

highest rule conceivable for us human beings in the Divine Order of things.¹ And again, if we turn to the result of recent biological enquiry, we are struck—as great authorities² have told us—by the practical impossibility of predicting phenomena and events in the living portion of creation with anything approaching that accuracy with which exact science has taught us to predict the workings of inanimate or mechanical forces. This may be owing to the complexity which governs every individual instance or to the undefinable nature of the living principle itself:³ we meet everywhere the unexpected, the unforeseen, the incalculable, that which is contingent, individual, and unique. This circumstance—as I stated on a former occasion—forces us continually to resort from the scientific exact and mechanical view of nature to a poetical and artistic interpretation, which seems to bring us much nearer

¹ The comparative history of religion, after having been confined mostly to learned treatises on the subject which have accumulated an enormous amount of detail has, in recent times, been introduced more and more into general literature and made accessible to thoughtful readers. I should like to mention as especially interesting and helpful as an introduction to this large subject the writings of Dr F. B. Jevons; and besides a larger work referred to above (vol. iii. p. 163, n.), his small treatise entitled 'Comparative Religion,' in the "Cambridge Manuals of Science and Literature" (1913); see especially what is there said on the Christian conception of Love (p. 136 *sqq.*)

² See *ante*, vol. ii. p. 372.

³ As already stated on various occasions, the things in nature—notably those in the living and animated world—cannot be thoroughly understood if torn out of their surroundings, and still less if dissected and analysed into their constituent parts. Both these abstracting processes, so essential and so indispensable to scientific research, must be supplemented by ever and again recurring to the *vue d'ensemble*. And this refers equally to such historical growths as the religions of the world. A process of abstraction and of analysis, followed by ever so ingenious a synthesis and reconstruction, misses their real nature and significance. This reveals itself only to the synoptic glance.