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ARTICLE I.

THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD AS RELATED TO THE WORK OF REDEMPTION.

There are two great chains connecting man in his destiny with eternity and with God. One is the chain of God's providence; the other is the chain of Christ's redemption. It might at first appear difficult to decide which of these, considered in itself and apart from its relations to the other, affords matter of more profound and interesting inquiry.

How wonderful, for instance, is the chain of divine providence, as, taking its origin in the depth of the eternal purposes of God, and interweaving itself with all the details of human history, it forges its successive links in the midst of the rise and fall of empires, the growth and decay of civilisations, and the revolutions and dismemberments of states, presenting to us the finger of God in every event of history, from the falling of a sparrow to the overthrow of a kingdom or the extinction of a world.

How wonderful, on the other hand, is the chain of redemption, which takes its rise in the depth of the same unfathomable eternity, which we may trace backward link by link to the same deep counsels of the same unchanging Jehovah; and

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ARTICLE III.

THE REIGN OF LAW.

The Reign of Law. By the DUKE OF ARGYLL. Fifth Edition. George Routledge & Sons, New York. 1869. Pp. 433.

The culminating points of the successive ages of human culture are marked by the interpenetration of religious and philosophic thought. It distinguished the Socratic period. It was the vital principle of the Alexandrian school. It was the redeeming feature of the alchemical and scholastic discussions of the Middle Ages. And it imparts a growing significance and dignity to the studies and the controversies of the present day. Indeed, it is the goal to which, manifestly and naturally, any course of wide and deep investigation must finally tend. The tracts of thought are not divided, nor even bounded; they shade insensibly into each other. Though we begin with the material, we are presently environed by the intellectual; and while we grapple with the intellectual, we are confronted with the moral and drawn within the solemn shadows of religion. All tangents to the surface of the earth point to heaven.

For the first time in its long and evil life, infidelity has now attained to the utterance of a positive doctrine. The spread of logic, and the wide domination of the inductive philosophy, have imbued the thinking world with the idea of law. Hither, by a tacit concentration, the powers, the passions, and the hopes of believing and unbelieving minds are drawn; but chiefly, for a time, the unbelieving.

One who looks up from the unsightly "foothills" to a range of lofty mountains, is the subject of a strong and delightful illusion. These rough and awkward elevations are clearly clay, or mould, or stone; but those towers of amethyst and violet that lift the sky—those starry heads that kindle with the sunrising and blaze as he descends—they are fairy-land at least. Let judgment say what it will, even the enlightened imagination sees something more than stolid soil, or snow, or ice; while supersti-

tion always kept its mountains clad in raiment of the supernatural, and the unbalanced mind bestowed its illegitimate wonders there.

Now, when induction began to gather up its local conclusions into "laws of nature," and to discover or invent generalisations which bound together groups and congeries of such laws, and these, in their turn, were found unifiable in still larger utterances, it is hardly to be wondered at that imagination not only outran reason, but misinterpreted her deliverance. It associated power with grandeur. It mistook the light—*reflected* light—that bathed and glorified those heights, for an interior, spontaneous, and substantial glory. It crowned as actual king, not reigning only, but governing, those very principles, when lifted into broad generalisations, which, amid the foothills of homely experience, it had taken at their proper value.

And thus, again, unbelief is seen as the twin of misbelief, and godless philosophy may find, justly diverted to itself, the prophetic accusations of Holy Writ against Popery, inasmuch as law, like "the man of sin, the son of perdition," "opposeth and exalteth itself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that, as God, it sitteth in the temple of God, *shewing itself that it is God.*"* Yea, to His own transcendent, world-embracing thought, His own plan and will embodied in the creation, has man tried to give a frame and power to crowd Him from His throne and reign over His works.

This, therefore, may be called the first doctrinal phase of infidelity. While it *denies* that the being and handiwork of God can be proved—and is thus far on old ground with somewhat new weapons—it also *declares* that everything we see and know, have discovered or may yet discover, can be accounted for by reference to the laws of nature.

The Church, according to her wont, while abundantly ready to defend the truth committed to her charge, has been slow to join issue on the main point. She has yielded reluctantly and ungracefully to the progress of new sciences, and the evidence,

*2 Thess., ii. 4.

continually widening in its testimony and demands, of the prevalence of law in nature. And although she had certain obvious responses to make, such as that "law necessarily implied a law-giver," so little confidence had many of her champions in the force of their own plea, that there grew up a very general feeling that all territory won for science was lost to religion. Every conquest of law was felt as a defeat to the gospel. So much more jealously was guarded all that remained: so much more loudly, though with an increasingly tremulous voice, did many "watchmen" warn off intruders from a domain which their weak faith and weak reason converted into cloud-land. We have carefully said "many champions" and "many watchmen," because, though they were many, they are not all. Some have been found, and in rapidly growing numbers of late, to see the true line not only of defence, but of reconquest.

It is, indeed, amazing that any who knew God should have forgotten that the reign of God is necessarily the reign of law. Religion without law is superstition. Superstition is atheism in a delirium. And he to whom the Almighty Maker has become known, even in outline, must surely see that creation expresses thought, that thought necessitates a plan, and that plan, by excluding chance, enthrones law.

But the difficulty has not lain in a denial or forgetting on the part of theology of this bald and general statement of the truth. We have taken refuge in it—sheltered ourselves behind it, as behind a wall, against the details and mingled reasonings and imaginations of the philosophers. They, as we have seen, were the subjects of a very natural illusion. They predicated life and causal power of the "laws of nature." They grouped such heterogeneous and diverse formulæ under that one title—the simplest and most casual generalisations of natural history classed as "laws" along with the sublime, invariable, sovereign force of gravitation—that they turned both their own heads and ours. The "Vestiges of Creation" accounted for the first appearance of vegetation in the world, (which, it was assumed, must have been brush-shaped,) by crediting it to electricity, because certain particles of matter, under certain electrical condi-

tions, arrange themselves in a brush-like shape. And "an eminent professor and clergyman of the Church of England" is said to have sided with the Comtists on questions of law in nature, and yet preached "high doctrinal sermons from the pulpit until his death, . . . on the ground that propositions which were contrary to his reason were not necessarily beyond his faith!" So inference ran riot with the infidel, and common sense forsook the clergyman. It was indeed high time for some true man to be endowed with courage to look the formidable error in the face; for the "reign of law" threatened to end speedily in chaos.

The Duke of Argyll was by no means the first to dare this contest, or even to enter upon it. It is his distinction that he seems very nearly to have finished it. The crude attempts of his predecessors did little more than prepare the way for the superb book before us. Studiously plain in its attire, it is transcendently rich in thought—rich in the rare grace of thoroughness. The style is a model of lucidness and severely chaste beauty.

The first and great thing to be done in the settling of this controversy was to settle the meaning of terms in common and even incessant use. Indeed, it is startling to find how nearly all it is of what needed to be done. To define the natural and supernatural, and fix their true boundaries, if they are distinct, and obliterate all spurious boundaries, if they are one; to analyse the phrase, "laws of nature," and show us how many things we meant by it, and what their respective values and powers are—this is more than half the battle.

"We must cast a sharp eye indeed on every form of words which professes to represent a scientific truth. If it be really true in one department of thought, the chances are that it will have its bearing on every other. And if it be not true, but erroneous, its effect will be of a corresponding character; for there is a brotherhood of error as close as the brotherhood of truth. Therefore, to accept as a truth that which is not a truth, or to fail in distinguishing the sense in which a proposition may be true, from other senses in which it is not true, is an evil having consequences which are indeed incalculable. There are

subjects on which one mistake of this kind will poison all the wells of truth, and affect with fatal error the whole circle of our thoughts." Pp. 56, 57.

Perhaps few thinking men, who thought upon the old basis, have read the first chapter of "The Reign of Law" without being startled at the difficulty of discriminating the province of the natural from that of the supernatural. The world had assumed that they must be not only distinct but contrary; and it seems probable that the *usus loquendi* which opposes them to each other will prove stubborn and deep-rooted, despite the profound and forcible reasoning which endeavors to remove it. And this will indicate, if it does not establish, the conclusion that this *usus* is founded on an ordinance of thought, which in turn must be founded on a truth. In other words, the distinction between the *ideas* represented by the two words, "natural" and "supernatural," must be a real distinction, whether the things so named actually occur or not.

We are somewhat surprised that, among the various accounts of the supernatural, quoted from various works, the following, from Butler's immortal Analogy, escaped the eye of our author: "What is natural as much requires and presupposes an intelligent agent to render it so, *i. e.*, to effect it continually, or at stated times, *as what is supernatural or miraculous does to effect it for once.*"* Here is a real and just distinction upon the surface of things—one which the common mind, accepting phenomena as they come, and "looking on the outward appearance," cannot but recognise and name; and that is the distinction between continuous sequences and occasional appearances.

But Bishop Butler immediately proceeds to show, in words that constitute a marvellous anticipation of the very latest reaches of thought in this direction, how utterly without foothold in true philosophy that classification is; that it is an antithesis, and not a distinction. We quote the passage now in full:

"But the only distinct meaning of that word [natural] is, *stated, fixed, or settled*—since what is natural as much requires

*Part I., Chap. I.

and presupposes an intelligent agent to render it so, *i. e.*, to effect it continually or at stated times, as what is supernatural or miraculous does to effect it for once. And from hence it must follow that persons' notion of what is natural will be enlarged in proportion to their greater knowledge of the works of God and the dispensations of his providence. Nor is there any absurdity in supposing that there may be beings in the universe whose capacities and knowledge and views may be so extensive as that the whole Christian dispensation may to them appear natural, *i. e.*, analogous or conformable to God's dealings with other parts of his creation—as natural as the visible known course of things appears to us."

Compare with this the following from the work before us:

"The truth is, that there is no such distinction between what we find in nature and what we are called upon to believe in religion, as men pretend to draw between the natural and the supernatural. It is a distinction purely artificial, arbitrary, unreal. Nature presents to our intelligence, the more clearly the more we search her, the designs, ideas, and intentions of some

'Living Will that shall endure,
When all that seems shall suffer shock.'

"Religion presents to us that same will, not only working equally through the use of means, but using means which are strictly analogous—referable to the same general principles—and which are constantly appealed to as of a sort we ought to be able to appreciate, because we ourselves are already familiar with the like." P. 50.

The concession, then, is complete on the part of belief, as represented by these great thinkers, that there is but one domain, and that a domain of law: Butler pointing out that it may be so, and probably is; Argyll contending that it is and must be so. The only regret we have is, that this ever needed to be a *concession*; that the Church had not from the first seized and held this ground as its own impregnable citadel. But this is an anticipation.

We accept, then, broadly, the doctrine of the absolutely universal "reign of law." We proclaim it as emphatically and more joyfully than the philosopher who makes law his God. Height above height the mighty pile arises—

“The world’s great altar-stairs,
That slope through darkness up to God.”*

Turn where we will, we find cause and effect moving in ordained sequences. The shape of the earth, the place and velocity of the moon, the solar reign, the stellar and nebulous systems; the submission of light to spectroscopic analysis; the principles of crystallisation and of vegetative and animal life; mechanics, chemistry, magnetism; geology, sociology, and, as we shall show in the conclusion of this article, religion itself—all, all confess the presence and prosper in the sway of law. Law is the one, supreme, and universal predicable of being. It does not stop, as in Wordsworth’s confession of it, with “the round ocean and the living air, and the blue sky, and in the mind of man.” Its range is wider and higher still.

But this sweeping acceptance of universal law does not settle the controversy between belief and unbelief. It only opens the last chapter of the present volume of it. That conflict will endure while there remain minds which will not have the Lord to reign over them. Just at this point the question recurs which has been so often and so unfruitfully discussed—What is a “law of nature?” He who has tried his dialectical skill upon a simple definition of it, has not failed to find it very awkward to manipulate. And the reason of that awkwardness will immediately appear: it is that formulæ so varied and even incongruous have been grouped under that single title and denominated “laws.” But while this has been a signal and almost vital philosophical error, as a feature of language and thought, it has its value, as an evidence of man’s irresistible tendency to believe in a common principle where he beholds a constant result.

Without pausing upon the criticism of the various definitions proposed, all of them colored more or less by the several schemes of thought intended to be sustained by them, we turn to the work before us, and find a notable substitution for all such ineffectual attempts, of a clear and exhaustive classification, under five heads, viz.:

*Tennyson: *In Memoriam*, LIV.

“First—We have law as applied simply to an observed order of facts.

“Secondly—To that order as involving the action of some force or forces, of which nothing more may be known.

“Thirdly—As applied to individual forces, the measure of whose operation has been more or less defined or ascertained.

“Fourthly—As applied to those combinations of force which have reference to the fulfilment of purpose or the discharge of function.

“Fifthly—As applied to abstract conceptions of the mind—not corresponding with any actual phenomena, but deduced therefrom as axioms of thought necessary to our understanding of them. Law, in this sense, is a reduction of the phenomena, not merely to an order of facts, but to an order of thought.

“These great leading significations of the word law* all circle round the three great questions which science asks of nature—the what, the how, and the why:

“(1.) What are the facts in their established order?

“(2.) How—that is, from what physical causes—does that order come to be?

“(3.) Why have these causes been so combined? What relation do they bear to purpose, to the fulfilment of intention, to the discharge of function?” P. 65.

The example chosen to illustrate the first and lowest sense of the word law is the Three Laws of Kepler. They were “facts of constant numerical relation between the distances of the different planets from the sun, and the length of their periodic times; and, again, between the velocity of their motion and the space enclosed within certain corresponding sections of their orbit. These laws were simply and purely an ‘order of facts’ established by observation, and not connected with any known cause.” P. 67.

But “an observed order of facts, to be entitled to the rank of a law, must be an order so constant and uniform as to indicate necessity, and necessity can only arise out of the action of some compelling force. . . . All order involves the idea of some arranging cause, the working of some force or forces, of which

*“In its *primary* signification, a “law” is the authoritative expression of human will enforced by power. . . . It becomes . . . necessary to define the *secondary* senses with precision.” P. 64. The italics are ours.

that order is the index and the result," p. 68; and we say that such order of facts must be due to some "law." This is the second of the five senses specified above.

Of law in the third sense, "the one great example before and above all others, is the law of gravitation; for this is a law in the sense not merely of a rule, but of a cause—that is, of a force accurately defined and ascertained according to the measure of its operation." P. 69.

We arrest the enumeration here a moment, as our author does, to remind ourselves that "no one law—that is to say, no one force—determines anything that we see happening or done around us. It is always the result of different and opposing forces nicely balanced against each other. The least disturbance of the proportion in which any one of them is allowed to tell, produces a total change in the effect. The more we know of nature, the more intricate do such combinations appear to be." P. 76. This is one of the cardinal truths of this whole body of thought—one of the great "strategic points" of the Church. As examples of the use well and convincingly made of it, we refer in passing to Whewell's *Indications of the Creator*, and McCosh on the *Divine Government*, Book II., Chap. I., §§2, 3.

And here we come upon the fourth sense of the word law.

"It is used to designate not merely an observed order of facts—not merely the bare abstract idea of force—not merely individual forces according to ascertained measures of operation—but a number of forces in the condition of mutual adjustment; that is to say, as combined with each other, and fitted to each other, for the attainment of special ends. The whole science of animal mechanics, for example, deals with law in this sense—with natural forces as related to purpose and subservient to the discharge of function. And this is the highest sense of all—law in this sense being more perfectly intelligible to us than in any other; because, although we know nothing of the real nature of force, even of that force which is resident in ourselves, we do know for what ends we exert it, and the principle that governs our devices for its use. That principle is, combination for the accomplishment of purpose." Pp. 78, 79.

But law in this sense is not only most easily intelligible as a

statement—it is also the most easily provable as a fact. When, for example, by the study of an organ in any animal, we have discovered its function, we know not merely what it does, but what some special construction enables it to do. “It is not merely its work, but it is the work assigned to it as an apparatus, and as fitted to other organs having other functions related to its own. The nature of that apparatus . . . is not an inference from the facts, but it is part of the facts themselves. The idea of function is inseparable from the idea of purpose.” P. 82.

As a case in point, let us take the poison of a deadly snake, as described on page 34:

“It is a secretion of definite chemical properties, which have reference not only, not even mainly, to the organism of the animal in which it is developed, but specially to the organism of another animal which it is intended to destroy. Some naturalists have a vague sort of notion that, as regards merely mechanical weapons or organs of attack, they may be developed by use: that legs may become longer by fast running, teeth sharper and longer by much biting. Be it so; this law of growth, if it exist, is but itself an instrument whereby purpose is fulfilled. But how will this law of growth adjust a poison in one animal with such subtle knowledge of the organisation of another, that the deadly virus shall in a few minutes curdle the blood, benumb the nerves, and rush in upon the citadel of life? There is but one explanation—a mind, having minute and perfect knowledge of the structure of both, has designed the one to be capable of inflicting death on the other. *This mental purpose and resolve is the one thing which our intelligence perceives with direct and intuitive recognition.*”*

Another convincing illustration is the case of the electric fish; where we see “the subordination of many laws to a difficult and curious purpose—a subordination which is effected through the instrumentality of a purely mechanical contrivance.” P. 103.

But here confronts us the great bugbear—the objection whose strength lies in the obscure terrors of a long word—even anthro-

*The italics are ours.

pomorphism. Purpose and design are said to be human conceptions—conceptions which it is not logical, at least not philosophical, to transfer to God. To this the entirely satisfactory answer is, that we can neither speak or think at all on these topics, as believers or as unbelievers, without borrowing not only words but conceptions from the processes of human thought and action. “The idea of natural forces working ‘by themselves’ is preëminently anthropomorphic. This is undoubtedly the way in which they seem to us to work when we employ them.” P. 106.

There is no need, however, to rely upon the argument *ad hominem*, as in that last quotation. The thing censured is absolutely inevitable. “Every conception of a mind, even though it be described as ‘universal,’ must be in some degree anthropomorphic. [For] our minds can think of another mind only as having some powers and properties which in kind are common with our own.” P. 106. This is patent and requires no argument.

But if the objector insist that the infirmities of our minds can be evidence of nothing but their own existence, and that the incorrigible anthropomorphism of our minds is such an infirmity, and cannot, therefore, avail to ascertain the mode of the divine existence, we waive the consideration so often and so justly urged, viz., that if we would know or hold any truth whatever, we must assume the veracity of our faculties; and that not to assume it is to deny the veracity of God. We waive them, in order to bring forward another and most important view of the matters involved, suggested by a reflection of our author’s. It surprises us to find that he has not used it in this connexion; that is, *God’s systematic self-subjection to his own laws*:

“The divine mission of Christ on earth—does not this imply not only the use of means to an end, but *some inscrutable necessity that certain means, and these only, should be employed in resisting and overcoming evil?*” * What else is the import of so many passages of Scripture implying that certain conditions were required to bring the Saviour of man into a given relation

*Italics ours.

with the race he was sent to save? 'It behoved him . . . to make the Captain of our salvation perfect through suffering.' 'It behoved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren, *that he might be,*' etc.—with the reason added: 'For *in that* he himself hath succored being tempted, *he is able* to succor them that are tempted.' Whatever more there may be in such passages, they all imply the universal reign of law in the moral and spiritual as well as in the material world; that those laws had to be—behooved to be—obeyed." P. 52.

The dominion of law is the government of God. And the thought here expressed is not that a fate called nature has set up its throne, and a Demiurge called God is constrained thereby, but that it has pleased the sovereign Jehovah to impress a certain type of law on this world, and to order his own course in an immutable conformity thereto. Whether, and how far, this same type of law is impressed, in all particulars, upon all places of his dominion, is a question immaterial to the present discussion, to which we cannot turn aside. But no reader or thinker can fail, when once it has been suggested to him, to discover, or discovering, to adore, the march through all nature of this sublime and self-imposed obedience. Natural history is full of descriptions of ingenious circuities for the accomplishment of ends which could have been more directly reached but for the interposition of some law. We pass by all minor instances, however, to adduce one signal and final fact—the more willingly as it has been used on the other side: the imprint of one plan and order on the whole vertebrate kingdom.

Throughout this vast department of animal existence there is a curious fact that recurs so often and so conspicuously, that a word has been formed—mal-formed rather—to describe it. Almost every animal beneath the grade of man has "*aborted*" members, whose sole use is to keep up their connexion and signalise their particular rank in the scale of life. The limbs of all the mammalia, and even of all the lizards, terminate in five jointed bones or fingers, though many of them need and use only one, two, or three. Those which are not needed are dwarfed, but always traceable. In the horse, only one is used, and that one is developed into a hoof; yet parts corresponding to the

other four can be detected. There are monkeys which have no thumbs for use; but they have thumb-bones under the skin. So has the wingless bird of New Zealand hidden wing-bones. Snakes have the rudiments of legs, and the slow-worm aborted blade-bones and collar-bones. These are only part of the examples collected by our author upon a single page (p. 195); but they suffice to suggest a problem and introduce the solution:

“These useless members, these rudimentary or aborted limbs, which puzzled us so much, are parts of a universal plan. On this plan the bony skeletons of all living animals have been put together. The forces which have been combined for the moulding of organic forms have been so combined as to mould them after certain types or patterns. And when comparative anatomy has revealed this fact as affecting all the animals of the existing world, another branch of the same science comes in to confirm the generalisation and extend it over the innumerable creatures that have existed and have passed away. This one plan of organic life has never been departed from since time began.

“When we have grasped this great fact, all the lesser facts which are subordinate to it assume a new significance. . . . A plan of this kind is in itself a purpose. An order so vast as this, including within itself such variety of detail, and maintained through such periods of time, implies combination and adjustment founded upon and carrying into effect one vast conception. It is only as an order of thought that the doctrine of animal homologies is intelligible at all.” Pp. 196, 197.

And in this conclusion, we have reached the most signal instance of the fifth sense assigned to the word “law,” viz., “a reduction of the phenomena not merely to an order of facts, but to an order of thought.” Another, almost as striking example, is the first law of motion—a law “not corresponding with any actual phenomena, but deduced therefrom as axioms of thought necessary to our understanding of them.” And we see clearly that anthropomorphism is a law of nature as well as of thought. We may remark here, in passing, that if the idea of law as an efficient cause—law filling the place of a God—needs any exposure, this analysis and classification of the senses in which the word is used suffices of itself for its overthrow. It is not law, but force acting according to law, that is here seen as hav-

ing any efficiency. And all the instincts of man—his fears, his reason, and his affections—combine to make him abhor the conception of a blind but self-existent force. There *must* be a God to wield it.

It is with great reluctance that we pass by the remaining topics of this great work, such as the Reign of Law in the Realm of Mind, and the Law of Natural Consequence in Sociology; but our space is rapidly diminishing and restricts us to two most important matters of which the Duke of Argyll has not treated—of one of which he has indeed taken no notice—but which are indispensable to the complete treatment of this subject.

The first is, the appearance of law in evil, and the fallacious inference (intended to operate as a *reductio ad absurdum*) that law here proves an evil lawgiver as cogently as law in good proves a good lawgiver. Perhaps no more transparent sophism ever found popularity among cavillers, or inflicted perplexity upon friends of the gospel. But let it be noted that this is its farthest reach of success. It has never, at least in modern times, created believers in the hideous notion it professes to establish. Men may be atheists, but they cannot be Manicheans.

The problem presented here is not the insoluble, unfathomable problem of the origin of evil. It is the alleged appearance of design, the alleged existence of law, the setting up of a kingdom of sin and pain, with the consequences thence ensuing.

Now, there is no principle more fully recognised in all departments of science and art than this: that *a permanent defect or abnormal element in that which is subjected to constant forces will work constant results.*

Suppose a cog to be broken in Babbage's Calculating Machine; the calculations would all come out wrong, but they would do so in a manner and to a degree which could be themselves ascertained even in advance by calculation, and which would be as invariable as the work of the original and uninjured machine. And the resulting errors, had we not this principle to guide us, might be as confidently charged upon the inventor as the wonderful achievements now seen redound to his honor.

So, again, though the interference of the heavenly bodies with each other's motions and times cannot be called a defect, it so far resembles it as to come under the same rule. And thus perturbation becomes a guide. The constant deviation, amid constant forces, points to an element which, though not in fact abnormal, is abnormal in respect of the system as hitherto understood, and requires now to be enrolled or newly characterised.

On the supposition, therefore, that the kingdom as created is a kingdom of good, and that into that good kingdom an element of evil has somehow found its way, the consequences would be not merely evil, but evil *seemingly framed by a law*; that is to say, there would be definite sequences, constant results, measures and fruits of apparent adjustment, which would perfectly resemble design.

If it be asked whether the appearance of design in good cannot be accounted for in the same way, we must answer: both Good and Evil cannot be so accounted for; because constant forces, combinations, and laws, infer design, and that design must include one result or the other. It remains now only to inquire, Which is the normal principle and which the anomaly? Sin is the transgression of the moral law; pain and sickness are witnesses to the transgression of physical law; government is simply the bulwark of social law. It is thus utterly incredible that Evil should be the normal principle and Good the anomaly.

Repeating the *caveat* that the matter before us is not the origin of evil, but the alleged appearance of law in evil with the corollary of law, viz., design, we advance to a second reflection, bearing upon this appearance. Assuming this world to be a stage upon which God administers his moral government, or any part thereof, and assuming—what cannot be denied—his knowledge of the moral character man would put on, *i. e.*, that he would fall and sin, there are but three possible suppositions: that this sinner should be introduced into a heaven, into a hell, or into a broken world, like this. The first was obviously impossible to a Holy Ruler; the third—we bless his mercy for it!—was forbidden by his infinite compassion and the purposes born of his tender pity. There remained, therefore, but the second

possibility. In the realisation of it he has shown the inestimable riches of his goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering.

Sin, introduced into the soul of man, which remains the subject of natural law, even when it has despised the moral law—sin works itself out into a life and becomes a definite element in the *cosmos*, according to the law stated above, concerning an anomaly under the operation of constant forces. And in a probationary world, sorrow, pain, and toil, would be—

1. The witnesses of the divine disapprobation;
2. The discipline of virtue and piety;
3. The instruments of providential control.

But if they were thus taken up among the instrumentalities of his government, they would wear every mark of design. All these appearances are thus explained on the one hand without surrendering our position concerning the reign of law, and on the other without admitting the horrible idea of a kingdom of evil.

“She comes, she comes! the sable throne behold
 Of Night primeval and of Chaos old;
 Before her, Fancy’s gilded clouds decay,
 And all its varying rainbows die away;
 Wit shoots in vain its momentary fires;
 The meteor drops and in a flash expires.
 As, one by one, at dread Medea’s strain,
 The sickening stars fade off the ethereal plain;
 As Argus’ eyes, by Hermes’ wand oppressed,
 Closed, one by one, to everlasting rest;
 Thus, at her fell approach and secret might,
 Art after art goes out, and all is night.
 See skulking faith to her old cavern fled,
 Mountains of casuistry heaped o’er her head;
 Philosophy, that leaned on heaven before,
 Shrinks to her second cause and is no more.
 Religion, blushing, veils her sacred fires,
 And, unawares, Morality expires.
 Nor public flame, nor private, dares to shine,
 Nor human spark is left, nor glimpse divine.
 Lo! thy dread empire, Chaos, is restored,
 Light dies before thy uncreating word;
 Thy hand, great Anarch, lets the curtain fall,
 And universal darkness buries all.”—*Dunciad*.

This is all we can properly be called upon to do. The question of the origin of evil presses alike upon all schemes of religious and irreligious thought, and is equally unanswerable by them all. *Why* a revolted prince was permitted to exist and to work evil, is a problem we suppose to be insoluble by finite minds. It may be that we could not receive the solution if it were given us. It may be so simple and obvious that when it is given, we shall be amazed that it had never occurred to us. But one thing we know—that evil, with all its mystery and might, is wielded by a power as sublime in goodness as matchless in force. “The day will declare it.” To that awful resolver of entanglements, and simplifier of complications, and finisher of sore trials, we humbly and undoubtingly remit the innumerable mysteries of life.

The last paragraph of the author’s preface will serve to introduce the topic, with a few suggestions upon which we must close this article:

“I had intended to conclude with a chapter on ‘Law in Christian Theology.’ It was natural to reserve for that chapter all direct reference to some of the most fundamental facts of human nature. Yet without such reference, the reign of law, especially in the ‘realm of mind,’ cannot even be approached in some of its very highest and most important aspects. For the present, however, I have shrunk from entering upon questions so profound, of such critical import, and so inseparably connected with religious controversy. In the absence of any attempt to deal with this great branch of the inquiry, as well as in many other ways, I am painfully conscious of the narrow range of this work.” Pp. 11, 12.

We greatly regret the absence of that chapter, even though the eminently brave and ingenious writer had avoided the subjects of controversy between the churches, and had thus given it but a broken and fragmentary character. It is in consequence of this “reserve,” of course, that so little is said of miracles, and almost nothing of prayer and its answers—though what is said is exceedingly rich and stimulative of thought, (see pages 23–26, 61.) With due diffidence, we offer two or three suggestions on this class of topics.

The common conception of a miracle is, that it is an autocratic setting aside or violation of law. That this is at least a defective account of the matter is seen at once when we reflect that miracles were intended to produce and did produce their results *according to law*. The miraculous loaves and fishes, for example, were offered to the same organs, and to the same result, *i. e.*, nutrition, as those produced naturally. The healing of the palsied man restored his frame to its normal condition, and set his life going again, just where it had run down. Miracles were not disorganising but reorganising agents.

Note, again, that "a miracle would still be a miracle [not only if accomplished by law, but] even though we knew the laws through which it was accomplished, provided those laws . . . were beyond human control. We might know the conditions necessary to the performance of a miracle, although utterly unable to bring those conditions about. Yet a work performed by the bringing about of conditions which are out of human reach, would certainly be a work attesting superhuman power." Pp. 25, 26.

If, now, it be objected that the setting aside of the laws which normally obtain in certain conditions, and the production of effects other than the normal ones, is itself a violation of law, inasmuch as the operation of law is in its very essence necessary, immediate, and invariable—that is precisely the issue we desire to raise.

One of the most general observations of science is this: that *in the various series of laws the higher continually countervails and sets aside the lower*, within certain limits. The operation of that principle is always in favor of organisation; the contrary operation, *i. e.* without those limits, is the general formula of disintegration.

The laws of mechanical attraction are subordinated to chemical forces. These, again, are modified, and even overruled by magnetic, and still more by vital action. And the vital energies in the same way are under allegiance to the mind, and are greatly influenced by its states; though this, we confess, is a very limited monarchy indeed.

But, be it more or less, here is the frustum of a great pyramid; not only law above law, but series dominating series; the higher usually controlling the lower, and thus maintaining the glorious order of nature. And though there are outbursts of volcanic violence, and the strata beneath are hurled through those above, this is a visible and disastrous disorder, and a signal confession of the need, and the blessed reign, of law.

Now, therefore, the question arises: Is this pyramid of systems of laws as incomplete as our account of it thus far? Does the ascending scale break off with man, as a matter of law? Is not the burden of proof thrown on those who assert that it does break off there? those who admit that there is a God, that there are duties, that man is immortal, and yet deny the connections of law between Him and us?

And though we must admit our ignorance of the next gradations of being above us, so far as the light of nature is our teacher, and that thus "the world's great altar-stairs slope *through darkness up*;" yet, have we all reason, and all man's best instincts, and all the "sounds of glory ringing in our ears," to teach us that they slope through this darkness "up to God."

For we are not denied the knowledge where these series end. The point of the pyramid, the zenith of the heavens, the infinite towering consummation of the glory and order of the universe, is Jehovah. His essential attributes are the laws of his being, and his moral attributes are the laws of his nature. Out of his absolute freedom, in his perfect reigning, all his works proceed. The culminating series in the ascending scale of laws is that of the laws of the divine life.

But now, having reached this awful height, and having carried with us the truth that superior systems of law control the inferior in their respective measures, the problem of miracles is already solved, and their alleged inconsistency with the reign of law finally disappears. They are simply the impact of these great first laws upon the (comparatively) temporary and local ones,* and prove the immovable firmness of the throne of God.

* . . . "It might be part of the original plan of things that there should be miraculous interpositions." Analogy, P. II., Ch. II.

It is now logically in order to introduce the kingdom of grace into the realm of law—that blessed interpolation of light into the darkness upon the altar-stairs.

And the first fact that presents itself here is one of which we can never exhaust the significance in any direction: that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was “made under the law.” The main reference here is undoubtedly to his assumed relations to the moral government of God, his voluntary subjection to both precept and penalty; but this, as we have already seen, was for a reason, and inferred a previous plan still vaster than itself. And this plan reveals itself, not merely in his obedience to the precept, and endurance of the penalty, of what we call pre-eminently “the law.” His bodily and mental frame stand in similar relations to natural law. He hungers; he thirsts; he is weary; he sleeps; he weeps. If they scourge him, his dear flesh breaks; if they crown him with thorns, “his visage is marred more than any man’s” by his trickling blood. When the “broken body” can bear no more, he dies.

Thus, while the central work of his life was to do homage to the highest law, and reconcile it with our salvation, it was an integral part of his work to accept all law within its own domain, and establish the kingdom of grace within the domain of nature. Thus his miracles are never wrought for his own convenience or relief, but always for specific and (so to speak) *official* reasons. His parables, as Trench so forcibly shows, every where imply, and rest upon, the analogy—more, the inward and vital identity—between the phenomena of nature and the facts of grace.*

One other remark. The life of grace in the soul is not only begun in us in accordance with the general laws of our being, as so many divines have said and shown; but it develops upon certain vital laws—opens out from within, as all finite life must, under a preëstablished plan peculiar to itself. It is the grafted “branch” upon the vine; it is the “wheat” growing in the field; it is the grain of mustard seed, or the fig-tree in the vineyard. One of the summary commandments is—“*Grow in grace.*”

* On Parables; Introduction, p. 19, *seq.*

But this spiritual life, though it be peculiar, is not all isolated. It is *inlaid* in the life of nature, both inwardly and outwardly, with the most exquisite joinery. It inhabits the body, and informs the mind, and lives in a marvellous partnership with them. It is both the subject and the object of the providential government. It threads with its own gold the whole tissue of human history. And in all these respects it is, beyond all question, a province within the universal reign of law.

And now, if it should be objected that there is no room left, in this view, for that personal and vital union of God with the regenerate soul, which is the most precious part of its inheritance; we reply that this is precisely that "peculiarity" which we have repeatedly mentioned. Every department of the vast kingdom of God is characterised by some law of its own—some principle at least not so prominently applied elsewhere. And the special law of the spiritual kingdom is the law of personal union with God by faith through grace.

Miracles on the one hand, and the laws of gracious life on the other, are like the great timbers and bars of iron that are built into the walls of great structures, to bind the parts together. They "lodge" amid the ordinary phenomena of nature, and they tower into the sublimest heights of grace. Jesus Christ is thus seen to be the chief corner-stone, not merely of the Church, but of all that immense edifice of the love and power of God, of which the Church is the crown, the beautiful consummation. The mere mineral world is the base, not without wise and good laws of its own. Each successive remove upward is finer and yet finer built. The Church is "gold, and silver, and precious stones" built in; yea, living stones. Then dimness veils a mighty space; but from the height of heaven flashes, sun-like, the throne of the King.

"As some tall cliff that lifts his awful form,
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm,
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head."