instruction of the people, and that voluntary effort is adequate to accomplish all that is needed for the public welfare. In my "Remarks on National Education," I endeavoured to show that Government is not only entitled, but is bound, to enable the people, by legislative aid, to organise their own wealth and intelligence for the establishment and maintenance of schools for universal instruction; and I now beg to add that experience shows that legislative aid far excels voluntary effort in this good work.

England [1857] has been left to voluntary effort for the education of her people from the foundation of her institutions, and what has been the result? Mr. Horace Mann, in his "Educational Tour," says: "England is the only one among the nations of Europe, conspicuous for its civilisation and resources, which has not, and never has had, any system for the education of its people. *And it is the country where, incomparably beyond any other, the greatest and most appalling social contrast exists; where, in comparison with the intelligence, wealth, and refinement of what are called the*

* Further details concerning the machinery by which the schools are managed and the taxes levied in Massachusetts will be found in an article in the *Edinburgh Review* for July, 1841, under the title of "Education in America," by George Combe.

higher classes, there is the most ignorance, poverty, and crime among the lower! Owing to the inherent vice and selfishness of their system, or their no-system, there is no country in which so little is effected, compared with their expenditure of means; and what is done only tends to separate the different classes of society more and more widely from each other."

There is a great difference between the influence of the voluntary principle when applied to the support of churches, and when applied to the support of schools for the poor. The main object of the Church is to provide means for securing the eternal salvation of the contributor and his family—a most momentous consideration to every reflecting man. It involves the selfish principles of his nature, as well as his affections and his sense of religious duty. The school for the poor, on the other hand, addresses chiefly his moral and religious sentiments, leaving his self-interest far in the rear. Experience shows that these emotions do not suffice to induce the rich to provide sufficiently for the physical wants of the poor, and, in consequence, Parliament has enacted poor-laws. Why, then, should we rely on them for providing for a not less clamant mental destitution?

The dogmas are obstructing educational progress in still another direction. They are depriving society of the full beneficial use of the Sunday. Their adherents insist that that day shall be devoted exclusively to hearing the dogmas preached, and to practising the solemnities they inculcate. One whole day of rest in seven is, to a toil-worn people, an inestimable boon, the necessity of which is clearly proclaimed by the constitution of our organism; and if judiciously employed, it may be rendered a grand instrument of civilisation. If Nature is a Divine Institution, and if it teaches rules of practical conduct to men, what a precious day may Sunday become when it shall be devoted in an

adequate measure to the exposition of these rules and of the wonderful structures and arrangements of Nature on which they are founded! How gratifying to all our faculties, to the wants of which they are adapted by Divine wisdom and goodness! And how fruitful in benefits to the mind and body of man!

But under the thralldom of the dogmas all this instruction, if given on Sundays, is regarded as sin, and society is excluded from the advantages of receiving it on that day—the only one set apart for mental improvement. The laborious inhabitants of our large towns who cannot travel in quest of the elements of this instruction and enjoyment have had these brought to them by the philanthropy of a few enlightened men, in the form of parks, museums, and collections of works of art, all calculated not only to recreate a wearied body and brain, but to furnish captivating texts from which the most salutary and elevating practical lessons may be drawn. God has bestowed on us faculties of Melody and Time; has endowed wood, steel, brass, and the air with qualities exquisitely fitting them to minister to their gratification, and has given us constructive talents enabling us to combine and apply these materials to the production of sounds capable of soothing us in sorrow, of inspiring us with gay and cheerful emotions, of rousing us to fervid action, or of lifting up our whole being in wrapt devotion to Him, the Giver of all good.

If benevolent design can be proved to human apprehension, here is evidence of it in abundance. Yet the adherents of the dogmas petition the Legislature, and successfully too, to shut up all these museums and collections of works of art, and to oppose musical performances in the public parks on Sundays. They claim the whole of that day to themselves. But under their teaching and preaching there is scarcely any social progress. Their dogmas are stereotyped, and ever the same; and I can bear testimony,

that for fifty years I attended churches, and after the first four or five, when everything was new, I rarely received any addition to my knowledge; and it is to maintain the interminable repetition of such doctrines that God, His works, His wisdom, and His lessons, so prolifically abounding in Nature, must be thrust aside as profane, unprofitable, and unfitted for the day set apart by society for rest, devotion, recreation, and instruction in things that are Divine!

If the dogmas were removed or modified, and if a more rational interpretation of the Bible were introduced, and the elements of science and the practical rules of conduct they dictate were taught in schools as God's revelations for our guidance, we should come prepared to hear the same sublime and soul-elevating instruction extended and enforced every Sunday from the pulpit; and it appears to me that the beneficial consequences to society would be incalculably great. Progress would never cease; monotony would be the fault of sloth and incapacity alone; and no man of average mental endowments could truly say at the close of fifty years of such preaching, I "am no wiser and little better than I was at the beginning."

The unreasonableness of the oppression exercised by the adherents of the dogmas over society in regard to the enjoyment of these sources of improvement and happiness on Sundays is the more striking when we consider on what it is founded. From infancy, certain interpretations of the Fourth Commandment have been entwined in their minds with their religious emotions, and have become sacred in their estimation. Wholly unconscious that the sacred and religious character of the notions *has been given to them by training*, they regard them as infallible Divine truths.

The inhabitants of Continental Europe, on the other hand, holding the same Commandment in their hands, put a different interpretation on the words, and, under the influence of *their training*, they regard *that interpretation* as

the sound one, and they act on it. Nevertheless, our dogmatists seem incapable of conceiving that these other opinions can possibly be true; and, not satisfied with unbounded liberty to act on their own impressions, they insist on *forcing* these on their countrymen! They not only refuse to listen on Sundays to God's teaching in Nature, but they prohibit their equals from enjoying this unspeakable pleasure and advantage.

Finally—In all ages and countries, religious teachers have succeeded in persuading their own flocks that only *their doctrines* constitute true religion, are capable of supporting the mind in affliction, and are certain to lead to salvation; and laymen, when trained from infancy under such impressions, really feel no religion in their souls, and cannot, even by their understandings, conceive any to exist that is calculated to produce these effects, except that which is embodied in their own tenets. When, therefore, a doctrine, be it that of election, or that of the fall of man, or any other (however uncertain in its foundation, and vehemently disputed by other sects), which has been woven into the mind of an individual as the only foundation of *his* hopes and consolations, happens to be subverted, *he* is really deprived, *pro tempore*, of his *religion*, and all its accompanying advantages and enjoyments; for *he* has *no religion* unconnected with belief in the dogmas which have perished. Such believers are as sensitive to every doubt thrown on their faith as they would be to an attack on their lives; and if they are not strong-minded, or are past the middle period of life, they only obey the law of their nature in feeling and thinking in this manner.

Were it likely that any of them would peruse these pages, I should be most unwilling to disturb their tranquillity. On the contrary, I should refer them to the case of Rammohun Roy's mother, and encourage them to hold fast by the faith which gives them support and consolation.

Though convinced that his Christian doctrines were true, she could not throw off the shackles of idolatrous customs. "Rammohun," she said to him, before she set out on her last pilgrimage to the Temple of Juggernath, "you are right; but I am a weak woman, and am grown too old to give up these observances, which are a comfort to me." She maintained them with the most self-denying devotion. She would not allow a female servant to accompany her, or any other provision to be made for her comfort, or even support, on her journey; and when at Juggernath, she engaged in sweeping the temple of the idol. There she spent the remainder of her life—nearly a year, if not more; and there she died.*

When Melancthon paid a visit to his mother in her old age, she asked, "What am I to believe amidst so many different opinions of the present day?" To which he answered, "Go on, believe and pray as you now do and have done before, and do not disturb yourself about the disputes and controversies of the times."†

* "Review of the Labours, Opinions, and Character of Rajah Rammohun Roy," by Lant Carpenter, LL.D. London, 1833.

† "Life of Melancthon," by Francis Augustus Cox, A.M. 2nd Edition, p. 281.

CHAPTER XIII.

CONCLUSION.—THE REFORMED FAITH.

IN reference to the present condition and the future prospects of the Religion of Christendom, the fundamental point to be determined appears to me to be—Whether the world, as it now exists, is merely the wreck of a better system, or an Institution? If it is the former, I leave to other hands the task of mending its disjointed parts, and educating from them whatever good they can be made to yield. If it is an Institution, then, as before remarked,* it will be our duty and our interest to regard it with respect as the design of its Author, to try to discover its plan, and to conform to its laws. With this view we may approach the study of it in the following order :—

Human nature will constitute the central point of our investigations : because the adaptations of the world to our capacities, wants, and desires cannot be understood while the latter are unknown. If the views of man's nature stated above be well founded, physiology will form one grand source from which this information will be derived.

If we find evidence that man is constitutionally a religious being, then we shall see a firm foundation in Nature for religion : and if we discover in him moral faculties, we shall perceive also an indestructible basis for morality.

These two points being fixed, the next question will be—Whether Nature is constituted in such a relationship to our religious faculties as to inspire us intuitively with belief

* See Chapter VI., page 83.

in the existence of a supernatural Power and Intelligence whom we call God? If this question be answered in the affirmative, we shall then be led to view our own constitution and that of the external world as institutions proceeding from this supernatural Power, and under this conviction our duties will become obvious.*

If we desire to be healthy and to live long, we shall inquire into the conditions on which He has been pleased to dispense these advantages. If we desire to possess the necessaries, elegancies, and beneficial luxuries that contribute, by His appointment, to the enjoyment of life, we shall try to discover and to fulfil the further conditions on which He offers to us these advantages. If we wish to live in the society of intelligent, moral, religious, industrious, and happy men, we shall inquire into and fulfil the social duties on which He has made these boons to depend. Finally, if we desire to improve our whole being to its highest attainable point of perfection, and to raise our souls to communion with their Divine Author, we shall acquire and carry into practice the kind of knowledge, the morality, and the religion which he has rendered indispensable to our highest state of existence on earth.

These are not Utopian and impracticable ideas : for, be it observed, if the world *is* an Institution, and man's faculties are adapted to it, *there must be* divinely appointed ways of gratifying these powers; and the corollary seems evident that man must be capable of finding them out, and complying with their requirements, when he shall seriously apply his endowments to this end.

Our next aim should be to discover the qualities, agencies, and relations of natural objects. These exist and act under divinely imposed laws, which we call the Laws of Nature. As we cannot alter the qualities, suspend their action, or

* See Chapter IV., page 54.

prevent the consequences which have been attached to it, our chief duty in regard to them will be to investigate them, and to discover everything that can be known regarding them. This is the aim of scientific inquiry as now conducted : and the elucidation of the qualities and agencies of natural objects should continue to be pursued on purely scientific principles, for the sake of the knowledge which it affords, without, in the first instance, any attempt to apply it to moral and religious purposes. But the Divine origin of Nature should be constantly inculcated, and all our investigations should be conducted in a reverential spirit.

In the next place, all the thoroughly ascertained facts concerning the qualities and agencies of Nature should be surveyed in their relations to man. When they are compared with his position, structure, wants, capacities, and desires, it will be seen that highly instructive rules of conduct are dictated to his understanding by Divine wisdom in these qualities, agencies, and relations. Examples of this fact are given in the preceding pages.

Now, I respectfully maintain that these rules, when correctly inferred, *are Divine Laws*, because the things from which they are deduced are Divine Institutions, and because obedience to them *is enforced by the consequences* attached to them, which man can neither alter nor evade. Here, then, we have Divine law and Divine discipline combined. To render these rules moral in our minds, we require only to entwine them from infancy with our natural moral emotions ; and to render them religious, to present them habitually to our religious emotions as Divine, and train our whole faculties to reverence and obey them.

If, by training, the doctrines of Calvinism quoted on pages 107—109, and the dancing evolutions of the Shakers described on page 126, have been invested with sacred qualities, have become religious truths and solemn ceremonies of Divine worship in the minds of large classes of

good and intelligent people, why should we doubt that rules which can be demonstrated to be Divine may be made to assume a moral and religious character, when proper means shall be used to communicate to them that sanctity which they inherently possess? The low estimate which is now formed of them, as rules of prudence, but not of moral or religious obligation, appears to me to arise solely from the misdirection of our moral and religious emotions to other objects, and from the false light in which we have been taught to view man and the world.

In the reformed faith, a distinction will be made between Religion and Theology. Religion will rest on the sentiments of Veneration, Hope, and Wonder as its basis, and will be recognised as emotional in its nature: its elements being reverence, admiration, and faith. It will be seen that by training, these emotions may be directed to almost any objects or doctrines: which, by being closely associated with them, assume a sacred or religious character. Hence, by such training, all truth conducive to human happiness may be rendered religious.

Theology will be referred to the intellectual faculties and their organs as its basis: and these will not permit any objects or doctrines to be associated with the religious emotions which they cannot comprehend and trace to Divine authority. The intellect will not pretend to comprehend the nature of God, but will recognise His existence, such of His attributes as it sees manifested, and also His will, as revealed in His works: and it will compose a theology out of these elements, will associate them with the religious emotions, and thus constitute a religion. Forms will be invented to give expression to this religion, and to teach it to the people.

Morality will be recognised as resting on the sentiments of Benevolence and Conscientiousness as its peculiar basis, using the intellect to give it form in precepts and laws, and

to direct us in its practical applications. It will include the proper use of all the other faculties. It will not be viewed as dependent on religion for its foundation, but be regarded as a co-ordinate supreme tribunal, having authority in cooperation with the intellect and religious emotions, to direct all the faculties towards their proper objects—itsself receiving from the latter a sacred and religious character. There will then be no accepted religious duty at variance with morality, and no morality that is discordant with religion.

The Desire of Perfection will be recognised as resting on Ideality, which, combined with the intellect, will prompt to constant improvement in all arts and sciences, and, combined with the moral and religious sentiments, will give an intense pleasure in elevating human nature, and applying all its powers to their highest objects.

“The higher life,” under the reformed faith, will consist in the zealous endeavour to improve every organ and faculty in ourselves and others, and to direct them to their highest uses. Intellect will investigate the means by which these ends can be accomplished, and it will recognise the order of the Divine government as its rule and guide. The moral and religious sentiments will sanctify and elevate the results of the researches of the intellect, and also the labour of the hands and the head in giving them practical effect. The grace or the goodwill of God will be recognised as pervading all objects and beings, inviting us to study and apply their qualities to their proper uses, with unhesitating faith that increase of knowledge and obedience will be accompanied by augmentation of happiness and holiness.

It is in vain to object that hitherto natural religion has been barren. It has had no key to the real principles of the Divine government, and could not become practical. It may accomplish more when this key has been discovered.

A great revolution in human perception, judgment, and

action will follow the general diffusion of the reformed faith. The selfishness, vices, and crimes through which individuals and nations at present too frequently seek to attain happiness will be recognised as follies as well as offences: and every individual will find that the most effectual way to promote his own well-being is that which likewise advances the improvement and enjoyment of his fellows.

In regard to his future destiny: under the reformed faith he will rely with confidence and resignation on the goodness of that Divine Power which has called him into existence here, and bestowed on him so many admirable enjoyments. He will claim nothing as a right, but will hope all as a boon.

Whose duty will it be to deduce, expound, and render sacred these Divine rules of conduct, and apply them to the promotion of human well-being, morality, and religion? In my opinion, it will be that of the clergyman, the moral philosopher, and the teacher.

What a glorious profession that of a clergyman will then become! With an immovable and indestructible foundation for morality and religion; with a knowledge of man's admirable capacities and high aspirations; with an understanding cleared of mists and prejudices, and alive to the perception of Divine power, wisdom, and goodness radiating from every object; with an ear open to the precepts which that wisdom is teaching; with benevolent, just, and reverential emotions excited to intensity by the contemplation of this assemblage of Divine gifts, and the wide world before him in which to apply all this knowledge, and to expand these emotions in diffusing truth, happiness, and a spirit of obedience to God: he will occupy a position which even angels might envy.

The priests, temples, churches, creeds, catechisms, and confessions, which fill such large and conspicuous positions

in the history of all ages and nations, are the forms in which the moral and religious emotions have welled forth and embodied themselves on earth. Far, therefore, from looking on them with indifference, I see in them manifestations of the highest human endowments, in many instances straying for want of light, but still holy in their aspirations; and I rejoice in the religious fervour and agitation of our own day, as indicative of the heaving of these sublime emotions labouring to cast off the load of errors and superstitions which now oppresses them.

Nor need the Bible form any obstacle to this consummation. It appears to me that with far less violence than has been done to it in framing the Westminster Confession of Faith, a new creed could be formed, every point of which would harmonise with a sound Natural Religion, adding from the Scriptures doctrines beyond the reach of reason, but not contradicting it. From all I have learned of the progress of opinion among thinking men who have studied the subject, the conclusion is forced on me that within the next fifty years this must be done, otherwise Christianity, as now taught, will perish. Were this course followed, every Church would become a focus of Divine light, radiating blessings on humanity, and every school a vestibule to the Church.

In the school, Physiology and the Laws of Life and Health,* and Social Economy, or an exposition of man's position and duties as the administrator of external nature, and of the natural laws which regulate his success or his failure in his trade, profession, or other employment, should form the first elements of scientific instruction. I have assisted in teaching these branches of knowledge to children from ten to fourteen years of age, and in leading their understandings to deduce from them rules of practical

* See Appendix, No. V.

conduct, which they recognised as Divine injunctions or commands ; and I can testify that the interest and effect of the lessons was greatly enhanced by this appeal to their moral and religious emotions.

The failure of most attempts to support continued interest in scientific lectures in Mechanics' Institutes is now generally recognised and lamented, but the cause of it has been little thought of. It appears to me discernible. Pure science addresses the intellectual faculties only. In the working classes in general these have not been cultivated, either in their school instruction or practically in their trades. They come to the lecture-room, therefore, untrained to intellectual exertion, and many of them weary with toil ; and indifference to abstract science is the natural consequence of their condition.

But their moral and religious emotions possess far greater power and activity than their intellectual faculties ; and, judging from the analogy of children, I should expect that they would listen with profound and sustained interest to courses of lectures based on clear scientific expositions of the structure, qualities, and modes of action of natural objects, accompanied by demonstrations of the rules of conduct which their Divine Author, through them, dictates to us for our guidance. By appeals to their moral and religious emotions, and a convincing elucidation of the practical bearing of these laws on their well-being and improvement, the lessons would probably become living fountains of instruction and enjoyment.

If all this is not a dream, the day will come when these Divine rules for the guidance of our conduct, with the basis in science on which they are founded, will be taught in every school, preached from every pulpit, promulgated by the press, enforced by the law, and supported by an overwhelming public opinion ; and then the incapable and the ill-constituted in brain and body, whose

actions now form the great afflictions of society, will be protected, restrained, and guided by social power, directed by benevolence, intelligence, and justice, and their crimes and sufferings will be circumscribed. Under the illuminating influence and discipline of the Divine law, Hell will probably appear unnecessary, Heaven will be realised on earth, and Man will prove himself by his conduct to be better fitted for an immortality of glory than he has ever hitherto been.

Some religious sects rely on a millennium, in which human nature will appear in the perfection of its powers, and in possession of its highest enjoyments. This hope appears to me to spring from the insatiable desires of Ideality for perfection, and of Benevolence, Veneration, and Conscientiousness for the universal prevalence of happiness, truth, piety, and justice. The aspirations may be clothed in fanciful forms, but in themselves they are real; and Nature appears to me to point in a similar direction.

The opinion advocated in this work, that a Divine government is discernible in Nature, is gaining strength on public conviction. On page 13, I have cited a letter on this subject from Lord Palmerston to the Presbytery of Edinburgh; and in a speech delivered by his Lordship in Manchester, in November, 1856, he is reported to have said:—"If a man were to enter a town of some foreign country where there were laws the violation of which was attended with pain, imprisonment, or, it may be, with death, would he not be deemed mad if he did not take the earliest opportunity to make himself acquainted with these enactments, so that he might avoid the penalties attached to their infringement? Yet there are laws of Nature applicable to the daily pursuits of men, which, if not attended to, inflict bodily pain in the form of diseases, imprisonment in the shape of the loss of

corporeal powers, and even death, through the neglect of those sanitary conditions on which life depends. How important, then, it is that the working classes should be made aware of those natural laws and regulations which are indispensable to their own welfare, and to that of their families."

His Royal Highness Prince Albert * is reported to have expressed the opinion, that "Man is approaching a more complete fulfilment of that great and sacred mission which he has to perform in this world. His reason being created after the image of God, he has to use it to discover the laws by which the Almighty governs His creation ; and, by making these laws his standard of action, to conquer Nature to his use—himself a Divine instrument. Science discovers these laws of power, motion, and transformation ; industry applies them to the raw matter which the earth yields us in abundance, but which becomes valuable only by knowledge ; art teaches us the immutable laws of beauty and symmetry, and gives to our productions forms in accordance with them."

Again, in a speech delivered at Birmingham in November, 1855, His Royal Highness is reported to have said :—
"The study of the laws by which the Almighty governs the universe is our bounden duty. Of these laws our great academies and seats of education have, rather arbitrarily, selected only two spheres or groups (as I may call them) as essential parts of our national education—the laws which regulate quantities and proportions, which form the subject of mathematics ; and the laws regulating the expression of our thoughts through the medium of language—that is to say, grammar, which finds its purest expression in the classical languages.

"These laws are most important branches of knowledge :

* At the Mansion House, 21st March, 1850.

their study trains and elevates the mind. But they are not the only ones ; there are others which we cannot disregard—which we cannot do without. There are, for instance, the laws governing the human mind and its relations to the Divine Spirit—the subjects of logic and metaphysics. There are those which govern our bodily nature and its connection with the soul—the subjects of physiology and psychology ; those which govern human society and the relations between man and man—the subjects of politics, jurisprudence, and political economy ; and many others.”

In contemplating the endowments of man, the provision made in Nature for his happiness, and the order of God’s providence for encouraging him to work out his own improvement and elevation, the intelligent mind thrills with vivid emotions of love, gratitude, and admiration of their great Author. A “present Deity” is felt to be no longer a figure of speech or a flight of poetry, but a positive and operating reality. We not only feel that we “live, and move, and have our being” in God, but we become acquainted with the means through which His power, wisdom, and goodness affect us, and discover that we are invited, as His moral and intelligent creatures, to co-operate in the fulfilment of His designs.

The beautiful exclamations of King David, “If I climb up into heaven, Thou art there ; if I go down to hell, Thou art there also ; if I take the wings of the morning, and remain in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there also shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me,” are felt to be expressions of a living truth ; and man takes his true station as the interpreter and administrator of Nature under the guidance of Nature’s God.

APPENDIX.

NO. I.—ON THE WORSHIP OF THE SHAKERS.

(Referred to on p. 126.)

As some readers may have a difficulty in believing that the dancing evolutions and singing of the Shakers, described on page 126, were really understood by themselves to constitute Divine worship, I present the following extracts from an account of their tenets, published by Seth Wells and Calvin Green, of New Lebanon, in the State of New York. It appears in "The Cyclopædia of Religious Denominations":—

"Concerning their mode of worship. This subject is generally greatly misunderstood. The people of this Society do not believe that any external performance whatever, without the sincere devotion of the heart, with all the feelings of the soul, in devotion and praise to the Creator of all their powers and faculties, can be any acceptable worship to Him who looks at the heart. But in a united assembly, a unity of exercise in acts of devotion to God is desirable; for harmony is beautiful, and appears like the order of heaven. It will be difficult to describe all the various modes of exercise given in the worship of God at different times; because the operations of the Spirit are so various, that even the leaders are unable to tell beforehand what manner will be given by the Spirit in the next meeting. Yet, in a regular meeting, where nothing extraordinary appears, they sometimes exercise in a regular dance, while formed in straight lines, and sometimes in a regular march around the room, in harmony with regular

songs sung on the occasion. Shouting and clapping of hands, and many other operations, are frequently given, all which have a tendency to keep the assembly alive, with their hearts and all their senses and feelings devoted to the service of God.

“Our benevolent Creator has given us hands and feet as well as tongues, which we are able to exercise in our own services. And where a people are united in one spirit, we know of no reason why a unity of exercise in the service of God should not be attained, so as to give the devotion of every active power of soul and body as a free-will offering to the God of all goodness who has given us these faculties. When the Israelites were delivered from their Egyptian bondage, they praised God with songs and dances. (See *Exod. chap. xv.*) This was figurative of the deliverance of spiritual Israel from the bondage of sin. This dancing before the Lord was predicted by the ancient prophets. (See *Jer. chap. xxxi.*) See also the account of David’s dancing before the ark of the Lord. (See *2 Sam. vi. 14.*) This is considered figurative of the spiritual ark of salvation, before which, according to the faith of God’s true witnesses, thousands and millions will yet rejoice in the dance. See also the return of the prodigal son. (*Luke xv. 25.*) We notice these figurative representations and prophetic declarations as evidently pointing to a day of greater and more glorious light which in those days was veiled in futurity, and if this is not the commencement of such a day, then where shall we look for it?”

This forms a striking example of the doctrine maintained in the text, that almost any ceremony may be rendered sacred and religious by being entwined from infancy with the religious emotions.

NO. II.—HEAVEN AND HELL. (Referred to on p. 155.)

THE following descriptions of Heaven and Hell are extracted from “A First Catechism for Children, to assist Parents and

Teachers." By Joseph Hay, A.M., Minister, Arbroath. New Edition. Edinburgh: William Oliphant and Sons; David Robertson, Glasgow; William Curry and Co., Dublin; and Hamilton, Adams and Co., London. Price One Penny. It is extensively taught to the young in schools in Scotland.

HEAVEN.

Where will the righteous go after they are judged? Into life eternal.

Why is this life called eternal? Because it will last for ever.

Will they never die any more? No; "there shall be no more death."

Will they ever be sick in heaven? No; there shall be "neither sorrow, nor crying, nor any more pain."—Rev. xxi. 4.

Why will there be no more sickness nor death there? Because they will have no more sin.—Isaiah xxxiii. 24.

Will they ever grow old in heaven? No; they will be like the angels of God.—Luke xx. 36; Mark xvi. 5.

What company will they have in heaven? The company of God, of holy angels, and of all good men.—Heb. xii. 22–24.

What will they be employed in? They will serve God day and night in His temple.—Rev. vii. 15.

Will they ever be wearied in His service? No; it will be rest to them.—Heb. iv. 9.

Will they be very happy in heaven? Yes; they will always sing the new song.—Rev. v. 9–10.

What honour will they have there? They will be kings and priests unto God.

What glory will they have? The glory of Christ.—Rev. iii. 21.

What will give light to them in heaven? The glory of God and the Lamb.—Rev. xxi. 23.

Will there be any night in heaven? No; “there will be no night there.”—Rev. xxii. 5.

HELL.

Where will the bad people go after they are judged? Into everlasting punishment.

With whom will they be punished in hell? With the devil and his angels.

What will they be tormented with? With fire and brimstone.—Rev. xxi. 8.

Will they have any rest from their torments? No; they will have no rest day nor night.—Rev. xvi. 10.

Will the pain of their torments be very great? Yes; they will gnaw their tongues with pain.—Rev. xv. 10.

Will they cry out under their pain? Yes; with weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.—Matt. xiii. 50.

Will they get any relief from these torments? No: not a drop of water to cool their tongue.—Luke xv. 24–26.

Will their torments ever come to an end? No; their worm dieth not, and their fire shall never be quenched.—Mark ix. 44.

Will their torments make them any better? No; they will blaspheme God because of their pains and their sores, and not repent of their deeds.—Rev. xvi. 11.

Will they have any light in hell? No; it will be the blackness of darkness for ever.—Jude 13.

A girl of seven years of age, to whom this Catechism is taught, recently put this question to her mother: “Mother,” said she, “the Catechism says in one place that the bad people will have no light in hell, and in another place that they will be tormented with fire and brimstone. How can there be fire and no light? I always see light where there is fire.” Her mother could not account for this anomaly, and gave an

evasive answer. This indicated active reflective faculties in the child, and this Catechism supplied the materials, presented by the mother, and by many other evangelical Christians to their children, on which to exercise them! The same persons denounce as infidel the proposal to instruct the young in the objects and order of God's providence in Nature, which stand in the same relation to their intellects that wholesome food bears to their stomachs.

The following account of sickness and death is given in the same Catechism :—

SICKNESS AND DISEASE.

Wherefore do sickness and disease come upon both old and young? Because all have sinned.—Rom. v. 12.

What is sickness to all who are not God's people? It is punishment for their sin, and a warning to them to flee from it.

What is it to God's people? It is correction, to turn them from their sins.—Rev. iii. 19.

What will afflictions do to God's people? They will make them love and serve God more.—Ps. cxix. 67.

What will they do to bad people? Sometimes they will turn them to God.—2 Chron. xxxiii. 12, 13.

If they do not turn them to God, what will they do to them? Make them more hardened against Him.—Isaiah i. 5.

What should we do when we are sick? We should seek God, and cry to Him for help.

What help will He give us? He will heal us of our sickness or prepare us for death.

TEMPORAL DEATH.

How did death come into the world? By sin.

Wherefore do all men die? Because they have all sinned.

Why do even the youngest infants die? Because they sinned in Adam.—Rom. v. 14.

What is death to bad people? The beginning of eternal death.

What is meant by the sting of death? Its power of destroying men.—Rev. ii. 11.

What is its sting? It is sin in us, unpardoned.

To whom does death have its sting? To them who die in their sin.

What is death to good people? The beginning of eternal life.—John xi. 25, 26.

Why is there such a change on it to them? Because Christ suffered it for them and took away its sting.—1 Cor. xv. 57.

What is the death of good people like? It is like a sleep.—Acts vii. 60.

Why is it called their last enemy? Because, after it, they have no more sin nor suffering.

How many of God's people have gone to heaven without dying? Two: Enoch and Elijah.

Will all who shall ever be in the world die? No; those who are on the earth when Christ comes shall not die, but be changed.—1 Cor. xv. 51, 52.

This is called religious instruction; and for it the whole lessons for the guidance of human conduct, deducible from the Divine government of the world in Nature, are thrust aside and excluded from schools.

NO. III.—NOTE ON DR. M'COSSH'S "METHOD OF THE DIVINE GOVERNMENT."

THE Rev. James M'Cosh, LL.D., in an elaborate work on "The Method of the Divine Government, Physical and Moral," has honoured my book "On the Constitution of Man" with a long note of criticisms, chiefly in condemnation of it. The following is his concluding paragraph:—"We have so far noticed this treatise because there is an

air of extraordinary wisdom about it, which has made many regard it as superlatively profound. The author has seen and endeavoured to count the nice wheels of the machine, but has overlooked their relation to one another, and the moving power by which they have been set in motion. His views are about as profound as those of a factory-girl explaining, with looks of mysterious wisdom, to her companion who has just entered the work, the movements of some of the straps or wheels, telling her how to use them, and pointing out the danger of not attending to them. The information is all very good and useful, provided always that it be not hinted that in knowing the motion of these few wheels we know all about the machine, its end, and its mode of operation."

If I am the "factory-girl," it is to be inferred, I presume, that Dr. M'Cosh is the head engineer under God, and that, in his "Method of the Divine Government," he has elucidated far better and more extensively than I have done "all about the machine, its ends, its mode of operation, the moving power by which the wheels have been set in motion," and "their relations to one another." The reader will judge of the success of his exposition when I add that he ignores the brain and the nervous system of man as instruments in the moral government of the world!

Again, Dr. M'Cosh says: "A very little observation suffices to discover the wonderful pains which have been taken with man in creating him at first, in endowing him with bodily organs and mental faculties, in opening to him sources of knowledge, and placing a multitude of resources at his command. What high intelligence! What far-sighted sagacity! What fields, rich and fertile, placed around him, inviting to enter that he may dig for treasures and gather fruits! It does seem strange that, in endowing man with such lofty powers, God should not have furnished him with faculties to communicate directly with his Maker and his Governor."

(P. 41.) In my opinion, God communicates with man through Nature; and in Chapter V. I have pointed out that while our faculties are adapted to the constitution of this world, and it to them, and are capable of discovering the existence of God, some of His attributes and His will, in so far as it relates to ourselves, nevertheless, He may so far transcend our faculties as to render us incapable of receiving more direct communications. Man can communicate with the dog, because they have some faculties in common, but he cannot communicate with the oyster, because its powers of comprehension are too far below his faculties to render this possible.

Dr. M'Cosh's view is different. "Now," says he, "combine these two classes of facts, the apparent distance of God, and yet His nearness intimated in various ways, His seeming unconcern, and yet constant watchfulness; and we see only one consistent conclusion which can be evolved: *that God regards man as a criminal, from whom He must withdraw Himself, but whom He must not allow to escape.*" (P. 45.) If I rightly understand these words, they imply that the conclusion at which Dr. M'Cosh has arrived from his study of "The Method of the Divine Government" is, that this world is a great prison, the human race a collection of criminals, and God the Head-Jailer and Executioner! Whatever his meaning may be, his words grate harshly on my sentiment of Veneration when applied to the Supreme Being. Dr. M'Cosh was a minister of the Free Church of Scotland, and apparently he holds fast by its dogmas, and sees man and Nature only in the light in which they are represented in the Catechism quoted on page 213.

NO. IV.—SPEECH OF LORD JOHN RUSSELL ON TEACHING
NATURAL THEOLOGY IN COMMON SCHOOLS. (Referred to on p. 189.)

LORD JOHN RUSSELL, in a speech delivered by him in the House of Commons on 4th April, 1853, in introducing a

scheme of National Education, is reported by *The Times* to have said, "The scheme" (of giving secular instruction in schools and omitting sectarian religion) "is developed by many of the writers on the subject, especially by Mr. Combe, whose name, no doubt, will be well remembered by the House. What he holds out is this—that very imperfect views are taken with respect to religious subjects; that very often those rules which the Almighty has laid down for our conduct in this life, so far from being followed, are wilfully or blindly set at nought; and that it is the business of the schoolmaster to teach those laws of social economy and of physiology by which the people of this kingdom may be better instructed in conducting themselves, so as to enable them to avoid that course of vice and misery into which too many of them fall. It will, however, be obvious to the House that this is a proposal different from what was the apparent proposal, as at first put forth, of the advocates of the secular system. The proposal, as it stands nakedly in the first declaration of their views, amounts to this—give exclusively secular instruction in the schools, and leave religion to be taught elsewhere by the ministers of religion. The second view of the subject, however, is this: there is a natural theology which should be taught in the schools, but Christianity should not be taught there. Now, that appears to me a view certainly more extensive, and undoubtedly far more dangerous, than that which the advocates of secular education first set out with. My belief is that the people of this country acted with a right instinct when, upon associating together and devoting their money for the purpose of education, they declared openly that there should be a religious training in the schools, and that that religious training should comprise all the great doctrines of Christianity."

Lord John Russell commits an error if he means that while the advocates of a purely secular education proposed that Christianity should be taught by the clergy, or by

teachers authorised by them, in a separate school, I proposed to exclude such teaching altogether. In none of my published works does any such proposition appear, but the reverse. I have advocated teaching Christianity in separate schools, and I do so still; because the people are Christian, and I should outrage every principle of religious liberty and common sense should I propose that persons whose highest hopes and fears are bound up in the Christian religion should in any way be precluded from having it taught to their children.

The real state of the question is this. When purely secular instruction in one school, and sectarian religious instruction in another, were proposed, the religious public objected, "In your secular schools you propose 'a godless education.'" When we answered, "Nature is a Divine institution, and in these schools we shall teach God's natural laws established to regulate human well-being, leaving you to teach sectarian dogmas in a separate school," Lord John replied, "This is far more dangerous!" More dangerous than what? Apparently, from the context, than the purely secular instruction, which, however, many had denounced as "godless." Lord John appears to me, by implication, to deny that Nature is a Divine Institution, that it reveals rules for the guidance of human conduct, and that these rules are entitled to our reverence as Divine.

[A great and beneficent change has been effected in the principles on which grants of public money are made to schools by the English Education Act of 1870. By the seventh clause it is enacted that "It shall not be required, as a condition of any child being admitted into or continuing in any public elementary school, that he shall attend or abstain from attending any Sunday-school, or any place of religious worship, or that he shall attend any religious observance, or any instruction in religious subjects in the school or elsewhere, from which observance or instruction he may be withdrawn by his parent, or that he shall, if withdrawn by his

parent, attend the school on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his parent belongs: The time or times during which any religious observance or instruction in religious subjects is given at any meeting of the school shall be either at the beginning or at the end, or at the beginning and at the end of such meeting, and shall be inserted in a time-table to be approved by the Education Department, and to be kept permanently and conspicuously affixed in every school-room; and any scholar may be withdrawn by his parent from such observance or instruction without forfeiting any of the other benefits of the school: The school shall be open at all times to the inspection of any of Her Majesty's inspectors; so, however, that it shall be no part of the duties of such inspector to inquire into any instruction in religious subjects given at such school, or to examine any scholar therein in religious knowledge, or in any religious subject or book." And, by the 97th clause, it is enacted "that no parliamentary grant shall be made to any school in respect of any instruction in religious subjects."—ED.]

NO. V.—THE TEACHING OF PHYSIOLOGY IN COMMON SCHOOLS. (Referred to on p. 205.)

Medical Opinion on the Importance of Teaching Physiology and the Laws of Health in Common Schools.

"OUR opinion having been requested as to the advantage of making the Elements of Human Physiology, or a general knowledge of the laws of health, a part of the education of youth, we, the undersigned, have no hesitation in giving it strongly in the affirmative. We are satisfied that much of the sickness from which the working classes at present suffer might be avoided; and we know that the best directed efforts to benefit them by medical treatment are often greatly impeded, and sometimes entirely frustrated, by their ignorance and their neglect of the conditions upon which health neces-

sarily depends. We are, therefore, of opinion that it would greatly tend to prevent sickness and to promote soundness of body and mind were the Elements of Physiology, in its application to the preservation of health, made a part of general education; and we are convinced that such instruction may be rendered most interesting to the young, and may be communicated to them with the utmost facility and propriety in the ordinary schools, by properly instructed schoolmasters." (Subscribed by upwards of sixty eminent physicians and surgeons.)

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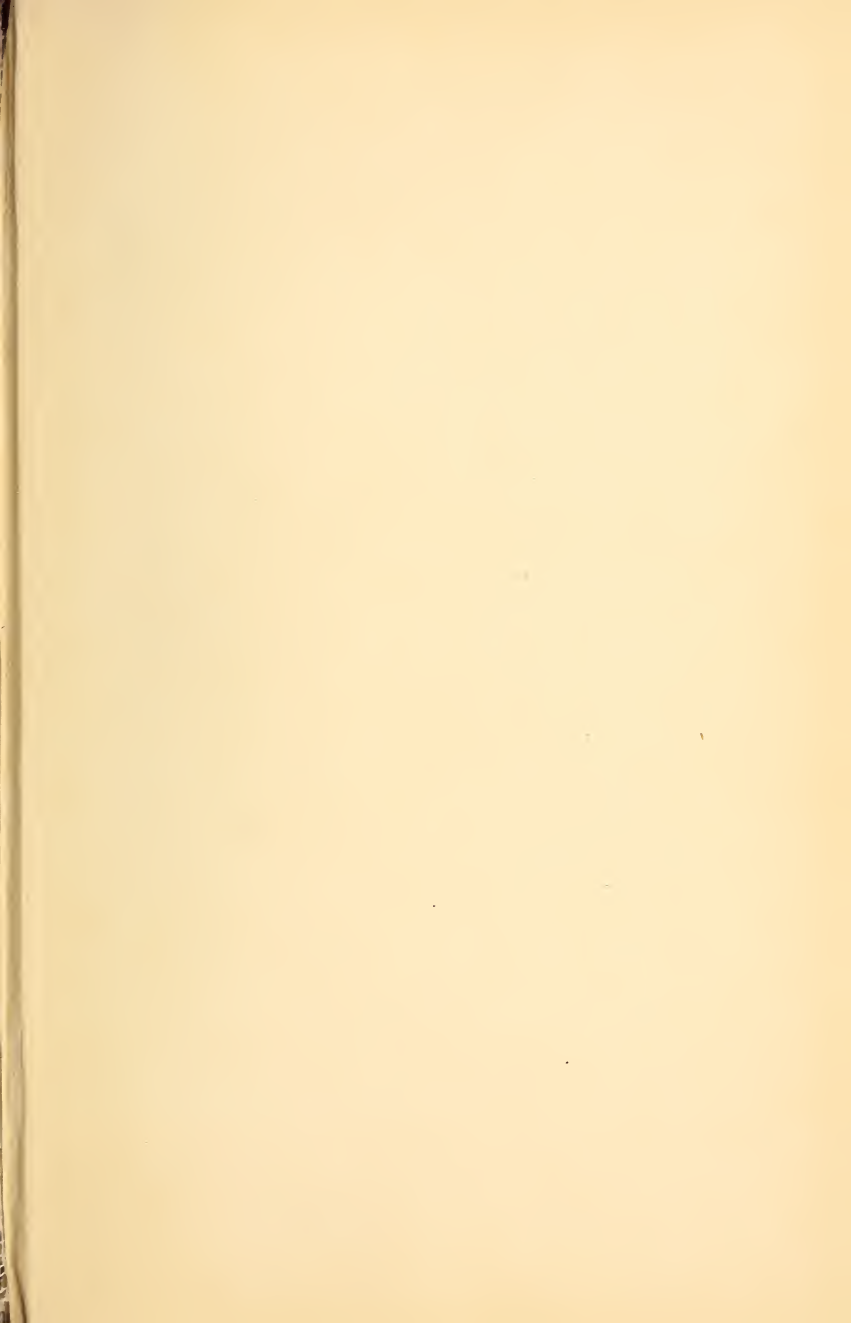
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