

LECTURES

AND OTHER

THEOLOGICAL PAPERS

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BY

J. B. MOZLEY, D.D.

LATE CANON OF CHRIST CHURCH, AND REGIUS PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

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ADVERTISEMENT.

IN the following volume of DR. MOZLEY'S literary remains, the greater number of original papers are taken from the Lectures delivered by him in the Latin Chapel, Christ Church, as Regius Professor of Divinity: to which office he was appointed in 1871. Of these a selection had to be made, as the Author, having no thought of publishing his Lectures, on some subjects availed himself freely of such passages from his earlier works as expressed his thought and opinion on the matter before him.

The paper on the Jewish and Heathen Conceptions of a Future State, a question on which he evidently felt great interest, was probably written about the year 1866.

The Reprints will be felt by the reader as deserving a permanent place among the Author's works, from the fulness and originality of their treatment and the lasting importance of their subjects. The Article on Dr. (now Cardinal) Newman's *Grammar of Assent*, which appeared in the *Quarterly Review* of July 1870, is given with Mr. Murray's kind permission.

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LECTURES AND OTHER THEOLOGICAL PAPERS.

I.—EVIDENCE.¹

THAT which a general course of Lectures on Theology like the present one naturally commences with, is the subject of Evidence. I shall not, however, enter into the consideration of the general fabric of the Christian Evidences, which is well known to you from the works of many able writers who have devoted themselves to that subject. I shall be doing perhaps something more useful if I call attention to some particular danger connected with the subject of evidence at this day, and endeavour to throw some light on the way in which it is to be met.

Apart from, and quite independently of, the particular arguments which unbelievers may use, it is to be observed that the mere existence of a large body of unbelief around us is itself a danger and a disturbance to us. It impresses the imagination. Such mere quantity of unbelief seems to be an argument in itself against revelation. We are perpetually reminded of it in the books of the day, in newspapers and reviews. It does not allow itself to be passed over; it obtrudes itself upon us at every turn; we cannot help observing it. All this affects the imagination. Unbelief is a great fact; it arrests us, and takes hold of our minds as such. It has a

¹ The first of an official course of lectures delivered in the Latin Chapel, Christ Church, Oxford.

threatening aspect. It is thus that, before going into the reasoning which it employs, a large mass of unbelief, as a simple fact, tends to produce a disturbing effect upon us,—to unsettle and to perplex us. As a mere fact it witnesses against religion. We may remark that anything that is constantly repeated tends to make itself credited, simply from the force of impression. So any standing assertion, quite apart from the grounds of it, influences us; there is a tendency in us to give way to the assertion itself, which gains its own admission in time from the mere circumstance that it demands it.

Such, then, being the disturbing nature of a great mass of unbelief, regarded simply as a fact, let us calmly consider whether this fact has any right in reason to make such an impression upon us. We shall find, I think, upon examination, that like many other great spectres which have frightened men, the terror of it goes upon a closer inspection; and that it ceases to possess any real pretension or right to unsettle and disturb our faith.

It must be remembered, then, that the conclusions which men arrive at are only valuable so far as they have possessed and apprehended the full data for forming them. We constantly reduce the value of men's conclusions on particular points on the ground either that they have not had opportunity of knowing the facts which bear upon them, or that they have not the special faculties and perceptions required for forming correct judgments upon them. The opinions men form on questions of poetry, philosophy, politics, trade, art, have thus constantly their weight challenged on this ground, *i.e.* that these men have not embraced certain preliminary special truths in their departments, which are necessary to be apprehended in order to the formation of correct conclusions further on. Vast masses of even strong judgment are very often set aside without any hesitation on this ground; they do not trouble at all those who arrive at different conclusions, provided only they see that those who have formed these judgments have not embraced certain principles necessary as preliminaries, and are wanting in the previous and introductory kind of truth.

To apply, then, these remarks to the subject before us : Christianity is founded upon certain great primary affections and wants of the human soul, which it meets, to which it corresponds, and of which it furnishes the proper objects and satisfactions. There is the feeling after a God ; there is the instinct of prayer ; there is conscience, and the sense of sin ; there is the longing for and dim expectation of immortality. Christianity supplies the counterpart of those affections and wants of the soul, and it is as supplying this counterpart that it recommends itself in the first instance to us ; it appeals to our belief upon the strength of its own characteristics at the same time that it comes before us as a subject of external evidence. The nature of Christianity, and its correspondence to our own nature, has a legitimate influence upon our minds, before any other consideration ; it is one part of the whole Christian evidence, and a valid and necessary part, without which the other or the historical proof is reasonably and logically deficient.

For will any one consider the very nature of belief, and how it is constituted and composed ? We never do, in fact, believe anything upon external evidence only. Somebody whom you meet in the streets tells you a piece of news ; you believe it instantly, and as a matter of course ; but what is it that makes you so believe it ; his own assertion simply, without anything else ? By no means ; he might tell you some things, and you would not believe them, or at any rate you would remain a long time in suspense. There is something, then, besides the report of the witness, or the external evidence, which enters into the grounds of your belief, and that is the antecedent probability of the fact itself. If this is complete, and it is a fact of a common everyday sort, then you believe the report of it without the least hesitation. Thus the very commonest sort of credence shows upon what grounds belief is raised ; that it is partly antecedent probability, and partly external testimony. Transfer the belief to a higher subject, and let the grounds of probability be not the mere experience of outward life, but certain inward instincts and affections, and the law of credence still holds. Your ground

of belief is a sense of probability meeting and uniting with external evidence. These instincts and affections are what Christianity falls in with, and with which it coincides. This gives a reasonableness, a common-sense meaning to Christianity, that it does answer to our nature and gives the complement of it. And it is the reasonableness in the truths themselves of revelation, caused by this correspondence, which gives that foundation of belief which external evidence consummates. The two grounds, internal and external, make one whole. And with respect to Christianity, as with respect to other things, it is no mere report of facts which convinces us, it is also a congruity in the matter of the revelation itself. Whenever we believe a thing, in short, there must be something reasonable in it, reasonable to us. This is a primary condition. Nothing can engraft itself upon us which is alien to us. There must be a congeniality between ourselves and it before we can incorporate it by belief. We may not see the whole reason of it, but there must be some part at which the truth links itself on to our inward nature.

If, then, there are any considerable number of persons who do not feel and are not affected by those instincts and desires which form the preliminary argument for Christianity, and which are assumed in the effect of the external evidence upon us, the unbelief of these persons is accounted for. We know the reason why they do not believe, and it is a perfectly sound and valid reason. They are not, in fact, in possession of the full data relating to the question,—in possession, in the sense of inward apprehension of them. The same doctrines which completely fall in with the whole antecedent thought and feeling of some, and so to them are natural and reasonable, are to these persons extraneous and artificial, because there is no felt want and affection within them for the doctrines to lay hold of and join themselves on to. That law of belief then, which requires a probability in the thing itself to unite with the external evidence for it, is not complied with in their case—is not satisfied in the premisses of revelation as they apprehend them. There is no probability in the truths as they see them; they therefore disbelieve them.

Let us take the Comtists. Now, to the Comtists, every one of those inner wants and affections, which I mentioned just now as forming the introduction to Christian truth and making it reasonable and probable to us, is wanting. The Comtist says first, that to assert there is any sense of or feeling after a God in our nature is a total mistake; that it does not exist, and that the whole notion of our having it is an unfounded supposition put into our heads by theorists. Accordingly they erase this religious instinct altogether from the mind, and they stop at humanity. They deny of course, consistently with this, the instinct of prayer, and instead of praying they contemplate humanity. They do not acknowledge again a sense of sin or guilt in man as we understand it. Nor do they acknowledge an instinctive longing for, or expectation of, immortality in man. That instinctive feeling is completely obliterated in their system. The Comtists therefore are clearly without, as a felt thing, that whole foundation of mind upon which belief in Christianity arises. The conclusion of the Comtists therefore against Christianity is no perplexity to a Christian mind, because with them the premisses are wanting. The Comtists then avowedly and formally maintain as tenets those several denials of our instinctive feelings and instincts of which the Christian is convinced to begin with; but Comtism, after all, only lets out a secret of the substantial state of mind of a large number of those who do not call themselves Comtists; and only gives formal expression to negations which are practically entertained by a much more numerous portion of society than the Comtist sect. Comtism indeed is, in its blanks and erasures, the informal and unconscious philosophy of all who are absorbed in the sense of life, and to whom this world is the whole of existence.

But there is a portion of society also which, without calling itself Comtist, adopts these principles more or less formally and philosophically; which systematically does not concern itself with another world, or hold by any mysterious revelations of nature respecting God, conscience, sin, judgment. There are many in the first place who, without calling themselves Atheists, still do not feel any want of a God: He does

not supply any need in their minds; they can do without Him; He is almost a superfluity in the world in their eyes; the world seems to go by laws of its own, and to be self-sufficient. To such, of course, prayer is no need of the mind. Again, the idea of morality which a great number entertain is not an idea involving any such deep affection as that of conscience and sense of sin. It is a public and social idea,—the idea of activity, public spirit, discharge of public duties, propriety of conduct, and the virtues which belong to a useful member of society. It goes a certain way in moral truth, but not to the depth of conscience with respect to obligation, or of sense of sin, supposing duty to have been violated or omitted.

The whole standard wants the element of sanctity. But this being the case, how can such a moral standard agree with or lead to Christianity? How can it lead, in the first place, toward a doctrine of an Atonement? If we feel a depth and a mystery in moral evil, then we are ready to accept a mystery in the remedy for that evil, and the restoration of man; but if we do not, such a remedy becomes immediately wholly out of place. It is eccentric and unmeaning, a simple anomaly, uncalled for and joining on to nothing in our nature. Again, there is no want of immortality felt by this class of minds. One might suppose beforehand, indeed, that human nature would long for an existence after death from the simple instinct of self-preservation; but as a matter of fact we find that a sense of present life which Nature has fixed in us (if we commit ourselves wholly to it) so completely shuts out the idea of death, as a realised and felt idea, that we do not feel any want of immortality. So long as we do not realise or feel that this life has an end, this life is endless to us; we have our immortality here, we do not want another immortality. There is no internal premiss then in such minds as these, to which the revelation of Eternal Life in the Gospel is a natural finish, and the revelation comes to them as an unconnected thing which their nature does not appropriate.

It is thus that the negations of Comtism, one after another, become the virtual premisses of a large number of minds; the

sense of God, the sense of sin, the sense of eternity, are done away with as parts of human nature. The denials are not put expressly forward as tenets, nor are they formally held ; but the whole groundwork of thought is in this direction. But if this is the case, the disbelief of such minds in Christianity need be no surprise to us. That is to say, we need not be surprised if such minds are not convinced by the external evidence for Christianity, when they do not possess those inward premisses without which the external are necessarily defective ; if they do not in fact accept a conclusion for which they have not the full argument. As was said just now, we never do in fact believe upon external evidence only ; there is always an antecedent ground of some kind : with respect to common facts this is experience ; in the case of religious doctrines, it is certain instincts and affections. This is a law of belief, and it argues no weakness in any given external evidence that it does not convince of itself ; it is only that defect which constitutionally attaches to all external evidence as such. The existence, then, of a certain quantity of infidelity in society is accounted for ; it need not trouble us as a riddle and an unexplained thing does ; we can explain it, we can trace it to an intelligible source.

But when we call attention to this structure of evidence, we must be prepared to meet one common objection that is made. When any appeal is made to the inward affections in considering the grounds of Christian belief, it is commonly remarked that this is prejudging the question. You must argue the question of belief in Christianity, it is said, exactly as you would argue any other question, whether of history, or natural philosophy, or any other department. Questions of truth are not decided by the affections, but simply and entirely by evidence ; and therefore it cannot make any difference, as far as the ascertainment of truth is concerned, whether persons have such and such affections, or are without them ; the Christian evidences must be examined with perfect impartiality, like any other question of fact, and any bias—it is boldly asserted—which may arise from desire and affection must be altogether laid aside.

But where this objection is made to any appeal to the

affections of the soul in considering the evidences of religion, it must be remembered that there is a vast difference between some questions and others, with regard to the place which the affections hold in the argument relating to them. It would be absurd to say that the moral affections have any place in a question of natural history, or chemistry, or mechanics, or any department of science ; because the moral affections have nothing to do with the faculties or perceptions which are concerned with that subject-matter ; but in questions relating to religion, the moral affections have a great deal to do with the actual perception and discernment by which we see and measure the facts which influence our decision. Let us take, for instance, the question of a future life and the immortality of the soul. Now it is obvious that one of the chief arguments for a future state arises from human character—those high forms of it which we meet and with which we become acquainted, whether by personal knowledge, or by reading or hearing of them. But we cannot possibly enter deeply into character without affections ; we cannot estimate or comprehend truly, we cannot embrace keenly, and with a living force, what is beautiful, profound, and touching in the mind and disposition of any person of extraordinary goodness, unless there are affections in us which enable us to seize hold of their moral traits, and inspire us with a vivid admiration and appreciation of them. Put before yourselves any one of the circle in which you have lived, or whom accident has brought before you, whose whole type has impressed itself upon you as uncommon, and who has stood out from the mass of average life as a being of a higher mould. Now it is evident that such a character as this is an argument for immortality ; it is a reason to your mind for expecting it, because the very idea of such a being as this perishing is a shock to us. Was this spiritual creation made in order to come to nothing ? In the case of such a character the whole look of life as a preparatory stage is particularly obvious. Life has matured its good tendencies, checked its wayward ones ; it has become more perfect as it approached its departure from the world, more answering to the design which is stamped upon it ; and the very final stage of all has taken its part in the development

of it ; there it attains its highest growth ; the soul is more than ever a living soul ; its feelings most alive and quick, the heart most tender, thought most deep. Is all this for nothing ? Is the structure with such pains built in order that it may be overthrown, and the parts so elaborately and delicately put together in order that one rude moment may shatter the work in pieces ? Is the Universe in which we live a system of treachery and mockery, of means for no end, frustrating every hope, and balking every purpose marked upon it ? It is, if just when the character is formed the being is destroyed, and existence is over. That such a being should be extinguished, blotted utterly out of the tablet of the Universe — this is a thought which communicates a shock to our whole nature ; and that it does communicate such a shock is the strongest of all arguments against such being the end of creation.

But can this premiss for a future life be apprehended without the affections ? The moral affections are the very instruments by which we embrace it. This fact of human character is quite a different fact to us according as we see it with the affections or without. Without the affections we do not apprehend it, grasp it, or possess ourselves of it ; we do not take it in. And therefore to those who exhort us to divest ourselves of the influence of the affections when we come to judge of the evidence for Christianity and its doctrines, we reply that with respect to very considerable parts of the evidence of Christian doctrine, very important premisses for it, the affections are absolutely necessary even for the full force of the understanding. Affection is part of insight ; it is wanted for gaining due acquaintance with the facts of the case. Feeling is necessary for comprehension ; we cannot know a particular instance of goodness, we cannot embrace the true conception of goodness in general without it. Affection is itself intelligence ; we cannot separate the feeling in our nature from the reason in it. When we come to examine the argument for a life eternal, we find that we cannot do it even bare justice without the help of the affections. One of the very first considerations upon the question of the destination of man to a state of eternal

happiness is human character, the kind of goodness it is capable of, its worthiness of such a destination ; and this is a matter which requires the affections as the condition of deciding it.

But let us take another point in the consideration of a future life, and in our relations of mind toward it ; and we shall see a fresh reason why the affections are necessary for seeing properly the evidence of Christian truth. It is impossible that we can obtain a full insight into the evidence of the life eternal after death, unless there exists in our hearts the real and earnest wish for that future life. It may be said,—a strong wish prejudices the question, the wish is father to the thought. Certainly there is a strong tendency in it to act so ; but on the other hand, to be without the wish for immortality is to be without the natural stimulus and motive to exert your reason on the subject, and to see what there is to be seen on the side of that doctrine. People are much mistaken if they think that no stimulus is required for the discerning of truth, for seeing the reasons and the evidences there are for any great conclusions connected with our prospects. Would Columbus, for instance, have seen all the evidences and probabilities which he did see of the existence of an unknown hemisphere ; would he have elicited the different scattered facts which threw light upon it, and traced out the faint lines which converged in that direction, had he not been inspired with the intense longing for discovery ? It was a great wish possessing itself of his whole mind which enabled him to see all the reasons there were for his conclusion. To have been without the wish would have been to be without the power of seeing them.

But again the wish for the life immortal is obligatory upon us ; nor are we in a proper moral or reasonable attitude of mind upon this question unless we have it. If we ask a man to believe, he may say, I cannot ; but he cannot say he cannot wish. If, then, there is any final issue of the whole of human existence which appears to be in the least possible, that is to say, our ascent into a glorious and endless state, we are at any rate bound, morally bound, to wish it to be true. We are under the

rational obligation of wishing that to be the real issue which is obviously the best and highest. That the mere conception is offered to the mind, unless indeed it is impossible and involves a contradiction, constitutes an obligation to desire its truth. A man, therefore, is not in a reasonable attitude of mind, unless he has the strong wish that the idea of Eternal Life after death should be true in fact.

As, then, we saw before that affection was necessary for seeing the evidence for immortality, because we could not embrace the argument from human character for that conclusion without it; so now we see its necessity for that object, in the fact that without affection we cannot wish for immortality, and that without the wish we cannot see the full argument for immortality. Subjects of physical science do not require the affections, because the affections throw no light upon them, and are not wanted to understand them; but the truths of Christianity have a relation to our moral nature, and our moral nature both consists of affections and requires the affections to understand it.

When, then, the existence of a large mass of unbelief in society is felt, as it should be, as a painful and grave fact, let us at the same time remember that the real value and weight of such a fact must be tested by the proper conditions. Do these persons receive and acknowledge in the first place those preliminary truths which are assumed in the evidences of Christianity? Is there this sacred foundation of holy sentiment and affection in their characters? If there is not, they want the first conditions upon which Christian belief is formed; and therefore, their unbelief being accounted for by an actual want in their premisses, the value of the fact as a witness against the Christian conclusion is annihilated. Without the felt need for prayer, without the sense of sin, without the wish for immortality, there is no antecedent ground of probability for Christianity; but there must always be some antecedent probability to create belief; we never in fact believe anything upon external evidence only.

I have called attention to one danger connected with the subject of evidence at this day, namely, the omission of the real

place which the affections have in forming the ability to judge of the evidences of religion. I will ask attention now to another danger very much akin to this, namely, a narrow idea of what does or does not make an argument. There is a certain class of considerations which have a strong influence upon the most rational minds in aiding the formal evidences of religion, but if one of these is mentioned it will probably be met by the reply that it is not an argument. For instance, it is a consideration which makes a great impression upon us, that, as was just now mentioned, the issue of things which the Christian revelation teaches us, is the very highest issue imaginable or conceivable. Other religions, indeed, have taught various forms of a future life, but it has been either a state of vanity and emptiness, as the pagan future state was; or it has been restless and fluctuating existence, going through interminable changes and cycles, and connected with metempsychosis, and the passage of the soul through different animal and human lives, as the Egyptian and Oriental doctrines taught. A *glorious* eternal state is the revelation of Christianity alone. But when this is mentioned, that is, that the Christian issue of things is the very best imaginable; "This is not an argument," is the reply. That it is the *best imaginable* issue does not show that it is the *true* one. Thus, though a consideration may be one which we cannot help being impressed by,—and reasonably impressed,—though it is one which must have some weight, and a weight which, as far as it goes, is on the side of Christianity, it is still set aside altogether and allowed to contribute nothing to the Christian evidences, because it is not, as is said, an argument.

Now in answer to this, I think it may be fairly said that anything is an argument which, as far as it goes, tends rationally to bias the mind in a certain direction. We must have no narrow definition of an argument. The question is, Is there naturally any force in a given consideration—not an actually deciding force, but a force?—if so, it is an argument, as far as it goes. Thus, in the present instance, we cannot help ourselves being influenced by the consideration of the issue of the Christian scheme,—what it ends in,—that its end is the best

possible one. It is so natural for us to think that this universe must be for good, that life, with all its capacities of development and discipline, must be for some great end, that when the highest and best conceivable end is announced in a revelation, its *being the best* end is a real argument to us that it is the *true* end. So when we are arguing the doctrine of a future state itself, and when we appeal to the natural wish and longing that we find within us for that state, as one of the *evidences* of its truth, we are met again with the reply, "This is no argument: that you wish for it does not prove that it is *true*." It may be admitted that it is no proof: it would be absurd to say that it was, taken by itself. And yet it would be as unnatural to say that the innate hope we feel had no force whatever as an item of evidence on the subject. That a man *ought* to wish for this issue is clear, as I just said; but now I say that the fact that man, when his nature is not suppressed, does wish for it, that he *has* a true longing and hope for it, is a real argument, as far as it goes, for it. The existence of such a wish must reasonably influence him. It is not a *mere* wish, such as we might have for some impossible thing. No, the wish that we actually find in our minds for a life to come is a wish accompanied with an idea of the possibility of it; it is a practical hope. And that we have such a hope is an argument. Does Nature insert an instinct without a use? It may be said, indeed, the hope is not in vain if it cheers people at the time, and that *that* is a use for it. But is this the *kind* of use which we see in real nature; that it is useful by deceit and by illusion; by giving people ideas to which there is no responding reality merely that they may have the comfort of the ideas? That is not the type of Nature's action. If she implants a presage or prognostication, it is that it may tell us of something. Her use and truth coincide.

The hope in our nature then for a future life is a reason, in a degree, for expecting that life; it is a kind of forecasting of the future fact. And this accounts for the more believing temper which is often the effect of illness and approach of death. When people are well and strong, and enclosed in the sense of life, they entertain no real wish for another life, and have none

of this forecasting. Amid the fulness of physical power and strength all these presentiments and presages are brushed aside as superfluous unmeaning shadows; but when this life is deserting them, and they really want another, then these presages and instincts come into force; then they have a meaning. Unbelievers have changed often upon the approach of death, and infidels say it is slavish fear, their understanding giving way. But is it their understanding giving way, or not rather their understanding awakening? They see tokens then within them to which their eyes were shut before, deep perceptions to what in the midday glare of life they were not alive.

And this may remind us again of another argument for religion which many disallow, namely, its utility. We appeal to the extraordinary utility of the Christian revelation, what motives it has supplied to virtue and benevolence, what stimulus its hopes and anticipations have given to our moral nature. But the answer is the same as before. Christianity may be *useful*, but it is not therefore *true*. And yet though usefulness is not formal proof, it is mockery to say that there is not something in it bearing upon evidence. We feel that we cannot wholly ignore utility in our estimate of the evidence of the truth of a revelation. For if a revelation truly comes from God, it must carry usefulness also as well as truth; usefulness must be one of its characteristics; and therefore where we see extraordinary and wonderful usefulness, we must take it as a note of truth. And indeed the progress of thought on the whole has been a decided testimony to utility as an argument. The philosophies of the old world and the ancient schools of legislation maintained the maxim of the utility of falsehood, and the great expediency of established religions, though they were not true; but the growth of thought has run counter to this. Lucretius condemned religion distinctly as being pernicious and injurious to society, as if he saw that to admit its utility would have been to go a long way in admitting its truth. And it is curious to observe that in the present day the position of "false yet useful" has been given up, and that modern Atheism expressly charges religion with the evils and disasters of society, and the grievances and miseries of humanity.

There is no mathematical criterion then of an argument. Everything is an argument which naturally influences us in one way rather than another ; to think one thing true rather than another. In the preliminary region of evidence especially, we meet with considerations which have such a natural influence upon us in guiding our judgment, that it would be folly to dispense with them. And yet if we listen to some persons' objections, we shall have to believe there is nothing in these considerations ; because, as it is said, they are not arguments. They do not indeed pretend to a technically conclusive force ; and yet to shut them out from the judicial scope on account of their informal character as arguments, would be to imitate those narrow and pedagoguish tactics of law which fence in, with scrupulous jealousy, what are called the rules of evidence, till step by step they exclude as irregular the main and most important inlets of truth and channels of proof.

I have confined myself in this Lecture to the preliminary ground of Christian Evidence, and have called attention to some important considerations belonging to that introductory section of evidence. I have called attention first to the place which the affections hold in the Christian evidence ; and secondly, to a wider and truer definition of an argument, which takes it out of a technical test, and makes it any consideration which reasonably influences us. And under this head I have alluded to the antecedent argument for Christianity contained in the fact that it offers to us the highest possible issue of human life and this whole scheme of things ; to the antecedent argument of instinctive hopes ; to the antecedent argument of utility. The substance of the Christian evidences of course lies in positive testimony, and in the proof of those historical facts upon which Christianity is based. But, referring you for the positive structure of Christian evidences to those well-known treatises which have issued at different times from our Church, I have preferred on this occasion directing your thoughts to those points connected with the introduction to Christian evidences ; because, while antecedent ground is apt to escape our notice, it is ground of which it is very important to retain a proper hold and a just estimate. It is very material to

establish our right to all the argument with which that ground supplies us,—not to allow ourselves to be deprived of it upon technical reasons; never to let a consideration of real weight, which has a genuine and natural influence upon us, be snatched out of our grasp upon the plea that it is not an argument. Everything is an argument which has a natural influence upon us in inducing us to think one way rather than another. If any persons have a criterion of an argument in their head, which lets all kinds of influential considerations slip,—casting them aside, and preventing their being turned to any use—because they do not come within this technical test; it is high time, not that we should give up these considerations, but that *they* should alter their criterion of an argument. Let us keep a firm hold upon the antecedent arguments for Christianity, upon all those reasons which induce us to welcome Christianity, and which prepare us for the reception of it when it is placed before us by positive evidence. These form a genuine and necessary part of the whole evidential structure, which is maimed and halt without it. We must have probabilities to aid external evidence in religion, just as in ordinary cases of reported facts; it is no fault of external evidence that it should be so, it is a constitutional limitation which attaches to it, and to which antecedent probabilities are the constitutional supplement. And as likelihood from experience is this supplement in ordinary evidence, so likelihood from moral considerations is in religious evidence.

II.—PHYSICAL SCIENCE AND THEOLOGY.¹

THERE is a current assertion relating to the existence of a Moral and Personal Deity, that the argument from *nature* for this truth is weak, and that the professed proof of it is taken from theological metaphysics. I will offer one or two considerations on this point. It may be admitted then that the existence of the human soul clears up many questions respecting the Deity which were not fully decided when we had only external nature before us. For example, as regards the question of design—we undoubtedly see a plastic power at work in nature before we take the human soul into consideration; but is this power intelligent or designing? We are involved in some perplexity. Mere material law is *methodical* in its operations, as in the case of crystals. Where do we get that plain evidence of an *end beyond the apparatus itself*, an object which is ulterior to the physical framework with which it is connected, which is the test of true design in nature? The answer is in all sentient life in its degree; but certainly the highest evidence of such an ulterior end, which throws all other evidence almost into the shade, is the human soul. That stands in such bold relief to the bodily structure belonging to it, as the *end of that structure*; the final cause is declared with such overpowering light, the purpose shines forth with such indubitable clearness and conspicuousness that the conclusion is irresistible: that power which constructed this body in order to the existence of myself—an intelligent being—must be itself intelligent.

Again, has the Deity will? On this question, too, we are much in the dark till we come to the human soul, which speaks and says:—"I have will, therefore that power which constructed this bodily apparatus for my existence has will too."

¹ Read by the Author at the Church Congress held in Dublin 1868.

Again, is the Deity moral? Here we are entirely in the dark before we come to the human soul, which says: "I am moral, therefore the power that made me is moral." In a word, He who thus obviously and elaborately provides for a moral and personal existence must Himself be a moral and personal Deity.

It must, therefore, be admitted that man, or the human soul, is the revelation of God in nature. Prior to this spiritual fact in nature, the mechanical system of nature reveals a First Cause of some kind, but it does not speak to the character of that Cause whether he is intelligent, moral, and has a will. We are groping in the dark amid the beginnings and *primordia* of things before nature interprets itself, and decides as to the character of its First Cause. But when we arrive at man or the human soul, the authorship of nature comes out like a disclosed secret, a light breaks forth which fills all space, which illuminates the whole fabric of the physical universe, and which reveals the moral source and end of nature. Of man it may be said, that not only as investigating man, but that as man, he is the interpreter of nature.

But is this proof of a moral Deity, as distinguished from law or plastic power, a metaphysical argument? Undoubtedly it is, if for convenience' sake we choose to call one part of our nature metaphysical; but let us, as we have a right to do, claim the term physical for *all* nature, and has not the human soul a place in physics? Is the instinct of any brute, any insect, to rank as part of nature, and is the instinct of man—namely, his soul—not to rank as such? In physical treatises the instincts of animals are invariably treated as just as much a part of physics as their bodies: the two are on a par as physical facts. And the soul is the instinct of man. We know indeed that the soul will one day exist out of this physical universe; but so long as it is *in* it, it is as plainly a part of it as the instinct of an ant or bee. The theistic argument, then, from the human soul is derived from something which is an element of this physical world; an instinct, a life, a power, an insight, an energy, going on in it, provided for by it, imbedded in the very centre of this whole physical apparatus. The great user of nature, the head and summit of nature, the rational soul which

inhabits nature and reigns in nature, belongs to nature as much as the mechanical laws of nature. It is a part of physics taken as a whole. That marvellous spiritual insertion in this physical world is yet one of the contents of that world. We look down from the height of our own reason upon a vast shadowy scene below of blind and groping instinct;—instinct which may be called subterranean, its processes are so dark, so hidden from itself, so unconscious;—a maze of motions in all shapes and figures, following tame and homely or wild and eccentric lines, but all going on in rigid grooves, between invisible walls which bound the vision; all the movements of a deaf, dumb, and blind spirit which does not perceive, which does not think, which does not direct itself. All brute life has this sad impress stamped even on its liveliest play and action, that it does not know what it is doing. From this animal instinct in all its stages, the leap is so sudden and immense to the human instinct, with its inward light of self-consciousness, and all its other glorious perceptions and faculties, that we forget that that mental force which is so *supreme* in nature is still *in* nature, and that it does not cease to be *part* of nature, because it is the highest part. This enormous and prodigious instinct, which is so different from the other instincts as to look miraculous, is still within the system—though a spiritual insertion in it, still in it;—the property of an inhabitant of nature, a tenant of a physical frame—an animal—man. The First Cause of this whole physical apparatus has connected this apparatus with the human soul: and it is all one system, the physical kosmos which encloses, and the spiritual life which is enclosed.

When, therefore, it is asserted that the argument from nature for a moral and personal Deity is weak, it may be replied that this assertion is only made true by robbing the argument from nature of its principal contents. The human soul does not come under the head of metaphysics only, but it is a part of physics, or nature taken as a whole. But if, upon the plea of its being a metaphysical element in the question, it is *excluded* from a place in the argument from nature; if the spiritual is extracted from nature, before we are allowed to argue *from* nature, the natural argument for a God may well

become weak. We reduce it then simply to an argument from methodical matter, from mechanical adjustments; and thus narrowed and reduced, no wonder if the argument from nature proves only a mechanical Deity.

I am aware, indeed, that this is only a question as to what head a particular argument comes under; and that the human soul is the same premiss under whatever head it may be placed; but I do not think the question is therefore unimportant. For the practical influence an argument has upon the mind, a great deal depends upon division. An arbitrary division excludes some great premiss from an area and enclosure in which it would have striking weight, banishes it from the field before our eyes, ostracises it, removes it to some distant quarter in which it is thrown entirely upon its own isolated strength instead of having all the aid of a familiar and recognised surrounding. So if we make the great theistic argument *nature*, the theistic evidence of the human soul is plainly disadvantaged if it is not allowed to come under the head of nature. As a metaphysical premiss only, it is deprived of a certain matter-of-fact aspect and bearing which it possesses as a physical. "Important in its place, but no part of the argument," is the reply to a proof which does not come under a main heading; "*we* are arguing from nature, *you* are introducing metaphysics." A premiss that is shut out of a great trunk argument fares like an incidental visitor, to whom we say: "Presently,—I will attend to you by and by." As soon as ever a man has handed over some point to metaphysics, he thinks he has entirely got rid of it, that he need not give himself any further trouble about it, that it is removed to a region of shadows. But remove mind or soul from its *technical* head of metaphysics, and place it under its *real* head of nature, and then we have at once two great facts of nature before us. All soul says of itself "I will," and "I ought;" and these two facts re-act by a necessary law of thought upon the character of the Divine Being. It is quite true that both of these are mysteries. It is true no one knows what "ought" means; no one has deciphered, no mortal key ever will decipher that unfathomable enigma. No one knows what "will" is, its

source or basis ; that, too, is an inaccessible secret. But it would be the greatest mistake in philosophy to say that mysteries cannot be facts. With the innate *impressions* of "will" and "ought" all nature vibrates ; all history is founded on them ; they are inherent in us, rooted in us, no human being can shake them off. When a man has deliberately and with choice before him done a wrong act, can that man really make himself think that he could not have done the right one? He cannot. It is an impossibility of nature. Can he cast off the sense of right and wrong? That too is an impossibility of nature. These impressions of "will" and "ought" are as plain, as obvious, as conspicuous facts of nature,—of physics in the large sense,—as electricity or the circulation of the blood. And with these two facts within us, we cannot, by a necessary law of thought, rest in a God who does not respond to them. If there is *no* God, there is no *moral* God ; but if there *is* a God of some kind (as science admits), and the only question is what kind, that question is settled by these facts.

Now to bring these remarks to bear upon one particular point.

1. Scientific men sometimes appeal to an inward certainty which they feel, as to the impossibility of any interruption of the order of nature. They do not profess to give the reason of this idea ; they only say they are possessed by it ; that it is an intuition, a forcible impression, which grows by conversance with nature and insight into her laws. Now, with respect to such an impression as this, I would remark that it is well known as a truth of human nature, and one of wide application, and attaching to all kinds of subject—that nothing does produce a stronger sense of certainty in men's minds than forcible impressions for which they can give no reason. It is curious that the instant you begin to reason, in a certain sense you begin to doubt. The *element* of doubt is introduced. If you allege a reason for a thing, the question of proportion immediately arises—is it reason *enough* ? is the premiss strong enough to support the conclusion ? But if you have no premiss, and no reason, the whole element of doubt which arises from this source is avoided. There are such multitudes of examples of this species of certainty arising simply from

forcible impression, that they may be said to compose a chapter in the history of the human mind ; nor is there any fact which experience teaches more strongly than that, for the absolute sense of certainty, there is nothing like being without a reason. Not, however, that I would exclude all forcible impressions, which are unable to give a complete account of themselves from philosophy ; or say that because men have them absurdly, men may not sometimes have them wisely ; but I would only remind those who possess such impressions, that the imagination simulates reason with wonderful success, and has an extraordinary power in making the view it suggests look like the only possible reality, and any other appear like fiction. It is the special effect of forcible impressions produced by the imagination, that it seems unnatural and artificial to resist them ;—that imagination looks like reason, and reason like imagination. Human nature is operated on by mighty currents, which carry it in different directions ; nor can science or philosophy, any more than action, be conducted without such impulses. Which current shall we trust ourselves to ? What is imagination, and what is reason within us ? The appeal must be made to our whole nature—for nature as a whole corrects the impetus of particular movements.

2. I would remark with great respect, and knowing that the liability is shared by other departments of knowledge as well, that physical science is capable—if I may dare to say such a thing—of breeding crotchets. A curious attitude of opposition to common sense is, I say, noticeable as an occasional feature of the scientific mind, rising up at sudden turns. It is a phenomenon to be attended to. We speak of poetry, romance, religious enthusiasm, generating strange fancies ; but nothing can exceed the odd and unaccountable convictions which science sometimes takes up. Can there, for instance, be found a more curious quarrel with common sense, than that antipathy which some scientific schools, especially the French school, entertain to the idea of design in nature, so thrust upon us by nature ? The vindication of physical causes can hardly be considered as more than a decent disguise for this grotesque prejudice of science ; because it is so obvious that physical

causes can produce a chaos just as much as they can produce a harmony or system ; that they are common to arrangement and disorder, and therefore cannot in themselves account for arrangement. Again, take the strange antipathy of one great inductive school to the idea of intuitive or necessary truth ; everything with them is induction—even truths of mathematics, even truths of arithmetic. That two and three make five has been “invariably observed:” in no single instance have we seen them produce any other number. It is what is called a “completed induction,” that is, as far as our opportunities of observation go ; but not necessary ; and if I understand Mr. Mill aright, he thinks it conceivable that in one of the heavenly bodies the result might be different. These curious scientifically generated points of view, these eccentric products of the scientific mind, show that science has, as a mental pursuit, its faulty habits, and that it can breed its own class of prejudices—aspects of things, caught in the first instance by the mind in peculiar junctures and angles of thought, and then permanently stamped upon the intellect.

3. I would remark respecting this forcible impression as to the impossibility of an interruption of the order of nature, that scientific men are in this instance doing what they generally disclaim doing—theologising : for unquestionably this is a theological conclusion ; it affects the nature and the power of the Deity. Their general posture is that of claiming the right to investigate facts without being interfered with by theology ; and there is justice in this claim ; but here they leave the position of physical investigation, and diverge from the discovery of facts, to drawing a theological conclusion from them.

4. But, lastly, scientific men are not only theologising in this instance, but theologising altogether prematurely ; they are judging about the Deity before they have a revelation of Him. The mechanical laws of nature do not of themselves reveal Him ; man alone is the revelation of God. Let it be granted then, that a person might argue from the material and mechanical laws of nature, taken by themselves, to the inviolability of the laws of nature. Allow him to say, looking simply to these laws, “I do not catch here any glimpse of a

power which can interrupt nature : I see motion, orderly motion, but that motion does not hint at anything which can stop it : I must regard, therefore, this as an alien, arbitrary idea, and gratuitous fiction of the mind." But has he in these laws the whole of nature before him ? No ; he omits the human soul, which has a distinct, a strong and vigorous argument of its own on this subject. All soul, being conscious of will itself, declares for a Deity with will, upon which an interrupting power necessarily follows ; and soul, as has been said, is a fact in nature, its consciousnesses are facts in nature. This, which is disdainfully called the "old theological argument for miracles," is theological only in its conclusion ; its premisses are, in the true sense, physical.

It must be observed that scientific men are by the order of their task and pursuit placed at a disadvantage with respect to a theological conclusion from nature—for this reason. A mechanical First Cause does not interrupt nature, because it has no will ; man, as I have said, reveals a will in nature, a moral power. It is therefore not from the mechanical beginnings and elements of nature, but from the user and the end of nature—Man ; it is from the spiritual life in nature that we obtain the idea of a First Cause that can interrupt nature. But this being the case, scientific men have, by the very order of their pursuit, to do with the beginnings of nature and not with the end, with the mechanical and not with the spiritual power in nature. They see the grand edifice, as it were, upside down, they look away from *themselves, from man, from soul, from mind, to matter, to mechanism, to material law*. They look in a direction which is dictated by the very investigating purpose of their occupation itself, but which has still the inherent defect of setting nature in a wrong position before them. They look at nature, indeed, *with the mind, with the rational soul*, but working with it as an instrument, not contemplating it as an object : as the eye sees other things, but not itself, the soul overlooks itself in its survey of the universe. This is an attitude essential for the purpose of investigation, but an artificial and inverted one for the view of nature. It is the higher part of nature which interprets the lower. Nature