Posthumous Publications - Notes and Essays

In the previous chapter of this work Butler's last major literary writing - Erewhon Revisited has been discussed in order to examine the continuity of his intellectual quest. His Notes have been used and referred to in all the previous chapters to ascertain and confirm his views and opinions expressed in his writings - both literary and non-literary. These Notes, wide in range and theme, apart from providing a living document of Butler's mind and art, are rich in sufficient materials for forming the groundwork of his intellectual quest. His essays on sundry subjects also are worth studying for gleaning some ideas which through a systematic study will yield a rich output in terms of his intellectual quest.

Therefore, in this chapter on Butler's Notes and Essays, published posthumously, we propose to find out how they reflect his intellectual quest. The Notes contain the germ of many of his writings and, taken together subject-wise, they hold a mirror to Butler's personality and range of vision. His letters, though
published posthumously, are excluded from the purview of the present study, as they are not essential elements in his intellectual quest.

In Section I Butler's Notes are examined and Section II will be devoted to a discussion of his essays. comparatively the Note Books are more important for the evaluation of Butler's intellectual quest, which, as already stated in the previous chapters, was to spiritualise evolutionism, to reconcile religion and science and to criticise some aspects of the contemporary society. His intellectual quest finds expression in a dialectical manner in examining the positive and negative aspects of things with the synthesis implicit.

Butler was fully aware of the fact that to jot down so many notes about himself was "a piece of ridiculous conceit" on his part, since it implied his confidence regarding his future emergence as a great writer. In spite of this diffidence regarding his future position he left behind six volumes of large Note Books, sixteen volumes of general correspondence. His carefully arranged and

indexed Note Books attest the fact that notwithstanding his want of self-confidence regarding his future literary position he had the common human desire to be remembered by posterity. His Notes also indicate his hope that his writings, about which his contemporaries were nonchalant, were likely to provoke the interest of the future generations. His essays, first published posthumously in 1904 by R.A. Streatfield entitled Essays on Life, Art and Sciences, are rich in materials, though stray, in respect of his intellectual quest.

Section I

Butler's Notes

In this section we shall be concerned primarily with Butler's ideas of one's Note-book. A small Note-Book may contain the literary aptitude of a person. The literary instinct of a man, according to Butler, may be known if he keeps a small note book in his waistcoat pocket for recording striking things which he may use in his writings. Early in his life Butler developed the habit of carrying a note-book and writing down in it anything he wanted to remember. To record his flying ideas he recorded as many
notes on matters that struck his mind and preserved them, re-written on loose sheets of paper which constituted a sort of museum stored with the wise, beautiful, strange creatures that were continually wringing their way across the field of his vision. In due course the notes he made were copied into larger books and the contents of these were in turn revised, recopied and indexed. At the time of his death there were six of these note-books, beginning in 1874 and ending in 1902, containing some hundreds of notes.

In 1902, Butler's friend and biographer, Henry Festing Jones, edited a selection entitled *The Note Books of Samuel Butler*, which was followed in 1934 by *Further Extracts from the Note Books of Samuel Butler*, edited by his literary executor - A. T. Bartholomew. Festing Jones grouped his selection of Notes under appropriate headings and edited the material very considerably. He often amalgamated several of Butler's entries on the same subject into larger Notes, and used his discretion in altering words and phrases and even on occasion added a sentence here and there. Bartholomew's selection, on the other hand, allowed the Notes to speak for themselves. They were
published almost in toto and in the chronological order. Bartholomew's edition was followed in 1951 by the edition of Geoffrey Keynes and Brian Hill entitled Samuel Butler's Note Books. This edition has followed the lead of Bartholomew, but the selection of Notes from the two earlier editions aims at giving the best picture regarding the range of Butler's mind and the variety of his interests.

These notes are on various topics - starting from Butler's early life at Langer to the sonnets of Shakespeare. Festing Jones, Butler's friend and biographer, writes about Butler's use of the Notes which through repeated writing and speaking became a part of his memory. Butler "looked at them and sifted them, from as many angles as he could, always with the same aim - to test their validity and permanence."¹

Butler's Note Books can be properly appreciated only after forming an idea of his philosophy. Butler's conception of truth is unique. According to Butler, truth is unattainable and hence it should be moderated with occasional

¹ Samuel Butler Author of Erewhon: The Man and his work - John F. Harris (1916), p. 247
untruth. About the definition of truth Butler wrote - "We can neither define what we mean by truth, nor be in doubt as to our meaning."\(^1\) Absolute truth, Butler holds, is humanly unattainable - "There is no such source of error as the pursuit of absolute truth."\(^2\) Butler's view of truth is pragmatic in character. This comment is confirmed by the two following entries in his Note-Books—

(1) .... truth is only that which is most largely and permanently trouble-saving.

(2) Truth does not consist in never lying but in knowing when to lie and when not to do so.

As an idealistic writer Butler thought seriously on life, man and society. His notes on these bespeak his earnestness and seriousness, but many of the Notes are ridden with contradiction. In one Note he wrote:

2. Ibid, p. 288
We have got into life by stealth and petitio principii, by the free use of that contradiction in terms which we declare to be the most outrageous violation of our reason. We have wriggled into it by holding that everything is both one and many, both infinite in time and space and yet finite, both like and unlike to the same thing, both itself and not itself, both free and yet inexorably fettered, both every adjective in the dictionary and at the same time the flat contradiction of everyone of them.

The Note Books of Samuel Butler (Ed. H.F. Jones, 1919), p. 10

The note of contradiction is obvious in this entry. Another entry records:

Life is like music, it must be composed by ear, feeling and instinct, not by rule. Nevertheless one would better know the rules, for they sometimes guide in doubtful cases - though not often.

Ibid, p. 11

Butler's insistence on instinct as the guide to life is evident in this Note. What are the rules guiding life? Butler's reply is:
There are two great rules of life, the one general and the other particular. The first is that everyone can, in the end, get what he wants if he only tries. This is the general rule. The particular rule is that every individual is, more or less, an exception to the general rule.

(The Note Books of Samuel Butler
(Ed. H.F. Jones, 1919), p. 11)

Apart from a clear indication of contradiction in the end of this Note, it is an assertion of self-will for achieving success. Butler is aware of the monotony produced by life - "Life is one long process of getting tired."¹ Naturally the question about the worth of life may arise and Butler writes:

(Ibid, p. 17)

This assertion denotes Butler's bold acceptance of life as it is. This profound 'yea' to life finds eloquent expression in - "To live is to love."² He had no cynicism about the worth of man. This equation of life with love comes somewhat unexpectedly from Butler.

1. The Note Books of Samuel Butler
H. F. Jones,

2. Ibid, p. 17
The basic aim of all artists is to explore truth. This exploration of truth involves a lot of trials and tribulations, physical agony and mental torment. Truth comprises contradiction in all forms and a belief in the principle of contradiction is essential for ultimately exploring truth. In one of his Notes Butler wrote:

The search after truth is like the search after perpetual motion or the attempt to square the circle.

The Note Books of Samuel Butler (Ed. H.F. Jones), p. 302

This Note clearly indicates Butler's belief that truth is unattainable. Engaged in defining truth Butler wrote - "An eternal contradiction in terms meets us at the end of every enquiry." ¹

Butler's dialectical frame of mind finds expression in many of his Notes two of which are excerpted below:

Everything must be studied from the point of view of itself, as near as we can get to this, and

¹. The Note Books of Samuel Butler (Ed. H.F. Jones), p. 301
from the point of view of its relations, as near as we can get to them.

_The Note Books of Samuel Butler_
_(Ed. H.F. Jones), p. 279_

Practically everything should be seen as itself pure and simple, so far as we can comfortably see it, and then the two views should be combined, so far as we can comfortably combine them. If we cannot comfortably combine them, we shall think of something else.

_Ibid, p. 279_

These two Notes bring out clearly the dialectical character of Butler's mind and this dialectical frame forms the basis of his intellectual quest. His view of life, as revealed in his sundry Notes, about society, religion, human psychology etc is characterised by this dialectical attribute in which everything is viewed from two opposite angles - one positive and the other negative.

The dialectical process of Butler's thinking is to be found equally in his concept of God and Christianity. In some of his Notes he is coarsely irreverent to the God-idea and passes derogatory comments on Christianity. In one Note Butler wrote:
To love God is to have good health, good looks, good sense, experience, a kindly nature and a fair balance of cash in hand.

This idea of God is strange and thoroughly materialistic. Excepting the attribute of 'a kindly nature', the other attributes have very little to do with religion. To Butler God is the meeting point of two extremes - "..... the most absolute nothing and the most absolute everything are extremes that meet in God."\(^1\) Butler's fondness for contradiction is evident here, but his definition of god as the meeting point of two extremes is entirely valid. He wrote like an atheist in the Note - "Resist God and he will fly from you."\(^2\) This same irreverent attitude towards Christianity is expressed in the following note:

Christianity is a woman's religion, invented by women and womanish men for themselves.

\[^1\] Samuel Butler's Note Books (Ed. Keynes & Hill), p. 63
\[^2\] Ibid, p. 310
Butler did not elaborate his idea behind the Note. But presumably he meant that the story of resurrection originated from Mary Magdalene who saw two angels and Jesus during resurrection. Resurrection, the myth upon which Christianity is founded, had its origin in the credulity of an over-zealous woman. By 'womanish men' Butler meant men credulous by nature. This Note contains the germ of Butler's extended writing entitled The Fair Haven.

In another Note Butler wrote:

Christianity is true in so far as it has fostered beauty and false in so far as it has fostered ugliness. It is therefore not a little true and not a little false.

This Note clearly presents an aesthetic appreciation of Christianity. About the efficacy of prayer Butler was sceptic and wrote:

Prayers are to men as dolls are to children. They are not without use and comfort, but it is not easy to take them seriously.
The above Notes may show Butler as a sceptic. But the essential duality of his mind, an important aspect of his intellectual quest, finds expression in the field of his faith. In one Note he wrote:

The essence of Christianity lies neither in dogma, nor yet in abnormally holy life, but in faith in an unseen world, in doing one's duty, in speaking the truth, in finding the true life rather in others than in oneself, and in the certain hope that he who loses his life on these behalves finds more than he has lost.

Samuel Butler's Note Books
(Ed. Keynes & Hill), p. 309

This Note contains a serious statement and it indicates the highest spirituality. In another entry again Butler wrote:

God is the unknown, and hence the nothing qua us. He is also the ensemble of all we know and hence the everything qua us. So that the absolute nothing and the absolute everything are extremes that meet (like all other extremes) in God.

The Note Books of Samuel Butler
(Ed. H.F. Jones, p. 324
Apart from synthesizing contradictions, this Note too is a serious statement of a sincere believer. This ambivalent attitude to Christ and Christianity can be explained in the light of his deep-rooted antipathy towards priestcraft and the profession of the clergyman. In one Note he thus attacked priestcraft:

"Priestcraft arises from men's desire to have their opinions formed for them. This desire is like nature; you may expel it with a fork, but it will always return."

(Further Extracts from the Note Books of Samuel Butler (Ed. A.T. Bartholomew, 1934), p. 107)

In another Note he made a bitter attack on clergymen—

"Clergymen ought to be like barristers, and allowed to plead on a side which they know to be a wrong one without its being expected of them to pretend that they believe it true."

(Ibid, p. 291)

This antipathy towards priestcraft and clergymen derives from his hatred against his clergyman father and his own direct acquaintance with the pretension of the profession during his own temporary trafficking in the field of religion. But Butler, in spite of his occasional criticism of
Christianity, is not in favour of rejecting it outright. He is in favour of reconciling science and theology —

What we want is to reconcile both science and theology with sincerity and good breeding ....


As an honest doubter, like Francis Newman, Tennyson, Froude, the writers of Essays and Reviews, John Morley, Butler also experienced the intellectual bewilderment in the wake of the recent explorations of sciences and encountered the problem of reconciling science and religion. This attempt at reconciling the two forces, held contradictory by many during the second half of the Victorian period, constitutes an important aspect of Butler's intellectual quest and this quest, which finds more systematic expression in The Fair Haven, God the Known and God the Unknown, Erewhon, The Way of All Flesh, and Erewhon Revisited, is of ambivalent nature and this in these entries of the Note Books is in a germinal form.

Like many other Victorian intellectuals Butler looked like a rebel in the field of religion. As a philosophical writer, imbued with a profound quest for exploring truth,
he had a unique view of morality. His concept of morality was pragmatic in form and had no religious base. He defined morality in a novel way: "Morality is the custom of one's country and the current feeling of one's peers." Morality stands for a standard of conduct respected by good men independently of positive law and religion. Conscience is the basic criterion of morality the external aspect of which varies from country to country. In another Note Butler wrote about Christian morality:

The Christian morality is just as immoral as any other. It is at once very moral and very immoral.

2. The Note Books of Samuel Butler-(Ed. H.F. Jones), p. 29

Love and righteousness are the basic aspects of Christianity and to call Christian morality immoral indicates a personal prejudice. Butler's Utilitarian concept is evident in the Note - "Morality turns on whether the pleasure precedes or follows the pain." Butler's Utilitarian and pragmatic concept of morality finds clear expression in the following Note:

2. The Note Books of Samuel Butler-(Ed. H.F. Jones), p. 29
The question whether such and such a course of conduct does or does not do physical harm is the safest test by which to try the question whether it is moral or no.

The Note Books of Samuel Butler (Ed. H.F. Jones), p. 26

According to Butler, a normal man should have a balance of vice and virtue in harmonious proportion. This idea finds expression in a Note - "The extremes of vice and virtue are alike detestable." In spite of having a unique concept of morality Butler's acceptance of life is positive and this is evident in the following Note:

... the very essence of morality is involved in the dislike of death. Morality aims at a maximum of comfortable life and a minimum of death.

Samuel Butler's Note Books (Ed. Keynes & Hill), pp. 168-169

As a philosophical writer, harassed with the riddle of existence, Butler was preoccupied with the haunting idea of death and his entries on death are of a wide range. In one Note he wrote -

1. The Note Books of Samuel Butler (Ed. H.F. Jones), p. 29
Death is dissolution - the dissolving of a partnership the partners to which survive and go elsewhere. Death is certainly the corporation or breaking up of that society which we have called ourselves.

[Samuel Butler's Note Books (Ed. Keynes & Hill), p. 127]

In another Note death has been called "a larger kind of going abroad." Butler did not accept physical death as a termination. In another Note he wrote:

On death we do not lose life, we only lose individuality; we live henceforth in others not in ourselves.

[Ibid, p. 268]

Butler believed in a life beyond death - not from the religious but from a biological, point of view. He held that the body dissolved, but memory continued.

Some of his Notes carry his idea of science and scientists. His books on evolution failed to produce the noise he expected. Professional scientists like Charles Darwin
and Huxley greeted him with contemptuous silence. This made him call the modern men of science "Mrs. Hobson's parrots."\(^1\) Disgruntled Butler ventilated his ire bitterly - "Science is being more and more personified and anthromorphized into a god."\(^2\) In a mocking tone he called Darwin and Huxley the "only begotten son of science."\(^3\) Butler held the professional scientists charlatans and wrote:

Scientific to men like Herbert Spencer means little else than the power to say in hard words and involved sentences what could be better said in easy ones.

\(\text{Further Extracts from Butler's Note Books (Ed. A.T. Bartholomew), p. 136}\)

In another Note he wrote:

The charlatans of science will never accept a new truth from the hands of an outsider till the outsiders make them do it, and then they will say they found out themselves.

\(\text{Ibid, p. 135}\)

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1. The Note Books of Samuel Butler (Ed. Keynes and Hill), p. 32
2. Ibid, p. 233
3. Ibid
Butler classed scientists into two categories - one group consisting of disinterested explorers of truth and the other group comprising self-seekers, fond of displaying their knowledge. Opposed to making any distinction between mind and matter, organic and inorganic, Butler held mind and matter as the functions of each other. His chief bone of contention with Darwin was the latter's mechanistic concept of evolution and he attempted to spiritualise this mechanistic concept. During his own time he could not comprehend what he attempted to achieve. As his controversy with Darwin ripened gradually he left the field of science and entered into the sphere of metaphysics. So his ultimate conclusion about evolution is thoroughly metaphysical -

We can no longer separate things as we once could: everything tends towards unity; one thing, one action, in one place, at one time. On the other hand, we can no longer unify things as we once could; we are driven to ultimate atoms, each one of which is an individuality.

(The Note Books of Samuel Butler
(Ed. H.F. Jones), p. 84)
In *Erewhon Revisited* he pointed out the alarming growth of orthodoxy in science replacing that of religion. This idea finds clear expression in many entries on science quoted above. The theory of panzoism and raising a voice of warning regarding scientific orthodoxy constitute two important aspects of Butler's intellectual quest.

An ideological preoccupation with some contemporary social problems is an important constituent of Butler's intellectual quest. As a thinker he could not accept the prevalent system of education and severely criticised it in *Erewhon* and *The Way of All Flesh*. In one Note he wrote:

> He [the father] keeps his children like monks in a monastery as regards money, and calls this training them up with the strictest regard to principle.

*Samuel Butler's Note Books* (Keynes & Hill), p. 125

Apart from expressing his personal experience of economic stringency during his student life, this note is of importance in respect of his prepossessing preoccupation with the theme of money. Butler's literary works, excepting
Erewhon, failed to earn any notice from the professional academicians and this provoked his anger to write -

The more I see of Academicism the more I distrust it.

Samuel Butler's Note Books
(Keynes & Hill), p. 125

About the institution of the present family system Butler nursed an ill-feeling which found eloquent expression in The Way of All Flesh. Many of the entries of his Note-Books too contain a bitterness against the system of family. In one Note he wrote:

I believe that more happiness comes from this source than from any other - I mean from the attempt to prolong family connection unduly and to make people hang together artificially who would never naturally do so. The mischief among the lower classes is not so great, but among the middle and upper classes it is killing a large number daily. And the old people do not really like it much better than the young.

The Note Books of Samuel Butler
(Ed. H.F. Jones), p. 31

In another entry he wrote:
He was really a happy man. He was without mother and without descent. He was an incarnate bachelor. He was a born orphan.

Another Note expresses his bitter hostility to his father —

To most men the death of his father is a new lease of life.

He considered his father his "most implacable enemy from childhood onward." Butler's attitude to the family system, like the other aspects of life, is also ridden with contradiction. These Notes testify to his ingrained hostility to the family system, but in practice he could not offend the members of his family by publishing The Way of All Flesh (in which he had attacked his father and other members of his family) during his life time.

1. The Way of All Flesh —
   Samuel Butler, Intr. p. ix
In his Notes Butler wrote a lot about his own self, his likes and dislikes, his frustration springing from public negligence and his dream about a life of posthumous reputation. In one note he wrote:

Shall I be remembered after death? I sometimes think and hope so. But I trust I may not be found out (if I ever am found out, and if I ought to be found out at all) before my death.

[The Note Books of Samuel Butler (Ed. H.F. Jones), p. 369]

In many Notes he expressed his doubts and misgivings about his future literary position. In one of his Notes he recorded:

When I am dead do not let people represent me as one who suffered from misrepresentation and neglect.

[Ibid, p. 70]

But in another Note he wrote - "I have gone in for posthumous fame ...."¹ This Note expresses his hope that he

¹ Samuel Butler's Note Books (Ed. Keynes and Hill), p. 99
would enjoy posthumous fame. The conflict between apparent indifference to public recognition and an inner longing for fame offers to these Notes an ambivalence, a common characteristic of Butler's intellectual quest.

Butler's miscellaneous Notes are interesting for both variety and self-revelation. The Note in which Butler wrote - "the life we live in others, which is our truest life."\(^1\) appears paradoxical, but considered in the context of his theory of memory as propounded in his books on evolution, it is sound from his own standpoint. In another entry he wrote - "He is a poor creature who does not believe himself to be better than the whole world else."\(^2\) It sounds like a conceit, but it also gives expression to his positive acceptance of the value of life. Butler's definition of an idiot also is startling and funny -

An idiot is a person who thinks for himself instead of letting other people think for him.

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2. Ibid, p. 60
Any person who differs considerably from his neighbours is an idiot ipso facto.

*Samuel Butler's Note Books* (Ed. Keynes & Hill), p. 81

The whole Note is sarcastic and bears the implication that originality in the process of thinking betrays lack of intelligence. Butler is serious in praising:

..... gentleness, absence of brow beating or overbearing manners, absence of fuss, and generally consideration for other people.

*Ibid*

In one Note he extols lying:

*Lying has a kind of respect and reverence with it.*

*Ibid, p. 85*

Another Note expresses the same idea:

Any fool can tell the truth, but it requires a man of some sense to know how to lie well.

*Ibid, p. 114*

The two Notes convey Butler's love of paradox which is evident in other Notes, e.g. - "Be virtuous and you will be
vicious. The duality of his thinking process is evident in Note like - "If you follow it far enough, it always leads to conclusions that are contrary to reason." Logic and consistencies are luxuries for the gods and the lower animals, or "Logic is like reason; it has only two enemies, the too much and the too little, and the too much is the more dangerous."

These Notes on a variety of topics testify to the personality of Butler as man and writer. One common distinguishing feature of these notes is the dialectical process of his thinking. Often two notes on the same topic vary widely and that variance is in perfect tune with his theory of life which holds the operation of contradiction as a natural property of life. Many of the notes of startlingly paradoxical character have contextual significance.

2. Ibid, p. 165
3. Further Extracts from Butler's Note Books (Ed. A.T. Bartholomew, 1934) p. 80
4. Ibid, p. 280
5. Ibid, p. 279
and are important milestones in the history of his thinking process. But the startling character of some of the notes also derives from his habit of viewing everything in a novel and unconventional manner.

A close examination of these notes will reveal the seriousness of Butler's attitude to life. He was profoundly concerned with life in its biological and metaphysical aspects, with a unique concept of truth and morality. This profound preoccupation clearly exposes the depth of his quest of life and his attempt to grapple with truth through his intellect. His notes on Christ and Christianity bespeak his never-flagging interest in religion which he sought to reconcile with the new explorations of contemporary sciences. Some of his notes contain his theory of panzoism in a nebulous form. His ideological preoccupation with some social problems is obvious in his notes on education, morality and the family as an institution. These notes form the warp and woof of Butler's intellectual quest.
Section II

Butler's Essays

Butler's essays were published posthumously by his literary executor, R.A. Streatfield, in 1904 under the title Essays on Life, Art and Science in which Mr. Streatfield started his introduction by referring to the versatility of Butler's writings. It was published again in 1925 under the joint editorship of H.P. Jones and A.T. Bartholomew in the Shrewsbury Edition as Collected Essays in two volumes.

In respect of Butler's intellectual quest all the essays are not of uniform importance. In our discussion the essays that reveal his intellectual quest will be treated as more important and the rest will be referred to for tracing the chronological order only. The first essay entitled God the Known and God the Unknown has already been discussed in detail in Chapter II of this dissertation. The second essay A Clergyman's Doubts contains a series of letters in which a profound theological problem has been stated. The idea of writing these letters came into
Butler's head, because he was then re-writing that part of *The Way of All Flesh* which deals with Ernest's religious doubts and this made him wish to restate the difficulties with which he had himself struggled. An honest clergyman on reading *Essays and Reviews*, *The Origin of Species* and Bishop Colenso's writings on the Pentateuch was assailed with doubt on the score of the miraculous scaffolding of Christianity. His religious profession became a millstone to him, but he could not give up his profession on account of family necessity. It involved him in a mental struggle between conscience and exigency. He expressed his doubt in the form of a published letter and it was answered by a man signing as 'Cantab' who counselled dissembling his convictions for the sake of subsistence. The letter is bitterly attacked by another man signing 'Oxoniiensis' who is up in arms against adopting a middle course.

No condemnation can be too great for the man who enters or remains in the Church while rejecting in his own mind all belief in the dogmas of Christianity.

A spate of letter follows and another writer signing as 'Ethics' also joins the fray. 'Oxoniensis' considers the views of the 'Earnest Clergyman' to be -

... far in advance of the philosophy of 'Cantab' and 'Ethics' because, believing he has found the truth, he is unable to reconcile himself to, and is unhappy in, a passive connivance with that which he holds as falsehood.


R. A. Streatfield, Butler's literary executor, asserts that all the letters were written by Butler himself under different assumed names. Butler's usual habit of viewing a problem from two completely contradictory angles is obvious in the letters. The presence of this dialectical method, an important aspect of his intellectual quest, makes the essay important. The impact of the cult of doubt on the clergymen on whom belief is imposed by profession - is the theme of the present essay under study. In private life the clergyman is assailed with doubt, but the necessity of subsistence compels him to assume a life of pretension. This problem finds a fuller treatment in the case of Theobald in The Way of All Flesh. An important facet of Butler's intellectual quest is an attempt to reconcile
science and theology. The onslaughts of science on theology generated the cult of doubt in the minds of the Victorian intellectuals in the second half of the period. The present essay portrays the impact of the cult of doubt on clergymen, representatives of religion.

The second essay in the volume entitled Life and Habit, Vol.2 purports to be a postscript of the first book bearing the same name. This essay is touched upon for containing some comments of Butler on contradiction which Butler accepted as a process of natural law for arriving at truth. Prof. Mivart objected to the theory of Butler advanced in Life and Habit and called his 'unconscious knowledge', 'unconscious memory' as contradiction in terms. Butler answered - "Contradiction in terms is the natural end of all propositions; it is to them what death is to the living organism."¹ and further stated - "All words and all combination of words are juggles;"² The second part of Butler's statement rather weakens his point of argument, but the first part contains

2. Ibid, p. 112
Butler's statement regarding contradiction characterising the manner of his intellectual quest. In this essay at another place Butler wrote - "We want to have everything both ways;" The same fondness for contradiction is expressed in another passage -

... we are so many living contradictions in terms ourselves, for every part of us is both us and not us at one and the same time.

Collected Essays - Vol. I, p. 115

To Butler the word absolute was an unattainable ideal. Contradiction was natural. According to Butler, absolute truth is unattainable, but we can do something positive through incessant strivings after an ideal absolute standard; ...

Another noticeable feature of this essay is Butler's stress on catholicity of temper. He wrote:

The only true logic in temper - in the power of understanding all things, believing all things; and at the same time, understanding perfectly well

1. Collected Essays - Vol. I, p. 113
2. Ibid, p. 128
that our fullest understanding goes but a little
way beneath the surface, that we should be very
cautious in our beliefs, and the less we hope the
less likely we are to be disappointed; in the
power of putting up with the small crosses and
ills of intellectual life, and of fusing them
without fuss into harmonious ensemble. St. Pauls
calls this charity, I prefer to call it temper.

_Collected Essays - Vol. I,
- Samuel Butler, p. 128_

This long tract on temper is somewhat unusual with Butler.
The application of this theoretical belief in his own life
could give it a more agreeable shape.

In this essay he defined faith in the following
way:

Faith is a kind of spiritual memory which has
the same unifying binding force upon reason which
memory has upon the individual moments of our lives
or the forces of cohesion upon matter.

_Ibid, p. 156_

and again Butler wrote:

Our faith is as the Kingdom of Heaven; it is
within us; it is the secret of our existence which
can be read without destroying the existence itself.

_Ibid, p. 157_
Both the above Notes have the definite touch of spirituality.

The essay concludes with a definition of consciousness - "Everything is conscious but somethings make more fuss about their consciousness than others."¹ His favourite gospel of moderation finds expression in another entry - "The one serious conviction that a man should have is that nothing should be taken too seriously."²

From the standpoint of Butler's intellectual quest this essay is of considerable importance. Apart from advocating the doctrine of contradiction, the present essay contains Butler's concept of panzoism, a major aspect of his intellectual quest.

In the next essay entitled On the Genesis of feeling (a lecture delivered at the City of London College on the 15th December, 1887) Butler expressed the different aspects of feelings.

1. Collected Essays - Vol.I
   Samuel Butler,
   p. 178

2. Ibid
In the next essay *On knowing what gives us pleasure* (a lecture delivered in 1887) Butler advocated pleasure as a safer guide to right conduct. This Benthamite doctrine of pleasure is affirmed in the lines -

... the aim of morality is a maximum of the most comfortable life and a minimum of pain and death for the greatest number of people. Whatever tends in this direction is moral, and whatever tends against it is immoral.

(*Collected Essays - Vol. I, p. 213*)

The next essay entitled *Proficiency and Originality* (found out by H.F. Jones and A.T. Bartholomew among the Mss. of Butler following Streatfield's death in 1919) is not so important in respect of Butler's intellectual quest.

The next essay - *The Sub Division of the Organic World into animal and vegetable* (a lecture delivered by Butler at the Working Men's College, 1887) Butler elaborated his belief that the line of demarcation between the organic and the inorganic is arbitrary and unjust and this belief

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1. Nowhere in his writings Butler acknowledged to imbibe the theory of Bentham. But his concept of morality is Utilitarian in character and akin to Benthamite hedonism.
finds more systematic and detailed expression in his
*Luck, or Cunning?*, which has already been discussed in
Chapter II. The trend of Butler's ideas from scientific
to metaphysical is clearly indicated in this essay.

The next essay entitled *Croesus's Kitchen Maid* also
dwells upon the theory of unconscious memory.

The volume II of the *Collected Essays* contains 13
essays all of which are not worthy of consideration from
the standpoint of Butler's intellectual quest. The first
esssay - *The Deadlock in Darwinism* has already been exa-
mined in detail in Chapter II of this dissertation.

The second essay in this volume entitled *Thought and
Language* (delivered as a lecture in 1890 at the Working
Men's College) is occasioned to criticise the view of
Max Muller that reason is so inseparably connected with
language that the two are in fact identical. This essay
brings out Butler's acuteness of intellect, but from the
stand-point of his intellectual quest it is not of suffi-
cient interest. Butler forwards a strange definition of
language -
Money indeed may be considered as the most universal and expressive of all languages.

\[ \text{Collected Essays Vol.II} \]
- Samuel Butler, p. 80

To Butler money is the symbol of power and authority and it recurs in his works like a refrain.

In the third essay entitled *How to Make the Best of Life* (delivered as a lecture in 1895 at the Somerville Club) Butler achieved poetic refinement. He started with a poetic definition of life - "Life is playing a violin solo in public and learning the instrument as one goes on." Here he made a distinction between two kinds of life - physical life and life in ideas. According to Butler, our life in this world is a life of probation. Many persons, physically dead but alive in their actions, exert greater influence than living men.

In the next essay entitled *Quis Desiderio* (which was contributed to the 3rd number of *The Universal Review*, July, 1888) Butler advanced some funny conjectures about Wordsworth's *Lucy* poems.

The next essay *The Aunt, the Nieces and the dog* (appearing in *The Universal Review*, May 1889) is rather

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1. \[ \text{Collected Essays - Vol.II} \]
Samuel Butler, p. 93
a skit, but it contains some cherished ideas of Butler on education. According to Butler - "the main use of a classical education consists in the check it gives to originality." About the public school and universities Butler wrote -

Our public school and universities play the beneficent part in our social scheme that cattle do in forests: they browse the seedling down and prevent the growth of all but the luckiest and the sturdiest.

Collected Essays - Vol. II - p. 128

The function of public schools and universities, Butler held, was to suppress originality. This view, advanced in Erewhon, finds expression in the excerpted paragraph. Criticism of contemporary system of education is an important aspect of Butler's ideological preoccupation with some social problems and this criticism, a vital constituent of his intellectual quest, is obvious in this essay, as it is in Erewhon and The Way of All Flesh.

1. Collected Essays - Vol. II
Samuel Butler, p. 128
The sixth essay entitled *Rambling in Cheapside* (published in *The Universal Review*, December, 1890) is like a wave of playfulness and contains nothing worthy in respect of intellectual quest. In one passage Butler wrote:

> It is love that alone gives life, and the truest life is that which we live not in ourselves but vicariously in others, and with which we have no concern.

[*Collected Essays - Vol. II, p. 142*]

The first part of the statement is somewhat unusual with Butler and the second part of Butler's statement regarding vicarious existence recurs in his other writings too. About university education a passage in this essay states -

> .... by a merciful dispensation of Providence university training is almost as costly as it is unprofitable. The majority will thus be always unable to afford it, and will base their opinions on mother wit and current opinion rather than on demonstration.

[*Ibid, 147*]
This note also unambiguously brings out the futility of university education.

In another essay entitled *A Medieval Girl School* (published in 1889 in *The Universal Review*) Butler extolled the Italian habit of combining devotion with amusement and advocated this for keeping Christianity as a living faith. He wrote:

"If Christianity is to be a living faith, it must penetrate a man's whole life, so that he can no more rid himself of it than he can of his flesh and bones or of his breathing."

/* Collected Essays - Vol.II - p. 199 */

This entry is surprisingly a serious statement and is not in conformity with Butler's general habit of making subversive remarks on Christ and Christianity. This essay clearly reveals the remedy he prescribed for a reconciliation of science and religion, an important factor of his intellectual quest. The essence of religion lies in faith in an unseen world, in doing one's duty, in speaking the truth, in selflessness, not in dogmas. This extended definition of religion is, in no way, in conflict with science.
The main aim of this study of Butler's intellectual quest as revealed in his works, is to examine him as a thinker. This chapter closes the evaluation of his writings thematically. But without considering Butler as an artist no evaluation of his intellectual quest can claim comprehensiveness. This, as well as his contribution to the contemporary current of ideas and his impact on posterity, will be offered in the next chapter to sum up this study of his intellectual quest.