

LECTURE VII.

IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL, AND DEFECTS OF NATURAL RELIGION.

SYLLABUS.

1. Show the testimony of Consciousness, Reason and Conscience to the soul's spirituality. See

Butler's Analogy, pt. i, ch. 1, 2. Turretin, Locus v. Qu. 14. Hodge, Theol. Vol. i, ch. iii, § 4, E. Dr. S. Clarke's Disc. Vol. ii, prop. 4. Dr. Thomas Brown, Lec. 96, 97. Breckinridge's Theol. Vol. i, p. 58-70. Chalmers' Nat. Theol. bk. iii, ch. 3.

2. Does Natural Theology show the immortality of the soul? See same authorities.

3. Does Reason hold out any sure prospect of the pardon of our sins?

Butler's Analogy, pt. ii, ch. 5. University Lectures on Evidences: Dr. Van Zandt, pp. 43 to 51. Dr. S. Clarke as above, prop. vi.

4. Can Natural Theology be sufficient for man's religious welfare? How much evidence in the answer for the inspiration of the Bible?

Turretin, Locus i, Qu. 4. Univ. Lecture by Van Zandt. Chalmers' Nat. Theology, bk. v, ch. 1. Dr. S. Clarke, as above, Props. v to viii. Leland's "Necessity of Revelation," at large.

IN advancing to the solemn question of our immortality, I would remind you of the opening remark of the last lecture: That practically this question is involved in that of the soul's spirituality. The attempts made to infer that the soul is

1. Psychological Argument for Spirit.

not a spirit, from certain physical theories, I there endeavored to overthrow. The argument from psychological facts given us in our own consciousness, now remains; and this is obviously the legitimate, the conclusive one. For, let the supposition that man has a separate, immaterial spirit, be once brought into the debate; and of course, sensuous evidences of its truth or falsehood are equally out of the question, by the very definition of spirit as substance that is simple, monadic, unextended, indivisible, devoid of all sensible attributes. The spiritual *data* of consciousness are the only ones which can possibly give conclusive evidence, for or against the proposition. When the physicist argues that "science" (meaning thereby exclusively the science of sensible phenomena) "tells him nothing of spirit," I reply: of course it does not. But if he uses that admission, to argue there is no spirit, he is precisely as preposterous, as though he should wish to decide the question whether a given crystal vase contains atmosphere, by remarking that his *eye-sight* does not detect any *colour* in the space included in the vase. Of course it does not; when the very definition of atmosphere is, of a gas absolutely transparent and colorless in limited masses. Other faculties than eye-sight must decide the question of fact. So other faculties than the senses must decide whether there is a spirit in man; when the very claim of our hypothesis is, that this spiritual substance is wholly super-sensuous. The only quarrel we have with the physicists for saying "their science tells them of no spirit," is against the apparent intimation that the science of sensible things is the only science! Let Physics observe their proper modesty, as only one branch of valid science; and let her recognize her elder sisters of the super-sensuous sphere, and we are content she shall announce that result.

The great evidence of the soul's spirituality will be found when inspected, intuitive. Man only knows by his own ideas, recognized in consciousness. The very con-

Consciousness is only of Spirit.

sciousness of these implies a being, a substance which is conscious. So that man's knowledge of himself, as conscious, thinking substance is *a priori* to, though implicitly present in, all his other thinkings: That is to say; he knows his own thinking Self first, and only by knowing it, knows any other thing. In other words: Every sound mind must accept this self-evident fact; my having any idea, sensitive or other, implies the *Ego* that has it. I can only have perception of the objective, by assuming *a priori*, the reality of the subjective. I cannot construe to myself any mental state without postulating real being, a *subjectum*, to which the state may be referred. But this thinking Self is impressed from without with certain states, called sensations, which we are as inevitably impelled to refer to objective substance, to the *non Ego*. Now in comparing this conviction of the *Ego* and *non*

Ego, a certain contrast between their attributes inevitably arises. The first conviction which arises out of a thoughtful inspection of the contents of consciousness, is the singleness of the mind. It learns the qualities of the objective by different sensations, but all sensations are inevitably referred to the same knowing subject. The Self who knows by touching, is always identical with that which knows by tasting, smelling, seeing, and hearing. The Self who knows by sensations is identical with that which reflects upon its sensations. The Self which conceives an object of emotion, is the same that feels towards that object. In the midst of the conscious diversity of all these states of mind, there remains the inexorable consciousness of the singleness of the mind affected by them. But the objective always exists before us in plurality.

Next, we learn from sense-perception that all the objective is compounded. The simplest material substance is constituted by an aggregation of parts, and may be conceived as divided. The lightest has some weight; the smallest has some extension; all have some figure. But our consciousness tells us intuitively, that the thing in us which thinks, feels, wills, is absolutely simple. Not only does this intuition refer all our mental states and acts to one and the same thinking subject, notwithstanding their wide diversity. But *we know* that they coexist in that subject, without plurality or partition. We are conscious that the agent which conceives, is the same agent which, upon occasion of that concept, is affected with passion. That which hates one object and loves its opposite, is the same agent, notwithstanding the diversity of these states. Moreover, every affection and act of a mind has an absolute unity. It is impossible even to refer any attribute of extension to it in conception. He who endeavors to imagine to himself a concept that is colored or ponderous (as it is a mental act) an affection that is triangular as distinguished from another that is circular, a judgment that has its top and its bottom, a volition which may be divided by a knife or wedge into halves and quarters, feels inevitably that it is unspeakable folly. All the attributes of extension are absolutely irrelevant to the mind and its acts and states. And especially is this thought fatal to the conclusion, that mental affections may be functions of organized bodies of matter; namely: that whereas we know all our mental affections have an absolute unity, we are taught by our senses, that all qualities and affections of organisms are aggregates of similar affections or qualities of parts. The whiteness of a wall is the whiteness of a multitude of separate points in the wall. The magnetism of a metal rod is the aggregate of the magnetisms of a multitude of molecules of metal. The properties may be literally subdivided with the masses. The materialistic conception receives a most complete and exact refutation, when we recall the multitude of distinct

things in consciousness. If the soul is material, then it has some dimensions; less, at all events than the superficies of our bodies. Recall now, for instance, the countless multitude of ideas marked in our unconscious memory. How are they all distinguishably made on a surface of no more breadth? Remember, that if materialism is true, the viewing of these ideas in conception, is a sensuous perception. How many distinct lines on an inch's surface can sense perceive? That is settled with a geometrical exactness! How then are these countless marks preserved on a surface of sixty inches; or possibly, of a fraction of one inch?

Now the law of our reason compels us to refer this absolute contrast of attributes to a real difference of substance. While we name the *Ego, spirit*, we must call the objective something else, matter. Man cannot think at all, without virtually predicating his thinking on the recognition of a substance that thinks, essentially different from the objective, a spiritual *monad*. We can only know matter, by having known mind. It is impossible, my Brethren, for me to impress you too strongly with the impregnable strength of this position against the materialist. It is our 'Gibraltar.' The man who thinks consistently, must always be more certain that there is mind, than that there is matter. Because any valid act of intelligence must imply an intelligent subject. And the recognition of the *Ego* which knows, is *a priori*, and in order to perception of an object known by it. If then the existence of mind is uncertain, the existence of anything objective is inevitably more uncertain. Does sense-perception seem to the materialist to give him the most palpable knowledge of the matter external to him? But he has only been enabled to construe that perception at all, so as to make it a *datum* of valid knowledge, by first crediting the intuition of consciousness, which reveals the perceiving Agent distinct from the object revealed. How unfair, how unscientific is this attempt to use intuition in its less direct, and refuse it in its more direct, testimonies! If she is to be trusted in her interpretation of the objective sensation, she is, of course, still more to be trusted in her subjective self-consciousness.

Hence, pure idealism is less unphilosophical than materialism. That outrages one class of valid intuitions; this outrages two. The stress of the argument which I have just explained, is disclosed in a curious way, by the confessions of sundry of the modern materialists. Huxley, for instance, after abolishing spirit, finds himself in such difficulty, that he feels compelled to spiritualize matter! Thus his materialism is resolved into a species of idealism, which he impotently attempts to connect with the metaphysics of Des Cartes. First we are taught that there is no such substance as spirit; but its supposed

Contrasted attributes
imply contrasted sub-
stances.

Substance only cog-
nized by admitting spirit

functions are merely phenomena of Force, the only cause which materialism can recognize in nature. And then, to deliver us from the absurdities of this metaphysic, we are taught that there is no such substance as matter; but this is only an ideal something, possibility of force! Thus reason was destroyed, to exalt the validity of sense-perception exclusively; and now sense-perception is destroyed in turn, leaving us Nihilism.

Next, I argue, that materialism contradicts our intuition of our own free-agency. Experience shows us two rival classes of effects, the corporeal being one, thought, feeling and volition the other. Now it is impossible to think an effect without an adequate cause. But when the reason begins to represent to itself these causes, it perceives an inevitable difference. The corporeal effects are necessary; the spiritual are free. The one class is the result of blind force; the other is an expression of free-agency. Here are two heterogeneous causes, matter and spirit, acting the one by force, the other by free agency.

Materialism contradicts the testimony of our moral consciousness. It teaches that matter, if a cause, is an involuntary and unintelligent cause. But *we know* that we are responsible; which unavoidably implies a rational spontaneity in acting. To hold a blind, material force to a moral responsibility, is preposterous. But this conviction of responsibility in conscience is universal, radical, unavoidable, and intuitive. It is impossible for a man to discharge his mind of it. He cannot think the acknowledged wrong equal to the right, and the admitted wrong-doer irresponsible for his wrong, like a rolling stone, a wave, or a flame. These facts of consciousness compel us to admit a substance heterogeneous from matter. Had man no spirit, there would be nothing to be accountable. Had he no God, there would be none to whom to be accountable. If either were true, our very nature would be a lie, and knowledge impossible.

Feeble attempts are made by modern materialists to meet these arguments, by saying first: That consciousness is not to be trusted. Consciousness, say they, is incomplete. She gives no account of the subjective acts and states of infancy; and no correct account of those of the mentally diseased. She tells us nothing usually of the large latent stores of memory. She is absolutely silent as to any interaction of the nerve-system and the spirit; of which, if there is spirit, there must be a great deal.

But to what does all this amount? Consciousness does not tell us all things, and sometimes tells us wrong? If this were granted, still the stubborn proposition would remain, that if we cannot trust consciousness, we can have no ideas. The faculty which they would exalt against her, is sensation. Do the senses

Free agency refutes Materialism.

Responsibility refutes it.

Consciousness is trustworthy.

tell us all things? Are they never deceived? Does sense give any perceptions, save as it is mediated to the understanding by consciousness? Enough of such special pleadings! That consciousness reveals nothing direct of the interaction of spirit and nerve organs is precisely because spirit and matter are causes so heterogeneous—so that this fact contains one of the most conclusive proofs against materialism. If our conscious intelligence were only a function of nerve structures, then indeed it might be very natural that the function of intelligence should include, and should represent to us intellectually, every link of the action of the material nerve-force. But because conscious intelligence is not a material, organic function, but is the free action of spirit, a cause and substance wholly heterogeneous from matter, therefore it is, that just at the connecting step between nerve action in the *sensorium* and the idea in the intelligence, and between the volition in the rational agent and contraction in the voluntary nerve matter, there is naturally a chasm of mystery; a relation which the omniscient spirit was able to institute; but which sense cannot detect because the interaction is no longer merely material; which conscious intelligence does not construe to itself because it is not merely spiritual.

Again it is said: "Grant that there must be an entity within us, to be the subject of consciousness, why may not that be *the Brain?*" One answer has been given above: That while the properties and functions of brain matter are material, qualified by attributes of extension; those of consciousness are spiritual, simple, monadic. Another answer is, that consciousness testifies that my own brain is, like other matter, objective to that in me which thinks. How do I know that I have a brain? By the valid analogy of the testimony of anatomists, as to the skulls of all other living men like me. But that testimony is the witnessing of a sense-perception, which that anatomist had when he opened those other skulls—of an objective knowledge. Hence I only know my brain, as objective to that which is the knowing agent. If I have any valid opinion about the brain, it is that this organ is *the instrument by which* I think, not the *Ego* who thinks. Materialists have objected that material affections have this oneness to our conception; as a musical tone, the numerous series of successive vibrations of a chord divisible into parts. I reply, that the oneness is only in the perception of it. Only as it becomes our mental affection, does it assume unity. As we trace the effect from the vibration of the chord to that of the air, the *tympanum*, the bony series, the aqueous humour, the fimbriated nerve, the series is still one of successive parts. It is only when we pass from the material organ to the mind, that the phenomenon is no longer a series of pulses, but a unified sensation. This very case proves most strongly the unifying power which belongs to the mind alone. So, when an extended object pro-

Consciousness cannot be the Brain.

duces a sensation, though the object perceived is divisible, the perception thereof, as a mental act, is indivisible.

Now, the soul being another substance than the body, it is seen at once, that the body's dissolution does not *necessarily* imply that of the soul. Indeed, let us look beyond first impressions, and we shall see that the presumption is the other way. The fact that we have already passed from one to another stage of existence, from *fœtus* to infant, to child, to man, implies that another stage may await us; unless there be some such evidence of the soul's dependence on the body for existence (as well as for contact with the external world,) as will destroy that presumption. But there is no such dependence; as appears from our experience in amputations, flux of bodily particles, emaciation under disease, &c. In none of these cases is the loss of the spirit proportioned to the bodily loss. This independence is proved by the fact, that in sensation even, the bodily organ is merely the soul's instrument. The eye, e. g., is but its optic glass: that in sleep the soul may be active, while the body is passive; and chiefly, that all the higher processes of soul, memory, conception, imagination, reasoning, are wholly independent of the body. Even if the grossest representationist scheme of perception and thought, (that, for instance, of Hartly, or of Hobbes,) were adopted, making the *phantasmata* or *species* derived through the senses, the object of perception, still the question returns, How does the soul get its conception of general notions: of time, of space, of God, of self? Herein surely, it is independent of the body.

It has been objected to this great argument of Bp. Butler, in recent days, and with great clamour, that the cerebral action attend all discoveries of modern cerebral physiology discredit it. It is claimed that anatomists have now ascertained, that certain molecular actions in the brain attend what were before supposed to be abstract and independent acts of mind, (or, as the materialist would say, constitute those acts,) as regularly as other molecular actions attend the sensuous functions of the mind. The student will see this point thoroughly anticipated, two hundred years before it was raised, by Turretin, in the question cited in the *Syllabus*. Suppose it true, that a certain excitement of brain-matter attends the abstract processes of the mind and the acts of its original spontaneity. Is it any the less certain that in these cases, the excitement of nerve matter is consequence, and the exertion of the spirit's spontaneity is cause? Surely not. Just so surely as, in objective perception, the presentation of the new sense-idea in the intelligence follows the excitement of the nerve matter, in the order of causation; so surely, in the case of spontaneous thought, feeling and volition, the spiritual action precedes the action of the nerve matter (if there is such action,) in the order of causation. So that, in the sense of Bp. Butler's argument,

these acts of soul are independent of bodily action still. The clamour which has been made by materialists here, is a good instance of modern ignorance or oblivion of the history of opinion. Suppose the recent doctrine of the physiological "cerebration of ideas" be proved universal as to all the soul's acts, what have we, more than the hypothesis of Hartley, which made sensations "vibrations," and concepts "vibratiuncles," in a nervous substance? No competent philosopher of the past regarded that hypothesis, whether granted or refuted, as affording any sufficient account of the facts of consciousness. But the very attempt to employ the hypothesis thus has been the laughing-stock of science.

Here again, materialists have objected, that the cases of mental imbecility in infancy and dotage, and of mania or lunacy, seem to show a strict dependence of soul on body, if not an identity. In dotage, is not the mind, like the body, tottering to its extinction? If our theory of monadic spirit were true, would *mental disease* be possible? I reply, that strictly speaking, spirit is not essentially or organically diseased. It is the bodily organ of its action, which is deranged, or weakened. Bear in mind, that though there are undoubted processes of thought independent of the body, *sensations* form the larger portion of our subjects of thought and volition. Now, remember that the soul is subject to the law of *habit*; and we shall easily see that where, through the disease of the bodily organs, the larger number of the objects of its action are distorted, the balance of its working may be disturbed, and yet the soul's substance undiseased. That this is the correct explanation is confirmed by what happens in dreams; the mind's action is abnormal; it is because the absence of sensations has changed the balance of its working. Let the body awake, and the ordinary current of sensations flow aright, and the mind is at once itself. Again, in lunacy and dotage, ideas gained by the mind before the bodily disease or decline took place, are usually recalled and used by the mind correctly; while more recent ones are either distorted, or wholly evanescent. Finally, while it is inconsistent to ascribe an organic disease to that which is not organized, a functional derangement does not seem wholly out of the question.

It appears then, that the thinking monad is independent of the body for its existence. Impressive as are the changes of bodily dissolution, they contain no philosophic ground for denying the conclusion drawn from the experience of the soul's existence through so many moments and so many changes. But the phenomenon of death itself suggests a powerful analogy to show that the soul will not die. What is death? It is but separation of parts. When we examine all the seemingly destructive processes of nature, combustion, decomposition, we find no atom

Does mental disease imply the soul's mortality.

Only death known is dissolution. The soul simple.

of matter annihilated; they only change their collocations. There is no proof that God ever destroys an atom. The soul is a spiritual atom; why suppose it is destroyed? The only death is dissolution; the soul cannot dissolve. And this is my conception of its immortality; not a *self* or *necessary* existence, but the absence of all intrinsic ground of decay, and of all purpose in its Maker to extinguish its being.

But, objects the materialist: The same reasonings would prove the immortality of brutes. They would not brutes be thus shown immortal? have processes of memory, association and volition, from which the same conclusion of the presence in them of simple, spiritual substance, would follow. They might argue from their consciousness of mental states, the same necessary distinction between the subject and object. They also have a species of spontaneity.

I reply, that this is an objection *ad ignorantiam*. Where is the necessary absurdity, should it be that brutes have spirits? It might contradict many prejudices; but I see not what principle of established truth. If it is no just logic to say, that our premises may or may not contain conclusions of an unknown nature; when the question is, whether they do not contain this known and unavoidable conclusion, the spirituality of man. The nature of the mental processes of the higher brutes, especially, is very mysterious. It seems most probable that their spirits differ from man's chiefly in these two traits: the absence of all moral ideas and sentiments, and the inability to construe the contents of their own consciousness rationally. And these two are the most essential to a rational personality. The moral arguments for immortality then, which are the most conclusive in man's case, and those from the indefinite perfectibility of his mental powers, are all lacking in the case of the brute. What God chooses to do with this principle in the brute, which is the seat of instinct, appetite, perception, memory, passion, and perhaps of judgment, when the body dies, Natural Theology is unable to tell us. Only when we come to Revelation, do we learn that "the spirit of the brute goeth downward, while the spirit of man goeth upward." Ignorance here is no argument against the results of positive knowledge elsewhere.

The well known argument for a future existence from God's righteousness, compared with the imperfect distribution of awards here, need not be elaborated. All your books state it. It is conclusive. An objection has, indeed, been urged: That if the awards are so unequal, no evidence remains of God's perfect rectitude; and so the former premise is lost. I reply: The course of temporal providence is neither the only, nor chief proof of God's rectitude. Conscience demonstrates that attribute, without the light of observation. Further: while the awards are not exact, they approximate exactness here, showing

Equal rewards require a future existence.

that it is God's nature to be, finally, strictly just, And last, the inequalities of awards are explained consistently with God's rectitude by this: that they give scope for man's fortitude and sympathy, and for God's long suffering.

Conscience, apprehending God's justice, gives us a different and an instinctive proof of a future existence. Remorse for sins does by no means verge towards its termination, as death approaches; but recruits its fury. If the soul could apprehend this life as its only existence, at the conscious approach of death, remorse would relax its grasp; and at the expiring breath, would release the criminal, as having paid the debt of justice. We find in the dying conscience an inevitable and universal recognition of its immortality.

The ancient, and some modern, moralists, attached much importance to man's longing for existence, horror of extinction, and hopes in the future. Does hope prove it? I cannot but feel, with Dr. Brown, that these lack weight. Is not this horror of extinction resolvable into that love of life which we share with the animals? Hope does, indeed, ever fly before us, to the end. But it is not as much a hope of sensual or worldly good, as of spiritual? But should we infer from these premises, that a brute's or a man's animal existence will be perpetual, we should err.

I find a more solid argument in man's capacity to know and serve God, and in his capacity of indefinite mental and moral improvement. God's motive for creating, must have been from Himself; because, when He began, nothing else existed whence to draw it. He must, therefore, have sought, in creation, to satisfy and glorify His own perfections. Natural Theology tells us of no rational creatures, save men. Should there ever be a time when there are no rational creatures in the universe, there would be no recipients of God's spiritual goodness, and none to comprehend His glory. To have no eyes to behold the light, is virtually to quench it. Can we then believe that the only creature capable of knowing and enjoying Him shall perish so soon—perish, as to the majority of our race, before they understand Him at all? But again, man, unlike all other sentient creatures, is capable of indefinite improvement. The ox, the elephant, the horse, soon reaches the narrow limits of its intelligence; and these, the same fixed by the common instincts of its race, for its progenitors. The first bee built its cells as artistically as those of this "enlightened century." But man can make almost indefinite advancements. And when he has taken all the strides between a Newton or a Washington, and a naked Australian, there is no reason, save the narrow bounds of his mortal life, to limit his farther progress. Further: it is precisely in his mental and moral powers, that the room for growth exists. His muscu-

lar strength soon reaches that standard beyond which there is no usual increase. His senses are educated up to a certain penetration; there the vast and the minute arrest them. But memory, reason, conscience, affections, habits, may be cultivated to indefinite grades of superiority. Let us now view man's terrestrial pursuits, his vanity, his disappointments, his follies, and the futilities in which the existence of most men is consumed. How utterly trivial! How unworthy of the grand endowment! If this life were all, well might we exclaim, with the Hebrew poet, "Wherefore hast Thou made all men in vain?" *We see* that God is unspeakably wise in all His comprehended works; we must conclude that He has not expended so much for naught; that these seeds of immortality will inherit their suitable growth. I see a man setting scions in his nursery a few inches apart; but I learn that they are trees which will require forty feet for their ultimate growth. If the man knows what he is about, I conclude that he intends to transplant them.

For these various reasons, then, we may look across the gulf of death with the confident expectation of a future spiritual existence. I say spiritual; for the resurrection of the body is a doctrine of pure revelation, for which natural reason presents us only the faintest analogies, if any. It is the glory of the Bible, that it alone reveals the immortality of *man*, of the whole united person, which lives, hopes, fears, sins, and dies here. But in proving the immortality of the soul, a sufficient basis is laid for the larger part of the moral forces which bring our responsibility to bear aright. The essential point is to evince the *proper identity* of the being who acts here, and is rewarded hereafter. It is mental, and not personal identity, which lays this essential basis for responsibility. It is the spirit which understands, feels, and chooses, which recognizes identity in its consciousness. Hence, it is the spirit which is responsible.

Now, if existence is continued beyond the grave, there is nothing to check the conclusion that it will be continued forever. Suppose a soul just emerged from the impressive revolution of bodily death? then it must repeat all the reasonings we have considered, and with redoubled force, that after so many changes are survived, *a fortiori*, all others will be. But if man's conscious existence is continuous and endless, few will care or dare to deny that his moral relations to God are so, likewise. For they proceed directly from the mere original relation of creature to Creator. The startling evidences that this life is somehow a probation for that endless existence, the youth of that immortal manhood, have been stated by Bishop Butler with unrivalled justness. No more is needed by the student than to study him.

Conscience convinces every man that he is a sinner, and

3. Does Reason see hope of pardon? No. that God is just. Does natural reason infer any adequate proofs that God will, on any terms, be merciful; or is His righteousness as imperative as that conscience, which is His vicegerent within us? This is the question of most vital interest to us in natural religion. We are pointed to the abounding evidences of God's benevolence, and told that mercy is but benevolence towards the guilty. But, alas! Nature is almost equally full of evidences of His severity. Again, we are pointed to that hopeful feature in the order of His providence, which is but another expression for the regular ordering of His will, where we see remedial processes offered to man, for evading the natural consequences of his errors and faults. Does man surfeit himself? Nature offers a healing medicine, and arrests the death which his intemperance has provoked. Does the prodigal incur the penalty of want? Repentance and industry may repair his broken fortunes. So, alleviations seem to be provided on every hand, to interpose mercifully between man's sins and their natural penalties. May we not accept these as showing that there is some way in which God's mercy will arrest our final retribution? This expectation may have that slight force which will prepare us to embrace with confidence the satisfaction of Christ, when it is revealed to us in the gospel. But I assert that, without revelation, all these slight hints of a possible way of mercy are too much counterbalanced by the appearances of severity, to ground any hope or comfort in the guilty breast. What is the testimony of Conscience? Does she accept any of the throes of repentance, or the natural evils inflicted on faults, as a sufficient atonement? On the contrary, after the longest series of temporal calamities, the approach of death only sharpens her lash. The last act of culminating remorse, as the trembling criminal is dismissed from his sufferings here, is to remit him to a just and more fearful doom beyond the grave. And what say conscience and experience of the atoning virtue of our repentance and reformations? They only repair the consequences of our faults in part. The sense of guilt remains: yea, it is the very nature of repentance to renew its confession of demerit with every sigh and tear of contrition. And the genuineness of the sorrow for sin has no efficacy whatever to recall the consequences of the wrong act, and make them as though they had never been. But, above all, every palliation of natural penalty, every remedial process offered to our reach by nature, or ministered by the self-sacrifice of friends, is but temporary. For, after all, death comes to every man, to the most penitent, the most genuinely reformed, the restored sinner most fenced in by the mediatorial love of his fellows, as certainly as to the most reckless profligate; and death is the terrible sum of all natural penalties. This one, universal fact, undoes everything which more hopeful analogies had begun,

and compels us to admit that the utmost reason can infer of God's mercy is, that it admits a suspension of doom.

The last question which we shall now discuss in Natural Theology, is concerning its sufficiency to lead a soul to eternal

4. Is Natural Theology sufficient? blessedness. Now, I have strenuously contended that there is some science of Natural Theology. We have seen that it teaches us clearly our own spirituality and future existence, the existence and several of the attributes of God, His righteousness and goodness and our responsibility to Him, His providential control over all His works, and our endless relation to the sanctions of His moral attributes. But man needs more than this for his soul's well-being; and we assert that Natural Theology is fatally defective in the essential points. We might evince this practically by pointing to the customary state of all gentile nations, to the darkness of their understanding and absurdities of their beliefs, the monstrous perversions of their religious worship, and the blackness of their general morals, their evil conscience during their lives, and their death-beds either apathetic or despairing. If it be said that I have chosen unfavourable examples, then I might argue the point practically again, by pointing to the brightest specimens of pagan philosophy. We see that with all the germs of truth mixed with their creeds, there were many errors, that their virtues lacked symmetry and completeness, and their own confessions of uncertainty and darkness were usually emphatic in proportion to their wisdom.

But to specify. One fatal defect of Natural Theology has been already illustrated. Man knows himself a sinner in the hands of righteous Omnipotence, and has no assurance whatever of any plan of mercy. An equally fatal defect might be evinced, (far more clearly than divines have usually done,) in its lack of regenerating agency. If we knew nothing of the sad story of Adam's probation and fall, just reasoning would yet teach us, that man is a morally depraved being. The great fact stands out, that his will is invincibly arrayed against the mandates of his own conscience, on at least some points. Every man's will exhibits this tendency in some respects, with a certainty as infallible as any law of nature. Now such a tendency of will cannot be revolutionized by any system of moral suasion; for the conclusive reason that the efficacy of all objective things to act as inducements, depends on the state of the will, and therefore cannot revolutionize it. The effect cannot renew its own cause. But Natural Theology offers no moral force higher than moral suasion. Can then the creature who remains an everlasting sinner, possess everlasting well-being?

Another striking defect of Natural Theology is its lack of authority over the conscience. One would think that where the inferences of natural reason appeared conclusive, bringing the knowledge of a God to

Lacks Authority.

the understanding, this God would be recognized as speaking in all her distinct assertions; and the conscience and heart would bow to him as implicitly as when He is revealed in His word. But practically it is not so. Men are but too ready to hold revealed truth in unrighteousness; and Natural Theology has ever shown a still greater lack of authority, even over hearts which avowed her truth. Perhaps the reason of this is, that every mind has indistinctly and half consciously recognized this profound metaphysical defect, which underlies nearly all her reasonings. How do we first know spirit? By our own consciousness, presenting to us the thinking *Ego*. How do we know thought, volition, power? As we are first conscious of it in ourselves. What is our first cognition of the right and the wrong? It is in the mandates of our consciences. And the way we conceive of the infinite Spirit, with His thought, will, power, rectitude, is by projecting upon Him our self-derived conception of this essence and these attributes, freed from the limitations which belong to ourselves. Seeing, then, that God and His character are to so great an extent but ourselves objectified, elevated above our conscious defects, and made absolute from our conscious limits, how can we ever know that the correspondence of the objective reality, with this conception of it, is accurate? It is as though our self-consciousness were the mirror, in which alone we can see the spectrum of the great Invisible reflected. How shall we ever tell to what degree it may be magnified, distorted, coloured, by the imperfection of the reflecting surface, seeing Natural Theology can never enable us to turn around and inspect the great original, eye to eye? That something is there, a something vast, grand and real, our laws of thought forbid us to doubt; and that it has a general outline like the reflected image, we may not doubt; for else, what was it that cast the mighty spectrum upon the disc of our reason? But reason can never clear up the vagueness and uncertainty of outline and detail, nor verify His true features. Now, when Revealed Theology comes, it enables us to make this verification; and especially when we see "God manifest in the flesh," "the brightness of the Father's glory, and express image of His person."

It may be asked, if Natural Theology cannot save, why study it? I answer: 1st. It teaches some truths; and no truth is valueless. 2d. When Revelation comes, Natural Theology gives satisfaction to the mind, by showing us two independent lines of proof for sundry great propositions? 3d. It excites the craving of the soul for a Revelation. 4th. When that comes, it assists us to verify it, because it meets the very wants which Natural Theology has discovered.

Finally, if Revelation is absolutely necessary for salvation, there is the strongest probability that God has given one. This

Why then study Natural Theology?

A Revelation may be expected. appears from God's goodness and wisdom. It is proved, second, by the admissions of the Deistical argument, which always assumes the burden of proof in the proposition: "Revelation is not necessary." It appears, third, from the general expectation and desire of a communication from the skies among Pagans. Last: when we see (as will be demonstrated at another place) that the enjoyment of infallible communications from the infinite Mind is the natural condition of life to all reasonable spirits, the argument will become conclusive, that God surely has given a message to man. Now, no other book save the Bible presents even a plausible claim to be that Revelation.