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THE  
CHURCHMAN

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APRIL, 1880.

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ART. I.—BUTLER'S ANALOGY.

**A** MIDST the conflict of rival philosophies, Evolution, Positivism, Agnosticism, and any other of the protean forms of unbelief in God, each internecine with the others, but all of them made "friends together" in their attack on the credibility of Christianity—(did it ever harm them?) what is a plain man of average intellectual advantages to do? If he, by the Grace of God, has already laid the burden of his sins at the foot of the cross, and has felt in his heart the powers of the world to come, and experienced the influences of the Divine Spirit, whereby he is able to cry Abba, Father; then all these fiery darts from the philosophies of the wicked one will be quenched and pointless against the heavenly armour wherewith he is clothed. He would not so much as stop in his course to notice them were it not for the need of the prayer, "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do." The language of his innermost spirit is *I know*; "I know that my Redeemer liveth;" "I know in whom I have trusted, and I am convinced that He is able to guard that which I have entrusted to Him against that day." Or if again, the man, though he be conscious of no such relations of his inner life to the unseen world, is nevertheless willing to give the Christian Truth a fair trial in his own experience, then again he will need no elaborate arguments of earthly origin to convince him that what Christ has promised, that also He is able to perform. Nevertheless it is essential to the honour of the Christian Faith that it shall be provided with an effective answer in respect to its reasonableness against serious questionings from whatever quarter they may come. For the Eternal Father has provided us, His children, with the bright and responsible gift of the intellect, as well as with that of the affections; with

minds, as well as with hearts; and the truths which come from and which appeal to, the many sides of our complex nature must be adapted to the satisfying of the necessities and the cravings of both these faculties, even when both of them are developed and improved to the utmost of their capacities. If, through error or mistrust, either of them be cultivated by appealing to it unduly rather than to the other—*i. e.*, if we habitually rely on the responses of the one rather than the other—the Nemesis of Disproportion will find us out, and amidst the pain of discomfiture will compel us to retrace our steps, and in some way make amends for the partiality and neglect. This then is the reply to the question—Why occupy our thoughts on the evidences of our faith? No doubt, arguing about religion will not save a man's soul; but arguments may deter the scoffer, for very shame's sake; and they may save other men from the pain of the endurance of the scoffing.

Now that form of philosophy which is presumed to furnish the most formidable weapons of attack upon the first principles of Butler's argument, is the hypothesis that there is no evidence producible for the existence of a directing and designing Will in Nature. That man (it assumes), or that creature, succeeds the best who accommodates himself the most completely to the things which chance to surround him; nothing has been pre-arranged, it asserts, for his existence or his welfare; the man becomes solely what his surroundings make him. Thus, a revelation becomes totally discredited, because the fashionable hypothetical philosophy of the day assumes the non-existence of a supreme Author of Nature, from whence alone the revelation could proceed.

I may here mention that when this new theory was first seriously propounded, it became the duty of so profoundly gifted a man as the late Sir John Herschel carefully to examine its claims to acceptance. I am told, on the best authority, that after having read Mr. Darwin's book, and before forming an irrevocable opinion about it, he requested a near and intelligent relative to read it again, on his behalf, and see whether he was right in concluding that its author made no reference to the action of an intelligent Will in Nature. On being assured that the case was so, "then," said the most illustrious expounder of Nature of this day, "then the hypothesis is not adequate to explain the facts." And so say I, forming my conclusion from those parts of Nature which it has been my duty to study as best I may. The hypothesis (and it is no more)—the hypothesis will not explain the facts.

In reference to the argument for design, and, so far, for the existence of a designing Mind in Nature, I propose to adopt the same principle which was not very long ago adopted with

success by a British judge when sorely perplexed by the contradictory evidence of professional experts. Men of great character and eminence for their knowledge of certain natural product gave the most contradicting and irreconcilable accounts of the nature and nomenclature of this same natural product; the one set affirming what the other explicitly denied. The judge in his perplexity threw aside the evidence of the professional experts, and appealed to the account given by men of average sense, and of common experience, as to the true nature of the substance with which they would be familiar. In like manner I propose to give here a very rapid, succinct, and general account of a small portion of those activities of Nature by which mankind have been furnished with products and materials conducing, perhaps more than anything else, to the development of their human intelligence, and to their progress in the arts and conveniences of everyday life. Important elements, in fact they are, and intimately concerned in the furtherance of social and civil development. And so, for the purpose of illustrating our argument, I must ask my readers to summon forth that divine creative faculty wherewith God has lovingly endowed us, for the clearer apprehension of His manifold works.

In imagination, then, I must ask you in spirit to ascend with me some old Silurian hill, on the primæval earth, ages upon ages before God had fitted it for the abode of man. Picture to yourselves some mighty stream, like the Ganges or the Amazon, rolling its waters from far distant mountains into an ancient sea. You observe the broad interminable belt of forest, which, stretching inland further than the eye can reach, rises in wild luxuriance from the swamps that fringe the stream. You may trace there the majestic pine, the graceful fern, the erect gigantic moss, fluted and towering columnar reeds, and a strange fantastic undergrowth, unknown to the flora of the age of man. The oak and the elm, the sycamore and the noble acacias of the West, you will not find in those swampy forests, for, as yet, such are not created. There are no cattle grazing upon a thousand hills, for God as yet has not clothed those hills with grass. In the thick jungle of these primæval forests you will not hear the young lions roaring after their prey, for, as yet, there is no meat provided for such by God. Those forests are tuneless of the glad carols of the birds, for, as yet, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after its kind, are not yet created for their food. Apart from the hoarse croak of the reptiles, and the shrill chirp of many an insect, there is the hush of the silence of non-existence amidst those matted fronds, save when the voice of the Lord is heard, in the thunder or the wind.

And if the strength of the creative gift of your imagination

you will still keep your stand upon your watch place, for ages beyond your power to count, you will see nothing but the decay and the renewal of that interminable umbrageous belt. The ferns will wither, the gigantic moss and the columnar reed will shrivel, and the pines will decay and fall to their mother earth, but all this only to make way for another and another succession of luxuriant growth. And so for ages; ages of waste do you think them? Wait awhile.

At length in the scene changes, and through some mighty pulsation of the yet unstable earth, ordained of God, you see the waters of the broad swampy margin deepen and deepen, and then pile upon pile of forest growth and forest decay are submerged and gone. Still wait awhile, for the lapse of years, I know not how many, for Science as yet has found no unit for the measure of cycles such as these; they are but as a day in the mind of that sublime intelligence who is the Lord of the ages and of the worlds above. Wait awhile, and then upon the broad and now silted margin of the everlasting stream, piles upon piles of other forest again rise and decay, and by slow successive pulsations of the uncompleted earth in their turn disappear beneath the swollen tide.

Now, if in spirit you saw all this, and only this, would you be able to decipher the meaning of the riddle? Would you imagine, for instance, that all this mysterious prodigality of decay would issue in the storing up of fuel for the future service of races of beings yet unborn? As you witnessed the successive growths and successive submergences of these forests, could you foresee or conceive in what way such an arrangement of things could one day conduce to the development of the genius of intelligent creatures, destined in the remote futurity to be the chiefest denizens of the earth.

I have not been amusing my readers with some fantastic creation of the brain. I have been reminding them of the mode of the Divine Action, during one brief stage of the Creation. And there are many like it. There is, for instance, the strange deposit of the various minerals, all of them turned to the unexpected service of developing the genius, and advancing the intelligence of the future man. Materials they are, stored away, to be, after the lapse of apparently interminable ages, converted into printing presses, and steam engines, and telegraphs, and telescopes, and microscopes; into the very means of deciphering what has been the work of the Creator, from the examination of what now is. Is all this, forsooth, a series of accidents? Is it only a succession of the survivals of the fittest? The appeal lies, not solely nor even chiefly to the philosopher in his closet; not at all to the hasty specialist, leaping to notoriety, the appeal lies to the common sense of reasonable beings.

- In this way, then, of a majestic prescience, in this way of a loving anticipation, God created the Heavens and the Earth. He spake and they were created; He commanded and they stood fast.

I must pass over what Butler in the midst of his grave argument, for once, with even a passionate emotion, calls the ten thousand thousand other instances of a prescient design for the promotion of the material and intellectual advancement of God's earthly children. I proceed to the divine prearrangement for their moral progress. Butler, in the fifth chapter of his Analogy, enforces the conviction that the Eternal Father had so constituted human society as to render it peculiarly suitable for the discipline and education of His children into habits of virtue; which habits and condition of the moral character are intended to fit them for the more enlarged sphere of a future and a holy life after death. Bishop Butler describes the formation of these moral habits, as the "Business of Life;" as the chief object for which we were created and placed upon this earth.

But now comes another phase in the human history, and another corresponding phase of divine, *anticipative* intervention. That man has somehow reduced himself to a state of moral degradation (I need not give you the Scripture account of it), no one can doubt who takes a survey of human society, or of his own heart. We cannot but feel that we are, the best of us, very far gone from that righteousness which befits a child of God: sinful we are, and very sinning; and we are conscious of possessing little or no power in ourselves to lift ourselves out of our degradation. Perhaps the worst feature in this our human condition is the natural alienation of the heart from its filial relation to the Eternal Father. Nothing that human ingenuity has ever conceived could set this matter of sin and of alienation right. But here again, from the counsels of eternity, comes the most signal instances of the *anticipative* love, and the boundless wisdom of the Almighty Father of our spirits. I need not now describe the scheme of the Redemption of mankind, from this their low and lost estate, by the Sacrifice of the Incarnate Son of God upon the Cross, and man's restoration to the family of God by a loving faith in His Word. My present task is not so much to expound the doctrines of Revelation as to show, after the manner of our great Bishop, how closely they, *i.e.*, these revealed doctrines, harmonise with analogies which we find already in that human society wherein God has placed us. Nature and Grace, both proceed from the Divine Mind: the provisions of Nature and Grace we find are parallel, the one to the other.

And first then as touching Redemption by a suffering Redeemer. Society, the whole fabric of the moral world, is carried on, and

is held together by a law, by a scheme of natural intervention or mediation. I think we can name few joys we have ever felt, or few troubles from which we have even escaped, which we cannot trace to the intervention of others, and not rarely to an intervention effected with pain to the intervener.

Think of the little babe ;—there it lies joyous, and redolent with the promise of the activities of life ; yet utterly helpless, and dependent upon others' care. But think also of the pale face of her, whose strength scarce suffices to nestle her little one in her nerveless arms. Nay, without my bidding, some perforce recal to memory how the mother's pulse ceased to beat before she could utter a parent's blessing on her child. And what is all this, but the redemption of a life, at the cost of the sufferings of another ? Pass onward a few years, and trace that child now walking with elastic step at his father's side ; but look upwards at the father's face ; you will not be surprised to find many a deep furrow there, furrows that bear testimony to anxieties and toils—*anxieties and toils*, that the bright boy at his side may have a good offset for the battle of life before him ;—*nay*, anxieties and toils, sometimes deep and inevitable for the bare supply of that child's daily bread. And what means all this ? What is it but redemption again ; redemption secured at the cost of labours, and sufferings, and toils ? And when is it that you cease to hear men speak of their "friends ?" What other word more common among us ? And what does that word "friend," for the most part, practically imply ? Alas ! for the most part it implies, not the confiding interchange of thought ; not the sweet comparison of experience, and of hope, and of aspiration ; not the pleasant suggestions which arise from community of taste—for such high privileges are reserved for those only who by patient continuance in well-doing have acquired the right and the capacity to enjoy them ; but that commonest of words, "a friend," bears testimony to that commonness of weakness, which looks for aid from another's strength, to that commonness of wants, which seek their supply from another's abundance ; it bears testimony to that commonness of troubles, which, not rarely, can be removed solely at the cost of another's pain, even greater than that which they assuage.

Think further even of the arts and conveniences of life ; of the appliances, the inventions, the discoveries, which the Divine Father has ordained to enrich and ennoble life. Such results come at no man's light bidding. The discovery itself, the last link in the invention, may come, and in fact must come, at last, like a flash, but the happy thought comes to the man of genius only after days and nights, or even years, of patient continuance in intellectual toil. And when it does come to him, not seldom the health is failing, or the lamp of life has burnt low ; or other

men step in, reaping the harvest of his toil, and leaving him only the gleanings of the field, the sowing of which was all his own. Meanwhile, the chief advantages accrue to society; the toil was all his own.

Now, such being the scheme, such the manner after which it has pleased the Eternal Creator to impart the joys, to assuage the sorrows, and to enlighten the ignorance of His creatures in this their temporary life, which endures but for three score years and ten, is there any thing which can reasonably jar upon our feelings, if we find that the Divine Father, in His marvellous beneficence has interposed, after a like, though in a higher manner, on behalf of His children, in those higher relations of theirs which endure for ever? Is there cause for a hesitating wonder if God, through the mediation, the intervention of His Divine Son, should give to man a distinct and living manifestation of all that a finite being need know, or can know, of the infinite character of the God of the spirit of all flesh? Is there cause, I say, for a hesitating incredulous wonder, if, in man's low estate, the Son of God should interpose in his behalf, and this interposition, this mediation, thus made on man's behalf, should be accompanied by the suffering and the death of the incarnate Redeemer. Even in this life, and among creatures of our earthly mould, perhaps for a good man, some would even dare to die.

Such extremity of intervention may indeed be, and must be, a matchless instance of unbounded love, nevertheless it would be all of a piece, in perfect harmony, in strict analogy with those other interventions in man's behalf, which by God's natural appointment we see every day involve the sufferings of the intervener. I cannot tell others, nor can I suggest to myself, why a righteous Creator permitted sin to defile the beautiful world which He had created. I dare not, in my partial ignorance, tax either His benevolence or His power, for, as I have said, we know not the whole of the case; neither do we know the nature or the requirements of Infinite Love, or of Power in its utmost perfection. I cannot even guess the whole reasons, why a loving and wise Father permitted sorrow, and ignorance, and misery to be the lot of all His children for a time; but as I see that in the natural world around us He has provided the mediation and suffering of one man, to remove the suffering or the ignorance of another, with what reason can any man cavil at a Revelation which tells me that man may be pardoned for his sins, and restored to the filial relations of a child of God, and all the varied ills of life removed or assuaged, through the humiliation, the life, the example, the death, the vicarious suffering of the Divine, the incarnate Son? These things are beyond my capacity to comprehend in their fulness, but they are not beyond my gratitude, or the poor return of my filial, dutiful love. So let us bow the

head and place ourselves at the foot of the Saviour's Cross. So let us stay our minds on God.

We come at length to the last element in the scheme of Revelation for the recovery of man. To Salvation by Faith in the Son of God ; by faith in the incarnate, Divine, crucified, yet ever living, Redeemer.

Many are the attributes which in the Gospel are assigned to faith. By faith the Christian is said to stand ; by faith he walks ; by faith he is made pure ; by faith he removes mountains ; by faith he lives, he is justified, he is saved. But if these attributes assigned to faith are great, so also are the cavils with which men in all ages have been disposed to admit her claims ; and many and grievous are the charges which are laid at her door. Let us try, then, to ascertain what this much-vaunted, much-misunderstood principle really involves. And here I observe, that if there is any one English expression which fully renders the meaning of the Hebrew original, it is *trustfulness of spirit*. The word actually adopted in the Authorized Version of the Old Testament is "trust:" and if one were to recount all the achievements attributed in the Old Testament to trust in Jehovah, one would have to repeat a large portion of the Old Testament itself ; and the results of this trust in Israel's God are very much the same as those assigned in the New Testament to faith. Assigned, be it carefully observed, no longer to faith in God, simply as the Creator and Governor of the world, or even as the Covenant God of the Nation, but to faith in God, as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and as our Father reconciled to His redeemed children, under the new and better Covenant of the Gospel.

But I must go further than this, further, that is, than identifying the principle of the New Testament "Faith" with the principle of "Trust" under the Old Dispensation ; and I must show how this same principle of faith or trustfulness is the very key-stone to our social fabric, the very strength of our daily natural lives.

I observe, then, that just as in the illustration of redemptive suffering, which runs through the world of Nature, we took the mother's pitiable condition at the birth of her child, so here, in illustration of the continuity of faith, we shall take the instance of the growing child itself. For the first years of its existence its whole life is of a necessity a life of dependence and trust. In faith it seeks its natural food ; in faith it nestles in its mother's breast ; in faith it strives to stand ; in faith it lisps the fond names of father and mother ; and, blessed be God, in this Christian land in faith it sits upon its mother's lap, and with stammering lips it learns to call upon the name of Jesus. As years advance, the young child walks at its father's side, and gazing

in his father's face with unquestioning faith, learns from him and applies the first lessons of the life before him. Thus, we all of us, by the natural ordinances of God, are reared and nurtured as it were in the cradle of faith. But these early lessons of faith stop not here. In faith and patience he painfully learns the arts of maturer life. In faith he ploughs, in faith he sows, in faith he gathers into barns; in faith he launches on the deep; in faith he borrows; in faith he lends; in faith he devotes the years of his incipient manhood to manifold studies.

Hence we see that the faith in Jesus, the loving trust, I mean, in a sympathising, personal Saviour, whereby alone the Christian stands upright, the faith in Jesus, whereby the sinner is purified, justified, and saved, is after all no new principle, but rather the old and abiding principle of trustfulness, which alone gives cohesion to our own natural life. It is the old principle indeed—but the old principle heightened, intensified, and sanctified by the Spirit of God. It is the golden chain which unites the world of flesh with the world of spirit, assuring the child of Nature that he is also the Redeemed Child of God.

Thus, after the manner of our great philosophical divine, and in illustration and defence of his method, we have traced some of those many remarkable analogies which exist between the life that now is, and that dispensation of grace which the Sacred Scriptures reveal, as preparing us for the higher and enduring life beyond the grave. I know not what impressions the survey of this wonderful system of analogies may have upon the minds of my readers. Perhaps, what chiefly impresses my own, is the wonderful constitution of the Human Spirit. It is indeed fearfully and wonderfully made. What strange, what vast capacities, for good or for evil! It can degrade itself to the diabolical; it can be raised nigh to the Divine. The choice is ours; the help is from the Spirit of the Lord; and they that seek shall find.<sup>1</sup>

C. PRITCHARD.

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<sup>1</sup> In this Paper—the distinguished writer will pardon our remark—a present-day chapter, so to speak, has been added to the Analogy. The Professor's replies to recent sceptical objections, particularly to the objections which come from followers of Hume, can hardly fail to do good service. We are glad to know that the masterly work of Butler, discredited as it is by Evolutionists and Scientists of various shades, keeps its place in Butler's University.—Ed.