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ARTICLE V.

GLADSTONE'S EDITION OF BISHOP BUTLER'S WORKS.

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THIS new edition of Joseph Butler's writings will mark an epoch in religious philosophy; for this author is secure in the position at the head of all uninspired writers on the natural evidences of a future life. There has been a disposition, on the part of shallow doubters, to decry his method of analogy, to undervalue his line of argument, and to declare his conclusions unwarranted. Carping critics make merry over his crabbed style, and refute to their own satisfaction a chain of reasoning which they manifestly never understood. Science pronounces his method obsolete, while patronizingly lauding the nobility of his character and the excellence of his motives. But the thoughtful inquirer who listens to conscience as the voice of God, and who sees in the course of human experience the counterpart of that scheme disclosed in Revelation, is drawn to Butler's reasoning, because it interprets to him, as no other merely human author is able to do, the facts of his present life and his hopes of an immortal existence. Hence, whether the object of sneering contempt which is affected most when conscious of its weakness in argument, or of reverence from those able to appreciate his greatness, Butler calmly unfolds his proof of our continued being as parts of a life infinite in growth and direction.

Though the "Sermons" and "Analogy" have been published more than a century and a half, and have been re-

printed oftener, no doubt, than any other argumentative work on religion, they have never till now found a competent editor. Some portions, it is true, have been well edited by those in sympathy with the author's purpose, and with the ability to comprehend his arguments. But all such partial attempts failed in that they did not view his writings as a unit. No author ever exhibited a more unified system or more concatenated arrangement of its parts. The "Sermons" consider man in his relations to his neighbor, with whom he is united by common bonds of interest and sympathy, as belonging to a scheme which has a partial display on earth, but will have its full realization under the same Lawgiver in heaven. The "Analogy" proves that the life here is a part of the same scheme which embraces both worlds. This is done by showing that the moral law written in the conscience is realized in the inherent nature of sin to punish itself, and of virtue to produce happiness and thus reward itself. This is the coördinate of that law revealed in the Holy Scriptures. But while the tendency of these opposite principles is to effect these results, the time for such consummation is too short; and therefore to complete the scheme a future life is absolutely necessary. These doctrines constitute the end and aim of Butler's system, and are never out of sight for a moment. But all previous editions have been deficient in that they did not grasp his purpose as a whole or make it sufficiently prominent.

It is well that Mr. Gladstone has undertaken this work. Common consent will pronounce him the most competent for the task of all who have lived since Butler's day. In breadth of intellect, in knowledge of men, in experience with all the affairs of life, whether moral, political, or religious, the world has scarcely ever seen his equal. It is fitting that a man whose life has been under the guidance of an enlightened conscience, who in himself exhibits the supremest results of habitual faith in a world to come, should devote

his last days to the edition of this work, which, in a greater degree than any other that has ever been written, combines the natural proofs for a future life, and by showing their perfect agreement with divine revelation proves that these two kinds of evidence are counterparts of each other.

Mr. Gladstone shows in every line of his editorial work that he is in complete sympathy with the temper and purpose of Butler. He handles the great author with a reverent touch. Nothing could be in more admirable taste than his quotation on the title-page: "Cujus sacra fero ingenti perculsus amore."

The peculiarity which first fixes our attention in this edition is the division into sections. The original arrangement of the author in long chapters, with scarcely a break in the severely logical discussion of his great themes, rendered both his Sermons and the Analogy repulsive at first glance, and difficult to those determined to wrestle with the arguments. This difficulty Mr. Gladstone has most happily met. It would seem that Butler's statements could not be condensed. But the chapters and long sections have been broken up into convenient paragraphs, and headings have been prefixed containing the quintessence of the argument in a few simple words, which are a key to the whole, and may be taken in at a glance as the complete summary of the reasoning.

These are the hidings of Mr. Gladstone's power. His mastery of the contents is perfect, and he gives a reproduction of the matter digested anew by a genius equal to the original. This division, with the appropriate head-lines, will make Butler accessible to many who would have been repelled from undertaking to read him, and render the task easy for such as determine to master the contents. The notes and discussions of controverted points are fewer than one could desire; seeing that so much of value has been written since Butler's time by able authors who have traversed the subjects of Apologetics and Finality. The notes

furnished are models of clear exposition, and show, both by what they say and leave unsaid, that the editor's encyclopedic learning is under the control of a judgment which can effectually winnow, and his knowledge in reserve is greater than that displayed. We look for a complete exposition of his views in the remaining, the third, volume, which is soon to appear. There is a wide field for Mr. Gladstone's wonderful powers, both in the discussions which have arisen in the border-land of science and religion, and in the persistent attacks made by agnosticism and other forms of unbelief, which have recently placed themselves so much in evidence. The trenchant criticism which has lately marked Mr. Gladstone's articles in the *Nineteenth Century* shows that his blade is as keen, and his claw of irony as sharp under the velvety touch, as in his most vigorous day.

This republication of Butler's works, while a sign of their power of an endless life, will also prove a great factor in its realization. Doubtless this will be the signal for a great harvest of Butlerian literature, as a kind of bicentennial of the first publication. We have seen this in the philosophical centennial of Kant in metaphysics, and are likely to witness a similar phenomenon in the religious philosophy of Bishop Joseph Butler.

Some Phases of Analogy.

The disciplinary character of the government under which we live is clearly shown by the effect which transgression of the moral law has on our physical constitution. That there is an inevitable connection between our conduct and its proper effect on our bodily welfare is as certain as the laws of causation and uniformity in the natural world. There is no such thing as chance here, any more than in the laws regulating matter controlled by physical forces. The act makes its impression on the character, or rather becomes the warp and woof of its structure. The soul is not a *tabula*

rasa on which each act makes its record, but his acts become an integral part of the man's individuality. Hence they punish and reward themselves in making their agent good or bad, and thus become the measure of his happiness or misery. It is a mistake to think that an evil act or thought can ever escape notice. For there is no concealment in nature. The declaration of our Lord, "There is nothing covered which shall not be revealed," is the counterpart by an exact analogy. As each phenomenon in the world's material history has made its record in the formation of the rocks, the plains, the seashore; in the hidden parts of the earth as well as the surface; even so the acts of a responsible creature are the expression both of what he is and what he desires to become.

This is the moral law written in the very nature of man, and therefore it is impossible for him to elude or shake off the effects of his own conduct, since they become the totality of his character. Moreover, as they make their impress on his moral nature they produce their legitimate fruit in weakening or strengthening his bodily constitution. For we cannot separate, except in thought, the instrument from the power by which it acts. Soul and body are connected together, and necessary to constitute the human individuality. They act and react upon each other, as is to be expected from their intimate association. In the normal man both mind and body are healthy, and the law under which we are placed would, if obeyed always and in its integrity, preserve both in a sound condition until their appointed sojourn on earth was completed. But any infringement of that law writes its own record in the effect it has to purify and strengthen, or to corrupt and destroy. For this reason sin and disease are indissoluble. For righteousness consists in obedience to that law under which we live, and which is intended by the Supreme Lawgiver to secure our happiness. Any infringement of that law enters its protest by the pains

and weakness it produces. If the protest is heeded and the offense ceases, then the recuperative power of nature—the counterpart of divine forgiveness—is so strong that it heals the lesion. But, if persisted in, the protest becomes louder in the greater suffering, in the generation of innumerable diseases by which the vital powers of mind and body are sapped, and even a depraved nature is transmitted as a baleful inheritance after the first transgressor has destroyed himself.

That we live under a moral law which punishes or rewards the responsible actor is thus seen to be a fact as clear as any of the physical laws of science. No one can doubt this without shutting his eyes to the history of the world and the experience of each individual man. If, then, the one set of laws belongs to a scheme which works as far in all directions of space and time as we can follow their action, so also does the other. If the one continues amid all changes and successive periods of time, so by analogy will the other during all the stages of man's existence. The universe of physical and spiritual energies—or of matter and force—do act and react on each other to bring about a united result. They show unity of purpose by working in concert; and, therefore, according to all the evidence we possess, we are justified in reasoning from the one to the other by analogy. If they belong to different systems we have no proof thereof. The only way of showing this would be to argue from our ignorance and thus try to disprove a contention which is supported by all the evidence which our intelligence can discover. To call this absurdity would not describe it adequately.

Again, it may be admitted by the doubter, that analogy renders the theory probable that, if there be a future life, and the individual consciousness survive the shock of bodily dissolution, the same scheme of moral government will continue to prevail. But this continuance, says he, is the

very thing I deny; and deny it simply because there is no proof in nature to render it even probable. On the contrary, the powers of mind and body decay side by side. They cease to exist as an energy even before death. We have no knowledge of the spiritual nature, if there be such a thing, subsequently. The body disintegrates rapidly, and is resolved into its elements, so that its previous form and activity as a personality or unity entirely disappears. Where then can we find any place for analogical reasoning?

But the doubter is guilty, perhaps unconsciously, of a *petitio principii*, without any proof and against the teaching of analogy. Science comes to our aid here most effectually. The conservation of force, which was first enunciated by Galileo, though somewhat vaguely, has by successive philosophers been formulated more distinctly, and has now become the corner-stone of science. According to this principle, the matter and force of the universe have been neither increased nor diminished, while in an unceasing change—perhaps better to say interchange—they remain forever a constant quantity. These two factors are, as far as we can see, dependent on each other to produce phenomena manifest to our senses, and so give evidence of their existence. But their quantity in no way changes, however many transformations they may suffer while they are subject to our scientific tests. And there is no materialist, however uncompromising his creed, who would dare affirm that the force of any compound substance is diminished when it is dissolved or transformed in any possible way. It may be so changed that we do not know what it has become, nor are we able to follow its course any more than we can that of a disembodied spirit. But it still exists somewhere in undiminished quantity, whether potential or actual, visible or invisible. Science must then admit that the power represented by a human being in the union of body and soul is not destroyed by death. It still exists somewhere in undiminished energy.

But it may be asserted by the materialist that the personality is destroyed. The doubter admits that no force is lost in the material world. Science grants this, but only as to matter and force as physical agents. Yet if analogy avails for proving that the same law holds good in regard to the spiritual part of man as the material in their experience in this life, we must admit two things: (1) that such a power does exist, and (2) that the personality which represents it is not destroyed when the body dies. We see force transferred continually from latent to active, and *vice versa*. The coal is changed to heat, and this dissipated throughout the universe. The sun and planets are losing their heat constantly. We collect forces by chemical and mechanical processes, employ them, and then they elude our grasp. They disappear, are scattered beyond recovery, even though they exist somewhere in space. Now it will not be denied that the real agent in all physical and mechanical processes cannot be apprehended by the senses in any other way than by its effects. Phenomena are all that we can perceive. Two bodies affect each other, and motion is produced; but what causes that motion is entirely beyond our apprehension, examine it closely as we will. The processes of life begin under the proper conditions, but the energy that originates it, the growth that causes the materials to combine so as to begin the evolution of an organism that shall henceforth be self-moving, is a mysterious force which no biologist can discover. It is true that it is the whole organism which acts, but the real source of the action is the living being, which is a personality different from all the materials which it collects into itself.

In this respect it is wholly unlike all other forces. They act as they are directed by intelligence, either a Teleology which is immanent or transferred *ab extra*. We know of no design acting without a personality as its agent. If such exists in matter, we have not the remotest conception of it,

either through our own experience or any analogy from experience. Hence it is not to be assumed as a basis for any theory of material or psychical action. Whatever force then there be by the union of matter with that essence which constitutes the soul, whether this be material or spiritual, that force, when the dissolution by death takes place, either continues directed by the same personality with which it was endowed when it became a separate existence, or else it falls back into the original Power whence it derived its being. For it cannot be lost, unless the analogy derived from the conservation of force be denied.

And we must remember that the greater part of the force belonging to this personality is moral and intellectual, and has been gained by the independent exercise of the capacities with which it was endowed by nature. That there is a growth in character, in virtue, and intelligence, no one can deny unless he do violence to the dictates of common sense. For experience, both that from introspection and the observation of those about us, renders it certain beyond dispute that a man can improve himself, can grow in capacity for greater and better work. If this were not the case, then all education, all discipline, all effort to become wiser and better, would be vain. Even the pessimist would arrogate this claim for himself, that he had become wiser than other men in discovering that all the world is out of joint and going at a breakneck speed to the bad.

Now this growth in character is emphatically one's own possession. He has earned the increment, and owns it more than he does his body; yes, if this be possible, more than he owns his natural endowments—nay, even than his own soul. For these were given him either by a Creator, or the development of nature which, acting at random, yet by a lucky chance fixed on a combination which worked out into a man. The materialist in order to be consistent must say the latter method. But surely this personified chance de-

serves no credit for what the man made of himself after he became a distinct personality, and exercised his will and intellect to make his character what it has become. Certainly, it would not be right to deprive the owner of his hard-earned increment by taking it away from his guidance after he has improved it so much, and throw it back into the jumble of fortuitous atoms. Nothing but the spirit of anarchy, that looks with an evil eye on the wealth which energy, economy, and thrift have gained as a conservative force in society, advocates such a policy. To wrest from the lawful owner all his possessions and swallow them up again in the chaos made by idleness, dissipation, and brutality, would take away all spirit for strenuous action, and make a wreck of material civilization. But if you take from man his hope of immortality, he will then lose all incentive to improvement in character, because there will be no permanent sphere for its exercise. Assuredly this would despoil him of his greatness and render life not worth living.

This force which has been gained by responsible personality belongs to the individual man, and to no other. It is not simply a material strength—that of a lion or a bullock, or of the blindly acting powers of heat, gravity, or electricity—but of intelligence inseparable from a subject to exercise it. And if this personality be destroyed by death, then whatever attached to this moral agent, as gained by himself when exercised for the good of the world, must be lost, because it belonged to him exclusively, and was inseparably connected with his modes of action. There would be no other agent who could possibly exercise it. For this is not like the force of material agents, which segregate a part of the general powers of nature and employ them under the direction of a personal intelligence, but cannot be increased or diminished. For the personal being through his own actions can do both. He increases his natural endowments by voluntary virtue, and can with equal certainty diminish his

own potencies by idleness or crime. But no more force can be exercised by any machine of material construction than is put into it.

Here the case is different. This machine, if man be merely one, actually does increase his efficiency by determining to do so; and this increase goes on as long as the voluntary action continues. But if this agent, machine, or whatever the materialist may call it, perishes, then not only must the power for further increment be lost, but all that has been gathered by it must be destroyed along with the only being that can wield it. For this is wholly unlike the power which lies loose, so to speak, in the realm of nature, awaiting appropriation by any intelligent agent which can secure and employ it. This power gained by the personal agent in the discipline of moral and intellectual character is *sui generis;* and as it appertains to a personality, therefore, if this perishes, it drags down all that belongs to it. But if no force is destroyed, then, *a fortiori*, a creator of force, or one which becomes a new power by appropriating it from every side and adding to its acquisition, will continue forever as a part of the energy existing in nature.

A favorite argument in proof of a future life for man is derived from the fact that his existence here seems incomplete. His preparation fits him preëminently for a higher stage; and as he often dies at a time when his powers are at the acme of culture, he is not permitted to use them. If there be no waste, if all power is conserved, analogy would clearly demand another sphere of action for that agent whose work is broken off at the point of greatest efficiency. But an objection is urged strongly against this reasoning by adverting to the fact that many of nature's efforts are abortive. Perhaps not one seed or germ in a thousand ever comes to maturity, or, if it does, is permitted to produce a perfect successor. The amount of apparent waste in nature is prodigious. Overcrowding prevents a large proportion of

seed germs from developing. There is every species of living thing,—animal, vegetable, rational,—which is checked in its progress at every possible stage and perishes. Only the material seems to remain; while whatever of potentiality there was in the germ, is utterly lost. Therefore, says unbelief, the analogy argues the other way. Instead of the incomplete destiny of man in this life being an evidence of a future for the continuance of his activity, the course of nature clearly demonstrates that immeasurably more of her inceptive efforts come to nought than prove successful. In fact, they are not allowed to progress far enough to achieve any result; or even to show, except by anticipation, their purpose in existence.

This argument has been triumphantly exploited as a complete refutation of all the proofs of a future state for man growing out of his uncompleted work at death. At one time this appeared to be a well-grounded objection which could not be answered by the defenders of man's immortality. But science has here again unwittingly come to our rescue by its cardinal doctrine of the conservation of force. So that what seemed, till long after Butler's time, a serious difficulty in the way of optimism, that there is such a waste in nature, and was seized upon with avidity by the materialist, now, by the application of this principle, presents no obstacle. Admit that multitudes of embryo growths in every department of life never come to maturity, nay even scarcely advance to the first stage toward life. Must their existence therefore be deemed a failure? Do they progress that short distance to no purpose, because they do not attain a sufficient development to enjoy life, nor the power of transmitting to their successors what they did not reach themselves? Are these imperfect growths lost, and all the pains of nature abortive? If force could be lost, then all these would be but attempts which did not succeed, and would imply chance, or lack of wisdom, in the plan. Analogy then

would not support the view that more advanced growths, such as had arrived at a stage fitted by discipline and strength for future action, must continue, and have a further sphere suited to their continuance. Nature's plan, instead of being complete, as the result of design which does everything according to a wise purpose of infinite reach, shows failure at every step, and contains within itself the elements of final destruction.

But the conservation of force, which is appealed to by all scientists, overthrows the pessimistic view which a pure materialism advocates. Those who hold this doctrine, and think that the creation of either matter or spirit is thereby rendered impossible, and therefore eliminate the Creator from the universe which he has made, were not aware that they subverted their own dogma. Like so many other enemies of the truth, the weapons which they forged against a future life may be turned against them to their own confusion. For it matters not that germs are destroyed before they arrive at life; that the great majority of seeds which sprout never mature the full-grown fruit as seed in turn; that the great majority of children die before they reach even the age of responsibility. Their power developed thus far is not lost. For the conservation of energy cares for every portion, however immature or small. It matters not if the world be so crowded with animal and vegetable germs that there is not room for their complete development, provided the forces they contain as germs, and gather during their ephemeral existence, cannot be lost. The powers they do contain, represent a really higher grade of force than they would, had they remained in their elemental state, without organic form or living principle. Then, if all force is conserved, whatever increment these germs have gained by the embryonic or more advanced growth, is a contribution to the development of the universe. These organized powers

are more fitted for further use in the economy of nature than is primordial matter, from which they were formed.

For there is an advance made by everything that reaches an organized structure, and, still more, by that which attains any form of life, however rudimentary. Nothing surely is lost by the *process*. The force in the universe is constant amid all changes, but this does not prevent finite nature from appropriating some of that which must be absolutely infinite, if the intimations of science and pure reason are to be trusted. Nature makes no failure, and the embryonic germ suffers no wrong. If it does not attain to sentient life, it suffers no pain by dying. But if it does reach this stage, and is then cut off, it has the gain which this brief period gives, unless the pessimistic view be assumed, that all existence is a failure. Of course then immortal existence, or life for any period, could be no boon, and the shorter the day the longer and sweeter the night of Nirvana. But the conservation of force leaves no basis on which annihilation can rest; and those who exploit pessimism as a theory never follow it in practice,—except a very few whose acts are consistent with what they affect to believe.

Thus, by the kind help of our adversaries, we prove, through their own doctrine, that nothing is lost of the progress made by sentient or conscious beings. The farther they develop in personality, the more likelihood does there seem to be that they will yet have a sphere of action commensurate with their fitness for action. The wisdom of man is best seen in allotting work according to the capability for its performance. Self-interest, if no higher principle, desires to utilize all forces material and spiritual for the general good of society. For it is an axiom admitted even by advanced utilitarians, that the good of one is the good of all, and that the general happiness of man is the criterion of individual progress. Herein the system of Bentham and

Mill agrees exactly with that of Butler and Paley; and all, consciously or unconsciously, harmonize with the teaching of Him who spake as never man spake—that our neighbor is our fellow-man. Now as human wisdom is enlarged, the ability to place each one in that station for which he is best fitted, is enlarged; and there is no limit to this, except by man's finite wisdom. If then there be a Power above that of man, as the exigencies of the universe demand,—one commensurate with its greatness,—then this Power will not only conserve the energies which he directs, but will direct them in such a way as to best effect the purposes of his infinite dominion.

Here the analogy is complete again, so far as we can trace its application. If then we belong to a scheme which embraces all existing things, and which shall continue through all time, then the scientific principle—the conservation of force—will work just as we see it among men. Each factor will be employed according to its capacity for good work. The spirit which has become fit for efficient service in this life, when it arrives at the stage whence it can be translated to another and a higher one, such as is better suited to its matured capacities, undergoes a change which we call death; but is only a higher development than it could attain in this life. And in the case of those which are checked in their growth, prematurely as we think, the increment is certainly not lost any more than other force is destroyed. It is merely removed to another place where, under conditions more suitable, it may complete that which was begun here. In the struggle for existence the germs of life are crowded on earth. Nature is exuberant in her fecundity, and may be thought of as a mother who bears more children than she can nurse. But infinite space has room enough; Omnipotence, resource enough; and Divine Love, goodness sufficient to provide suitable sustenance to develop every germ of life to its highest perfection. No creature need perish, no en-

ergy be lost of all that the forces pervading matter warm into being. They seem to die, they certainly undergo a change. But we can follow their living principle quite as well as we can the force which is dissipated after it has done the bidding of the mechanic arts. The latter is surely not lost: why should we conclude the reverse of the former?

Hence we cannot argue from our ignorance, and assert that the overcrowding of germs and the premature dissolution of more advanced organisms is a disproof of man's immortality. For we certainly do not know that the life when it passes from our view ceases to exist as a personal factor; nor are we justified in measuring the resources of a universe and its adequate Author by our own power or wisdom. All that we can do in this case is what Butler has essayed: interpret the unknown according to the course of action pursued within our knowledge by ourselves, or others who are possessed of like minds. Human thought is justified in arguing from no other premises. These are that our life belongs to a scheme devised by an intelligence which works along the same lines which we are compelled to follow or cease to be rational creatures. For we can interpret the actions of other men only by analogy with the motives which actuate ourselves, and there is no fixed line in nature where we are estopped from using the same method. If there be any other, we must be guided by ignorance when we attempt to use it.

Every department of knowledge must have such unity as can be comprehended under some regular system. However varied its data or diverse their application in special processes, there must be a discernible unity running through the whole; otherwise there cannot be such a colligation of facts as make them fit into their places, and so become significant. Classified knowledge, scientific theories and laws, are possible only on this principle. But every such system or scheme can be understood only partially. This arises from

the limitations of the human intellect and the positively unlimited reach of the subject-matter in every department of science. Our knowledge can at best be only partial, and therefore will go on increasing forever. For the subtlety of nature is absolutely inconceivable. Each branch of science may be subdivided *ad infinitum*, and still furnish matter for investigation and increase of knowledge. Hence at any stage of the world's history, or that of the individual man, there must be much that is at best only partially known; while the greater part is still hid from us. And it is a strange and humbling fact, that while our knowledge increases in arithmetical ratio, the evidences of our ignorance increase in geometrical progression. It is a significant fact, also, that those who know most, and are therefore most competent to form a judgment, are the readiest to make a frank avowal of their comparative ignorance. This being admitted, it follows, of course, that the greater the compass embraced by any scheme of knowledge or department of nature, the more there will be that cannot be understood. Now the relations of this life to the next—if there be one—must confessedly be the widest in their extent and most important in their bearing on us of all subjects. For they embrace not one part of the material universe, not the whole combined, but also the realm of spirit; not the brief period of man's stay on earth, but all time; the unmeasured ages of the past, the present with its infinite complexity, and the ceaseless eternity to come.

Such is the scheme then of the government of the world under which we are placed. It embraces all that can possibly relate to us. Philosophy tells us: "All mass particles that coexist in space make up a unitary system, possessing a uniform motion in which the movement of every part is contained and determined as a partial movement. . . . All motions in infinite time and infinite space really form a single motion; the corporeal world is a unitary system possess-

ing one great single movement, to which all the separate movements are related as parts to the whole."[1] This sentiment is only the reproduction of what Leibnitz said a good while ago: "Everybody is affected by everything that happens in the entire world, so that a man seeing everything would know from each particular object everything that takes place everywhere, as well as what has taken place, and will take place; he perceives in the present that which is remote in time and space."[2] Such, undoubtedly, is the case with the omniscient Creator and Ruler of the universe. But "we are of yesterday, and know nothing" of that scheme in its infinite compass, whether of personal interest or curious speculation, save by the analogy of our own experience, and that of others like us, in the interpretation of the world's history.

In such a scheme, therefore, there must be much that we cannot understand—doubtless much that in no wise concerns us to know; much that only a culpable curiosity could presume to investigate. Here, again, the analogy between what we find in any department of science, or the experiences of daily life, and the scheme of religion, is complete. We find difficulties beyond our comprehension in every subject we investigate. Perhaps if we did not, the human intellect would stagnate. It is no doubt a wise provision that we are ever in the dark about much of what we investigate, in order to quicken our energies for further progress by stimulating our curiosity. But whatever be the reason for this partial knowledge in every subject which confronts us, we know the fact, and have to shape our conduct accordingly. History, moreover, shows us that while this is the case, there is also a continual progress in every department of knowledge. People must act on the basis of their progress at any period, if they would act at all. The future acquisitions cannot be

[1] Paulsen, Introduction to Philosophy, p. 146.
[2] Leibnitz, Monadology, § 61.

taken as assets in footing up the intellectual balance-sheet. Life must be regulated by what we know at the time when we are summoned to duty, because that which is wholly beyond our comprehension could not be made the basis of responsible conduct. If Newton's "Principia" or Laplace's "Méchanique Céleste" were translated into Platonic Greek, and in this form had been laid before Aristotle or Euclid, they could have made nothing out of these works, and hence their lives would not have been modified by the knowledge they contain. In any scheme relating to human destiny, no matter when or how communicated, there must be difficulties which are beyond the comprehension of the wisest among men.

But this in no way disproves their adaptation to our wants, or argues against the truthfulness of that which is level to our comprehension. Therefore, if a scheme of religion, natural or revealed, contained nothing which was obscure, and professed to explain every matter relating both to the present and the future, this would not be analogous to any other part of man's knowledge, and would therefore be an *a priori* objection to its credibility. But, it may be said, that the very purpose of revelation is to explain that which was not previously known. If not, then *cui bono?* This being the professed purpose of a revelation, the next question is, whether this shall explain everything, or only that which its omniscient Author deems necessary for our present guidance. If it profess to explain everything, this is an impossibility in the nature of the case, for all knowledge is relative, both to the successive and the individual capacity. What is level to the comprehension of one is above or below that of another; and hence a revelation which explained everything according to the receptive capacity must vary all the way between the simplest facts which a child could receive, and the profound mysteries which would satisfy the highest intelligences short of the Divine Author who gave

it. So the objection urged against Butler's statement, that mysteries are to be expected in any scheme of religion, just as in any sphere of human knowledge, falls by its own absurdity.

But, says the objector farther, revelation professes to bring light, and therefore, if it does not do what we expect from its own promise, that is to make plain what before was obscure, it answers no purpose and is a failure. Here again the objector loses sight of the real issue, and betrays his hostility to revealed religion, more than his argumentative strength. Revelation both in science and religion is necessarily progressive. If all truth were disclosed at once, it would be useless for man, since he could not comprehend that which is either above his special capacity or the culture of his age. All that is necessary, therefore, is that it explain so much as to enable each to do his whole duty to his fellow-man and to his Master. He fulfills his duty in the present life if he improve to the utmost under that discipline which shall fit him for a future life and a higher sphere of action. Now if anything is clear touching man's relation to duty, it is that he has all the knowledge in morals that he needs. The trouble is not in lack of light to show him the way, but in willingness to pursue it. His work is always in the present. Over the future he has no control, and therefore no responsibility. He meets the full requirement when he lives up to the measure of light he enjoys. There is no mystery in regard to doing right. The revealed Word is not only a perfect guide, but so plain that the wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein. The law of nature became obscured through willful neglect, and men perished through lack of knowledge. But the revelation of the Old, and particularly of the New, Testament supplemented and confirmed the law written in the conscience, so that all who are enlightened thereby might be without excuse. There is not a single matter touching moral conduct that is

left in the least doubt. The sophistry of those who seek not to know their duty, but how to evade its performance, may involve the plainest precepts in obscurity. For such no revelation would be deemed adequate. They love darkness rather than light, and create it for themselves, that their evil deeds may be concealed. Nothing can satisfy him who is determined to disbelieve, and would increase his hostility, no matter what condescension was made to his demands.

The revelation made by the prophets and by our Lord and his apostles claims to leave nothing to be desired as a guide of duty. The doctrines are complete. They are of infinite reach in their application. Like everything else which comes from God, either in the works of material nature or of moral law, their meaning is inexhaustible. But just as, in the realm of matter or of pure science, each new discovery leads to another more significant, and the evidences of its inexhaustible reach become more clear, so it is with revelation. For the Lord revealed his doctrine to his apostles just "as they were able to receive" it. Had all been delivered at once, or the full meaning been expounded, the hearers would have been able neither to comprehend its scope nor embody it in their lives. But as the ages of Christianity go on, there is a realization of the fact that "the commandment is exceeding broad." Vices which secured protection under a false interpretation of the divine will were found to be condemned, the conscience of the church, enlightened by the using, soon discovered that they were wrong, and that "from the beginning it was not so." We have notable examples in the slave trade and war. The former was upheld by nearly all branches of Christendom, albeit its practice involved every species of sin condemned by the divine law. Now its enormity is seen and acknowledged, though in our own country it has had apologists until a civil war swept it to perdition. The latter still is upheld by all Christian nations as if permitted by religion, though it is

directly contrary to the spirit of the Divine Master, and renders the practice of his teachings impossible. But the time will come ere long when the temper of all men shall be formed after that of Christ, and then they will fulfill his doctrine and "learn war no more." And thus it will continue indefinitely; or until the world shall become all righteous, and the command be no longer necessary for man to teach duty to his neighbor.

So far then from the objection being well founded which says that revelation is defective because it does not satisfy the *a priori* demands of its enemies, this is shown to be, like all other cavils, gratuitous. It is asserted with no misgivings, that all has been made plain in the divine revelation which is needful for the guidance of life, and if more of the secret things belonging to God had been revealed they would either have met with no response because beyond comprehension, or else they would have diverted man from his present duty, which is all that ought to concern him. For he can live only in the present. He can neither forestall the future nor bring back the past. Doubtless there are multitudes of questions touching man's future destiny and the unseen world which will open upon us after death. We would like to know what will be the mode and place of existence, the relation of those who have died to those who still live. And perhaps, more than all, we are perplexed by the existence of sin and suffering under the absolute dominion of an Almighty Sovereign who is the embodiment of goodness and who hates sin. This is the stumbling-block of every system of ethics, and the *desideratum* of every theodicy. But these are questions in which we have nothing but a speculative interest. The explanation, if we could understand it, would not in the least change our obligations to virtue, or make us stronger to meet them. We have nothing to do with the government of the universe outside the sphere of our personal responsibility. Hence the only effect which

the explanation could have would be in withdrawing our attention from what is in our power, and therefore has a real bearing on our destiny, and fixing it on that which is wholly beyond our reach. Hence if the entire moral scheme of the divine government were declared to us, this would make us neither more efficient nor, perhaps, more inclined to meet those responsibilities which we fully understand already; and which for their proper discharge require every conscious moment of our earthly existence.

There is a difficulty, however, in the limited extent to which the divine revelation has been made known, which demands attention. The gospel which is believed by its adherents to be a complete remedy for all evil has been confined to the knowledge of a very limited number of those for whom it was intended. Why has this revelation, if perfectly adapted to the needs of all, not been made known to all? Nearly eighteen centuries have elapsed since it was first promulgated. It is almost four thousand years since the legation of Moses, which gave a complete system of moral law and many intimations of the more perfect revelation to follow. And yet the great majority of the world's inhabitants are wholly ignorant of both. There is undoubtedly a defect somewhere. If the scheme of truth is sufficient to guide man into the knowledge and practice of virtue and thereby secure his deliverance from misery, why has this remedy been so tardily applied?

There are two questions which should be kept entirely distinct. One is: Does this revelation when applied effect the purpose it professes; and, if so, Why has it not been disseminated so as to embrace all who need it? The gist of the matter is, that the revelation itself is not to be held accountable for failing to effect its legitimate work on those who for any reason have not heard of it. The reasons for its failure to reach all men have nothing to do with its efficiency to benefit such as are made acquainted with its teach-

ings. Here again we see a complete analogy between the fate of the gospel and of those ideas discovered by men for their common good. The general course of human history shows that the most important discoveries in science, the most salutary ideas in medicine and appliances for the comfort of life, have had precisely the same experience. Discoveries which were exclusively beneficent are slow of adoption. Scientific truths in advance of their age have always had to run the gauntlet of ridicule and persecution. This fact, however, in no way invalidated their truth or destroyed their salutary tendency when applied. The course of the divine government is undoubtedly to make man responsible for spreading the truths he possesses, and thus to become the keeper of his brother in the practice of virtue. Every one feels this responsibility in exact proportion to his devotion in moral character and clearness of apprehension.

Hence the Divine Lawgiver is blameless in the controversy with bad men in which they wish to shift the responsibility for the spread of the truth. When a portion of mankind is entrusted with a message from God and at the same time charged with the duty of imparting it to the rest, they cannot shirk that duty by claiming that the message should have been sent to all at the same time. No one judges thus in regard to men. Who would think of blaming Newton for not dispelling the ignorance which allows the great majority of mankind to believe still that the sun, and not the earth, moves? How absurd to hold Jenner accountable for the death of those who, from hostility or ignorance of his beneficent discovery, still prefer smallpox to vaccination! It is held by all reasonable men to be enough when a person makes a grand discovery, to exploit it before the public by giving full information as to its nature, and the method of its application. He is not surely to be expected to remove the ignorance of those whose prejudice makes them despise his efforts in their behalf.

But the Author of revelation has done more. He has sent his accredited ambassadors with the *exequatur*: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." If these ambassadors refuse to go, or if the people who have the means, and are under the most binding obligation to send them, refuse, then, surely the message is not at fault nor He who delivered it. For we see it to be the course of this world that men are their brothers' keepers. This is the divine plan both in science and in morals; so that the analogy is complete. The world remains in darkness for two reasons. Men do not realize their obligations to their fellows to disseminate the truth; and those who hear, love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. "If I had not come," says the Saviour of men, "and spoken to them, they had not had sin, but now they have no cloak for their sins." And since the remedy proves efficacious as far as it is properly applied, the responsibility rests with those who for any cause fail to apply it. That the world does not come under the power of the truth at once is a grievous thought. That it is so slow in accepting any wise measure for its relief is also sad and inscrutable. For those who believe in an Almighty Power are assured that this Power could at once make all men wise, virtuous, and happy; could remove sickness, guilt, and misery, and make this world a paradise.

But such is not the plan under which we live. Whether the plan of government be teleological and restorative, or purely mechanical, the progress of knowledge and reform is slow and impeded. It must fight its way against the unmeaning hostility of prejudice; the darkness of ignorance, the powers of evil entrenched in the stronghold of habit; and do all this by the instrumentality of men who are not wholly free from these evils themselves, and therefore perform their part with half-hearted earnestness.

Thus all the objections to a system of revealed religion on

the ground of its insufficiency in clearness and extent, or of its failure to reach those who need it, or of its being a disappointment in fact after the expectations raised by its announcement, disappear when brought to the test. For it gives all the knowledge needful to enable us to do our duty in the present. There is not a single question touching man's relations to his fellow-man or to his Creator which is not fully answered. No more can be required. Curiosity may be eager to learn about a future life, and feel that it is the work of a Revelation to tell us of it in advance. Yet little need be said touching the experiences of another life, since the future cannot by any possibility be experienced in the present. Besides, each day has its full measure of duty, and this is so emphatically true that no conscientious man who is fully alive to his responsibilities, ever felt that he had done all he had the knowledge to do—much less that he had wrought works of supererrogation. The preparation for the future is in the present, and when that time comes its experiences will be most complete when the preparation for it shall have been the most perfect. Doubtless we could understand as little of the world beyond the vail of death as the babe in the womb of its mother does of the life after birth; and the experiences of the future existence will doubtless be as diverse from those of the present as they are from the embryonic state.

The question, What constitutes Personal Identity? is one which in theory is perhaps insoluble, but in practice presents no special difficulty. The name of the thing when added to the four Aristotelic causes,[1] viz., the material, formal, efficient, and final — all of which can be clearly discerned in man—constitutes a personality recognized both by the codes of law and the usages of common life. There may be doubt whether we can discern that personality under disguises assumed for deception or similarity

[1] Metaphysics i. 3, *ab init.*

between persons which seem indiscernible. But there is an identity in all responsible individuals which distinguishes it from all others, at least to itself, and would equally to us if we had sufficient discrimination to read all the marks which exist. This identity continues unbroken in moral agents. Neither age nor growth, change of purpose or character effected by experience, locality, or time, can destroy this. For there must be something constant in order to undergo any change.[1] For change cannot take place if there be nothing to become different.

This metaphysical principle enunciated so clearly by Aristotle resolves any doubt which might arise concerning Personal Identity. And it is the factor most important of all, for it is the substratum on which all the qualities constituting character rest in their last analysis. Powers, faculties or forces cannot exist unless they exist in something. Even in a materialistic view, whether it be the atom which floats at random in the air, or the sun which moves in space, each thing has an individuality which distinguishes it from all others, and makes it the receptacle of power and the organ of faculties of motion or life. If there is a continuance of power, a conservation of energy, there must be some actor or personality through which these continue their phenomenal existence. Hence if the powers which the soul has gathered into itself continue in a future existence, then the probability, to say the least, is that the substance in which the qualities inhere, or the personality by which they are exhibited in action, will also remain through all change. The analogy derived from this life points clearly that way. We are assured that the personal identity continues from birth to death; is persistent through all change, and is unaffected as regards responsibility either to the judgment of others or to our self-consciousness.

[1] Aristotle (Metaphysics xi. 11), *ἀνάγκη ὑπεῖναί τι τὸ μεταβάλλον εἰς τὴν ἐναντίωσιν.*

This personality contains all in man which distinguishes his nature, and places him at the head of all things on earth. It sums up his powers, and makes him the instrument for effecting whatever is great in human nature. Why should this personality be destroyed just at that time when, by discipline, it has become most complete? We can follow it with absolute certainty through all the mutations to which man is subject, and vouch for its continuance as far as we can discern it with our present powers; and it would be unreasonable to say that it ceases at the point where we are unable to follow it farther. For we cannot believe that the subtlety of nature is measured by the subtlety of our intellect. We are absolutely sure that the laws of the physical universe do not cease at the point where the present known powers of the telescope or microscope are exhausted. Space is not bounded where we stop, though we have traveled in thought to any limit we chose to fix. Time did not begin when the geological ages, however great the scientist may reckon them, began. Nor will it end when our powers of enumeration are exhausted. So the measure of man is not the measure of reality in any direction.

Thus we find a perpetual analogy between the scheme of nature as disclosed in our experience, with that which is declared in the revelation purporting to come from the Author of the universe. We could not, with our present powers of thought and knowledge, conceive of a more perfect correspondence, and we have seen that the parallelism grows more close with the progress of our insight into nature. We conclude that this life as now experienced and that disclosed in prophecy show by their complete agreement, that they are coördinate parts of one system, of which the parts seen are a voucher for those which as yet are unseen.