THE BATTLE OF BELIEF.

NEVISON LORAINE.

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OPINIONS OF THE PRESS

ON

THE BATTLE OF BELIEF.

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Mr. Dudley S. Calaby
with all kind wishes
from the Author.

Feb. 1906.

A Souvenir

THE BATTLE OF BELIEF.

"This much I may say, that, after a life, already not a short one, spent in the study of Science and Philosophical Divinity, and living in equal intimacy with men of science and with thoughtful divines, I have learned nothing which can reasonably disturb an impartial mind, either in its conviction of the truths of Christianity, as interpreted by the more moderate sections of the Christian Church, or in its acceptance of the divine inspiration of the Sacred Scriptures, not indeed as literal or punctual, but as generic and substantial. I am equally assured that the general development of human knowledge is friendly to these considerations."—*Prof. Pritchard.*

THE BATTLE OF BELIEF

A REVIEW OF THE PRESENT ASPECTS OF THE CONFLICT

BY

NEVISON LORAINE,

VICAR OF GROVE PARK WEST, LONDON;

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TO THE

BELOVED AND HONOURED

MEMORY

OF OUR

SON

HAROLD:

PASSED FROM

MORTALITY TO LIFE.

N. L.

190789

"Religion claims as its own the new light which metaphysics and science are in our day throwing upon the truth of the immanence of God: it protests only against those imperfect, because premature, syntheses, which in the interests of abstract speculation, would destroy religion. It dares to maintain that 'the Fountain of wisdom and religion is God: and if these two streams shall turn aside from Him, both must assuredly run dry.' For human nature craves to be both religious and rational. And the life which is not both is neither."—*Aubrey Moore.*

"The best minds of the future are to be neither religious minds defying scientific advances, nor scientific minds denying religion, but minds in which religion interprets and is interpreted by science, in which faith and inquiry subsist together and reinforce one another."—*Charles Gore.*

PREFACE.

THIS volume is intended as an examination in popular form of the Religious Question, and of the relations existing between Christian faith and "advanced thought." Very mistaken notions, it is contended, prevail in respect of the attitude of the most cultured modern opinion towards the fundamental principles of religion. It is true that religious convictions are widely disturbed. Doubt and unbelief trouble the air, often damping the ardour of religious service, where they fail to destroy the force of religious belief; but the truth advances, the faith strikes far and wide its deepening roots, and there are signs of happy augury in the skies.

It would have been easy to extend the present volume, and some of the questions raised specially tempt more lengthened discussion, but I have preferred to compress the book within the narrowest limits consistent with the scope of the argument.

Every side of the attack is met by large and

learned defences. They are, however, for the few. My aim is to provide a work that may be suited in style, and in size also, to the many, who have neither leisure, nor possibly present inclination to study large and recondite treatises.

A small volume, on Modern Doubt, that I published a few years ago, was received with much favour, and, as I have grateful reason to know, was of service to many who were harassed with sceptical questions and opinions. The present work travels on similar lines, reproducing in a few instances substantially some of the former material, but the argument is entirely reconstructed and greatly enlarged, the opinions expressed are sustained by much more varied and extensive quotations; notes are added to assist the inquirer who may wish to prosecute his studies in different branches of the subject, and the volume is so arranged as to facilitate reference to any branch of the subject under discussion.

The work has been produced amid the various and anxious demands of pulpit and parish, which, I trust, offers some apology for many imperfections; but I have been at much pains to state the case under discussion fairly and clearly, to sustain my contention with ample quotations from the writings of representative men of different schools

of cultured and liberal thought, and by the suggestive concessions of distinguished scientists and others, who, though, for the present, unfriendly to the Christian religion, have yet made admissions which materially assist the Christian argument.

My anxious desire is to aid the Sceptic and to reassure the Doubter; for whatever place they may have reached in the Creed of Negation, they hold my fraternal sympathy. I have known, alas, too keenly, the sorrowful anxieties of religious questionings and doubt:

"Non ignara mali, miseris succurrere disco."

Honest thought and earnest words, along whatever path they travel, command my respectful consideration. Similar results are obtained by various processes; and many roads converge on the same place. It is our encouraging hope that all sincere and patient seekers after truth will ultimately find their rest and deep content, alike for the intellect and the heart, in—

"That God which ever lives and loves,
One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event,
To which the whole creation moves."

I sincerely trust that nothing in this work, either

in phrase or spirit, is unbecoming a disciple of the Beloved Master, who has taught us the duty and delight of loving kindness and gracious courtesy. Amid all differences of opinion we must in this be agreed, that our common aim should be to promote kinship of hearts, and "peace on earth among men of good will."

N. L.

Grove Park Vicarage, Chiswick,
January, 1891.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

In issuing a Second Edition of this work I desire to acknowledge its very favourable reception by the Press, and to that circumstance I am sensible that it greatly owes its encouraging circulation. Several of my critics have remarked upon the numerous and very varied quotations with which I have illustrated and sustained my argument; and some of them—notably an able reviewer in the *Spectator*—have been good enough to express their regret that I had not abridged the quotations and extended my own observations. It is difficult to contend against such courteous and complimentary criticism. But as it was one aim of my book to show the attitude of Modern Thought towards the Religious Question, it appeared to me the most fair and convincing method to summon representative men in different schools of cultured thought to speak for themselves. It would not have been difficult to summarise their views according

to my own judgment, and then to offer my reply; but I felt it to be more equitable to base my comments on their own distinctly expressed opinions. I confess, too, that I had a further threefold object in the use of such varied and exact quotation. 1. To bring distinctly into notice how remarkable and suggestive are the concessions of even the most hostile opinion. 2. To exhibit in their own light the striking and monitory dissensions that exist among the different sects of unbelief. 3. To confront and repel a vague but widely diffused and mischievous opinion that the most cultured and masculine thought of the day has outgrown religious belief.

My conviction is, on the contrary, that in "the Battle of Belief," Christianity, in its essential principles, not only "holds the field," but actually advances "all along the line." I was anxious, therefore, to place beyond dispute the fairness of my "review of the present aspects of the conflict," not only in the disposition of the forces engaged, the weapons used, and the modes of attack, but also in respect of the confusion and internal strife of the opposing forces, whose only alliance is their common hostility to the Christian faith.

I venture to break a lance with my accomplished critic in the *Spectator*, who, in his lengthened article

on this work, has raised a question involving important issues in the Christian argument. He gives an "example" of what he considers to be "an overstatement of *my* case," and he recommends a correction in "the second edition" of my work, which he is good enough to anticipate and encourage. It would be pleasant to comply with the suggestion of so courteous and capable a critic; but as the question that he has raised is one that, *me judice*, affects the permanent validity of historic testimony, he will, I am persuaded, not only excuse my non-compliance with his recommendation, but allow me to defend my original statement of the case.

In the earlier part of the chapter (xv.), from which his "example" is taken, I have analysed with some care a remarkable statement in respect of documentary evidence, contained in *The Creed of Christendom;* and I have endeavoured to show (1) that supernatural events may be incontestably authenticated by documentary evidence; (2) that such satisfactorily authenticated documents, being duly protected and transmitted, are conclusive and permanent evidence of the events which they attest for those distant, whether in space or time, from the occurrences so verified. My reviewer intimates that, in his judgment, this second part of "the

argument is pushed too far"; and he urges that "distance of space and distance of time are not equipollent in the case of documentary evidence."

But surely this observation is scarcely *ad rem.* I do not contend for the necessary equipollence of space and time in reference to documentary evidence. Accidents, indeed, may affect the balance in favour either of space or of time. With our present methods of easy and rapid communication, it might be easier undoubtedly, as my critic says, "to verify an event occurring at the antipodes to-day than an event which occurred in England ten centuries ago"; but I can equally imagine that it might have been less easy a hundred years ago to have verified a reported occurrence in New Zealand or Nankin than an event that had transpired in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. My contention, however, as stated in my work, is that documentary evidence is not *necessarily* deteriorated by time: in other words, that documents may be so satisfactorily attested and so securely transmitted as to retain all their original force, irrespective of time or distance. If this were not so, as I have further urged (p. 55), we are driven into a *reductio ad absurdum.* "If the credibility of documentary evidence *necessarily* diminishes in the process of years, we are compelled to acknowledge that there

must be in respect of every event, however remarkable and historically attested, a vanishing point of distance from the date of the occurrence, at which it ceases to be possible to prove the event; that is to say, there is a date in relation to historic events at which the most veracious and accredited historic occurrences descend from the region of accredited fact to flit and fade amid the shadowy ranks of fiction." This, I contend, is neither a reasonable nor credible opinion. I am persuaded that there are documents being framed to-day that will be held to be as good evidence of the events which they attest to the generations of ten centuries hence, as they are to the present-day residents in Jerusalem or Japan. My readers will find a fuller treatment of the question at issue in cap. xv., pp. 48—58 of this work.

An opinion, expressed by a friendly reviewer in the *Guardian*, invites a reply, as he aims at a point to which I have given some prominence, when he says, "The author makes too much of the fact that the 'philosophers are at war';" and adds, "they do not profess to be a Church, and in natural science consensus is not demanded as a test of truth." Unquestionably that is so "in natural science." But when philosophers and scientists, leaving the region of their proper inquiry and

research, attack the Church, and, in a superior tone, tell us that they have exploded the Christian faith, and found out a more excellent way for the higher life of man, then I contend that I am more than warranted in giving some pains to the examination of their theories, and some space to exhibit their contradictions, confusions, and concessions; that I may thus show that, however much we may and do honour their laborious research, and defer to their opinions in those matters that come within the scope of their legitimate inquiry, yet, in things spiritual, they are blind guides; and manifestly in such matters have no authority to teach, derived either from philosophy or science, since they contradict each other as strenuously as they contradict our holy faith. And I am strongly of opinion that, eminently at the present time, it is a lesson of no small importance to convey to those who are apt to be carried away with what is called "advanced thought," or to be fascinated with the glamour of brilliant names, that the "philosophers are at war," and the scientists as vehemently in controversy with each other, in respect of the facts and principles of the spiritual life, as they are with the ancient faith of the Church of God.

N. L.

September, 1891.

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"Truth, which only doth judge itself, teacheth that the enquiry of truth, which is the love-making, or wooing of it—the knowledge of truth, which is the presence of it—and the belief of truth, which is the enjoying of it—is the sovereign good of human nature. The first creature of God, in the work of the days was the light of the sense, the last was the light of reason, and His Sabbath work, ever since, is the illumination of His Spirit."—*Bacon.*

"The candid incline to surmise of late,
That the Christian faith proves false, I find.
. . . . . .
I still, to suppose it true, for my part
Find reasons and reasons."—*Browning.*

"To fear argument is to doubt the conclusion. . . . . To call names, to accuse of sophistry, to be impetuous and overbearing, is the part of men who are alarmed for their own position, and fear to have it approached too nearly."—*Cardinal Newman.*

"The facts of religious feeling are to me as certain as the facts of physics. . . . . No atheistic reasoning can, I hold, dislodge religion from the heart of man. . . . As an experience of consciousness, it is perfectly beyond the assaults of logic."—*Professor Tyndall.*

"It should not be forgotten that opinions have a moral side to them."—*Sir James Stephen.*

"Le Christianisme n'est que la rectitude de toutes les croyances universelle, l'axe central qui fixe le sens de toutes les deviations."—*Sainte Beuve.*

"No supernatural halo can heighten its spiritual beauty, and no mysticism deepen its holiness. In its perfect simplicity it is sublime, and in its profound wisdom it is eternal."—*Author of* SUPERNATURAL RELIGION.

"If liberty is to be saved it will not be by the Doubters, the men of science, or the materialists; it will be by religious conviction . . . . by the enfranchised children of the ancient faith of the human race."—*Amiel.*

"Besides the particular calling for the support of this life, every one has a concern for a future life, which he is bound to look after."—*Bacon.*

"Whether Christianity be true or false, is the most practical of all questions."—*Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone.*

"Let us put the question with all the reverence due to a faith and culture in which we all were cradled—a faith and culture moreover which are the undeniable historic antecedents of our present enlightenment."—*Professor Tyndall.*

I.

THE religious question has many titles to consideration. The relations existing between the ancient faith and current opinion are of deep practical interest at all times, but at the present day they are of immediate and commanding urgency. "The religious question, whatever may be said or done, is the reigning question of the epoch."*

In the present volume it is proposed to pass under review the modern aspects of religious doubt,

* "Paganism in Paris." Père Hyacinthe. *Nineteenth Century*, Feb., 1880.

to examine the current questions of sceptical inquiry; and to consider the attitude of "advanced thought," as represented by its most distinguished exponents, towards the foundational principles of revealed religion.

In all grades of society religious opinions are deeply unsettled, old convictions are disturbed, new aspects of belief are advocated, many-sided doubt troubles the air, and alas, the cold shadow of a hopeless unbelief has fallen upon many hearts.

Sometimes modern doubt is sharply defined and defiantly asserted, but more commonly it exists without distinctness of apprehension or exactness of definition; it prevails rather as a nebulous conception, and an indefinite quantity—a haze in the atmosphere, but a haze that chills the fervour of devotion and slackens the hand of duty.

For various reasons men shrink from giving defined shape and distinct expression to their opinions in respect of religion. But it is well for the religious doubter, whatever phase of unbelief he has reached, to give objective form and proportion to his confession of faith and canon of conduct, and to look fairly in the face with calm and earnest eyes the belief or unbelief by which he determines to live and die.

Every thoughtful man, disturbed by the religious question, should set distinctly before himself the alternative—have I a religious belief in which my convictions rest, which inspires my sense of duty, exalts my conceptions of life, and kindles the hope of immortality? or, am I living, in every true and proper sense, without religion, without the primary convictions, the regulative principles, the immortal hopes that are of the essence of religion?

If he has accepted the alternative of unbelief, he should endeavour to make clear and explicit to himself the causes that have alienated him from the ancient strongholds of the Christian faith. In making that endeavour he may possibly find that he has simply drifted into unbelief or doubt, as idle flotsam on an ebbing tide; denying or doubting, he does not know exactly why, and accepting he does not know precisely what. Such an attitude of mind, in respect of a question of confessedly grave, practical importance, stands self-condemned.

The unbeliever may say that "he has chosen to release himself from the difficulties and thraldom of religious belief by a deliberate renunciation of the Christian creed." But if so, he misunderstands his position, and misstates his case. He is still in the bonds of belief. He has only

changed his creed. "To disbelieve is to believe."* Unbelief, so called, is only another form of belief. The unbeliever may be more credulous than the believer. The new disbelief may involve more difficulties than the old belief, and impose, on thought at least, inferior conditions of life.

It is then a practical duty that the Unbeliever should state his "Belief" in definite terms; and then ask himself, "Why has the old Faith been supplanted by this new Creed?" Does he find that the new belief is founded in better reason, supported by more cogent evidence, accepted by wiser and more cultured men than the ancient religion? Has he assured himself that a Creed of Unbelief can solace the sorest needs or satisfy the highest aspirations of human life—in short, that it can give either a path of open progress to the intellect, or a home of quiet content to the heart?

The Sceptic's position may not be, however, that

* "Bacon seized the just view respecting *credulity*, seeing plainly that 'to *dis*believe is to believe.' If one man believes that there is a God, and another that there is no God, whichever holds the less reasonable of these two opinions is chargeable with credulity. For the only way to avoid credulity and incredulity—the two necessarily going together—is to listen to, and yield to, the best evidence, and to believe and disbelieve on good grounds."—Essay xvi., "Whately's Annotations."

of positive unbelief or defined denial. He may designate himself simply a *Religious Doubter.*

The sunniest regions are sometimes swept with clouds. Strong faith may have its hours of enervation. Doubts may occasionally come and go as the shadow of a cloud, troubling the stoutest hearts for a season, leaving them, however, with a clearer assurance.

But the doubt that becomes a settled unsettledness of the heart, paralyses conviction, bereaves life of the highest motives of action and the purest sources of happiness. Doubt is a condition of mental dissatisfaction and of moral hazard. Earnest life cannot sit down in it. "Doubting Castle" is no place to dwell in. It should be, it must be, for better or worse, only a temporary occupation. From its dank and dreary chambers we would fain, and with fraternal sympathy, help the Doubter to make his permanent escape.

II.

An impression finds place, and widely prevails, mainly it may be among the younger men, but the evil infection spreads, that the evidences which authenticate Christianity have been somehow exploded ; that modern science has pronounced

against the primary facts of the Christian Faith, and that the Doubter, if not indeed the actual Unbeliever, holds his position under the general shelter and encouragement of the most advanced and enlightened thought.

As a consequence of this mistaken opinion, men in various ranks of society are found speaking with an easy assurance and a "light heart" of "having given up their Christian belief as part of an old world story that has passed away before the progress of cultured inquiry."

In the place of the ancient faith there obtains very extensively a rule of life, sometimes openly stated, but more generally only tacitly implied, to the following effect: "The present life I know and enjoy; of the future life I know nothing. The things seen are patent to the senses; the invisible is the unknown, and the future is the uncertain. I live therefore for the seen, and the known present, and let the unseen and the unknown future look after themselves."

Now we challenge and controvert that entire position. We deny as a matter of fact: 1. The proven inadequacy of Christian evidence. 2. The destructive results of scientific research. 3. The hostility of the most cultured thought. 4. We aver that this

Unbelieving Belief, this Creed of Doubt, "I live for the seen and the present, and let the unseen and the future look after themselves," is intellectually untenable, and morally a morass.

It would be an interesting investigation, yielding many suggestive considerations, but carrying us away from the direct line of our present purpose, to endeavour to trace the mental and moral mood, and, as far as might be practicable, the motives that sway those who reject the Christian faith for the Creed of unbelief.

It must be acknowledged, indeed, with tender sympathy, that occasionally the melancholy descent is made with serious consideration, sad reluctance, and even with

"Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears."

But how often it is the mere careless drifting away of life from ancient and familiar moorings into the ebbing currents of a hazardous unrestraint; and sometimes, alas! it is a wild impulse, "a leap in the dark," made with a frivolous egotism, or a mere sensual passion.

Christianity has its sublime declarations, its noble ethical principles, its historical and internal corroborations; it is a creed confessedly loftiest in thought, purest in principle, illumined with

unique splendour of immortal hope, and around it murmur Æolian airs of memory; yet how often is it bartered, an ancient birthright for a mess of pottage; dropped, indeed—substance for shadow—to snatch at a creed that shuts out God and immortality, and shuts up life within the precarious precincts of the present—a creed of frigid negations, alike without dignity, delight or expectation?

Such a rule of conduct as is contained in the formula, "I live alone for the present, and leave the future to take heed for itself," lies below the level of enlightened and thoughtful acceptance. It is absurd in theory; it is impossible in practice.

> "We look before and after,
> And pine for what is not."

Memory and hope, recollection and anticipation, are dominant forces in the formation of character and the guidance of conduct. No man does live, or can live, for the present alone; he quickens the present with expectations of a future, more or less remote, in which lie stored those results and rewards of effort and joys of hope that invigorate and ennoble life.

But *every future is an uncertainty.* No man can lay his hand upon to-morrow and say, "This, at least, is mine." That future of a few years, a few

months, a few weeks hence, towards which anticipations may be looking with such industrious eagerness, or joyful hope, is not an assured possession, but only a more or less remote contingency.

"I was notified," says Stanley, "at 2 p.m. by the Earl of Iddesleigh, that he would see me at 6 p.m., but at 3.13 p.m. the Earl died suddenly from heart disease."* The call from within the veil cancelled all earthly engagements. The statesman found that the future life was nearer than the setting of that day's sun.

Yet the Doubter or Unbeliever talks, and acts on the supposition, of the remote uncertainty of the future life, and the assured possession of the life present. But even in respect of this life present we have no actual possession of an hour hence. Not a moment is certain to us beyond the immediate now. All our efforts, plans, hopes, as they spread themselves into the future, are justified only on a "balance of probabilities." Such a balance of probability, however, may be found as to warrant and encourage the most vigorous and self-denying efforts in assured expectations of future good. In cases of daily and hourly occurrence men of the most matter of fact character and practical habit give up immediate profit or present enjoyment in

* *Darkest Africa*, 1 vol., p. 46.

assured anticipation of some future advantage; assured, however, simply by a "balance of probabilities."

III.

It is not only in matters of religion then, but in the highest, as well as in the humbler concerns of every-day life, that we permit ourselves to be governed, not merely by what Aristotle terms the *τεκμήρια*, "proofs positive," but also by a reasonable estimate of probabilities; for the *εἰκότα*—the "likelihoods," are a commanding force in determining the course and conduct of life.

"It is not necessary that a judge should decide from positive proofs, but he must also (sometimes) do so from probabilities, for this is in effect 'to decide according to the best of his judgment,' and so it is not sufficient for one to prove that there is no positive proof, but one must also prove the fact that there are not any probabilities."*

Possibly the religious doubter shrinks from the acceptance of the doctrines of religion, or submission to its ethical control, on a "*balance of probabilities*."

* "*ὃν γὰρ ἐκ τῶν ἀναγκαίων δεῖ αὐτόν* [*i.e.*, the judge] *κρίνειν ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐκ τῶν εἰκότων· τοῦτο γάρ ἐστι τὸ 'γνώμῃ τῇ ἀρίστῃ' κρίνειν.' οὔκουν ἱκανὸν, ἂν λύσῃ, ὅτι οὐκ ἀναγκαῖον· ἀλλὰ δεῖ λύειν, ὅτι οὐκ εἰκός.*"—Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, Bk. ii., Cap. xxv.

But this objection can only be taken, we apprehend, by those who have not carefully considered this aspect of the question, nor realised the weight which may attach to probable evidence, and the decisive conclusions to which it may surely lead.

"Probability is the very guide of life," as Bishop Butler justly observes. And in his *Analogy* he shows that "from the natural constitution and course of things, we must, in our temporal concerns, almost continually, and in matters of great consequence, act upon evidence of a like kind and degree to the evidence of religion."*

"Our knowledge," says Locke, "being very narrow, and we not happy enough to find certain truth in everything which we have occasion to consider, most of the propositions we think, reason, discourse, nay, act upon, are such as we cannot have undoubted knowledge of their truth. Yet some of them border so near upon certainty that we make no doubt at all about them, but assent to them as firmly, and act, according to that assent, as resolutely as if they were infallibly demonstrated, and that our knowledge of them was perfect and certain." †

* *Analogy of Religion.* Part ii., cap. viii.

† *Philos. Works. Conduct of the Understanding.* "Of Probabilities." Bk. iv., cap. xv.

In his *Grammar of Assent*, Cardinal Newman has shown that it is not by fixed logical methods and the process of formal reasoning that we attain to certitude, but "from the constitution of the human mind, certitude is the result of arguments, which, taken in the letter, and not in their full implicit sense, are but probabilities." And, further, he contends that it is not by "formal logical sequence" that we become certain, but by "the cumulation of probabilities independent of each other, arising out of the nature and circumstances of the particular case which is under review; probabilities too fine to avail separately, too subtle and circuitous to be convertible into syllogisms, too numerous and various for such conversions were they convertible."*

In his "Treatise on Logic and the Scientific Method," Professor W. Stanley Jevons says, "No inductive conclusions are more than probable, and I adopt the opinion that the theory of probability is an essential part of logical method, so that the logical value of every inductive result must be determined consciously or unconsciously according to the principles of the inverse method of probability."†

* Cap. viii., *Inference*, § 2 "Informal Inference."

† *The Principles of Science*, Pref. vii.

Again, he says, that the theory of probability is "the necessary basis of nearly all the judgments and decisions we make in the prosecution of science or the conduct of ordinary affairs. . . . All our inferences concerning the future are merely probable, and a due appreciation of the degree of probability depends entirely upon a due comprehension of the principles of the subject. I conceive that it is impossible even to expound the principles and methods of induction as applied to natural phenomena without resting them upon the theory of probability."*

Further, the Professor contends, "In spite of its immense difficulty of application, and the aspersions which have been mistakenly cast upon it, the theory of probabilities, I repeat, is the noblest, as it will in course of time prove perhaps the most fruitful branch of mathematical science. It is the very guide of life, and hardly can we take a step or make a decision of any kind without correctly or incorrectly making an estimation of probabilities. . . . The whole cogency of inductive reasoning, as applied to science, rests upon probability.†

* *The Principles of Science*, Preff. vii., p. 225. † *Ibid.*, p. 248. The scientific doubter would do well to examine carefully Prof. Jevons' able treatise, in which his purpose is to show "that Atheism and Materialism are no necessary result of scientific method."—Vol. ii., 465.

Seeing, then, that it is by "the cumulation of independent probabilities" that we become assured and act decisively in common affairs, that "the force of inductive reasoning in scientific inquiries depends upon probability," and that "the theory of probability is an essential principle of logical method," the honest Sceptic is bound to give due place and consideration to the cumulative argument of probability in the concerns of religion.

An eminent statesman, regarding the subject not only with the eye of a scholar, but as one deeply versed in practical affairs, contends that the religious question "is of all other questions the one upon which those who have not a conclusion available for use are most inexorably bound to seek for one. And, by further consequence, it is also the question to which the duty of following affirmative evidence, even although it should present to the mind no more than a probable character, and should not, *ab initio*, or even thereafter extinguish doubt, has the closest and most stringent application."*

In the following pages we hope to show not only some of the direct evidences upon which the claims of religion are founded, and the hollowness of many

* "Probability as the Guide of Conduct." *Nineteenth Century*, May, 1879.

of the objections with which it is assailed, but also to indicate the strength of the cumulative argument from probability in sustaining the essential claims of religion. "Let it suffice to bear in mind," says the statesman already quoted, "that there is no limit to the strength of working, as distinguished from abstract certainty, to which probable evidence may not lead along its gently ascending paths."*

IV.

CHRISTIANITY is indisputably a most potent fact and actuality, amid the dominant intellectual and moral forces of this age; and eighteen centuries ago we know that it "turned the world upside down."

It provoked and surmounted the embittered hostility of the early centuries. It conquered Cæsar and converted the Roman empire. It has commanded the devout homage and defensive skill, in various ages, of men of the most acute, comprehensive, and cultured thought. It has evoked in every rank and condition of society a fire of devotion that many waters could not quench, and a

* "Probability as the Guide of Conduct." *Nineteenth Century*, May, 1879.

firmness of fidelity that many tempests could not shake.

Amid the advancing movements of present-day activity it betrays no sign of abated energy or inadequate leadership. With its lofty aims and benevolent enterprises it raises the whole tone and temper of civilisation. Its disciples are among the foremost in liberal learning, and chief among those who are ready to every good word and work. From age to age, and amid all the chances and changes of time, it preserves the grand secret of satisfying some of the profoundest yearnings of human life. It distils solace in dreariest sorrow, affords succour in gravest crises ; gives "oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness" ; brightens joyful hours with a sunnier glow, and inspires with the exultant assurance of eternal life the last moments of mortality.

What do these and kindred facts imply ? Are they not cumulative and commanding *probabilities* that should give the Doubter pause, who boasts that he lives for "the present"—meaning by that term *the present life*, with its but momentary present and only probable future—and who, whilst labouring, storing, hoping for the probable future of the life present, yet illogically sets aside or

refuses to consider the vast and varied probabilities that sustain the Christian argument, and nourish the vigour of that hope whose fruition is life eternal.

V.

IT *is urged*, however, in language more or less explicit, that "*the evidences of Christianity are inadequate to sustain its claims to a Divine origin and authority*"; that "it lacks satisfactory and convincing proofs."

But *what does the Doubter really want in the way of proof?* Is he quite sure that he has made clear even to himself what evidence would satisfy him? Has he a distinct conception of the proofs that he wants in order to convince his judgment and incline his will?

If he has, he ought surely to make known his demand in specific terms. This is due *first*, to himself; *second*, to those whose assistance he may justly claim in prosecuting his reasonable and really momentous inquiry.

Further, since the Doubter may be indefinitely desiring somewhat that it is, in the very nature of things, unreasonable to expect, and that on this

high region of inquiry it is impossible to supply, it is of the first importance that he should formulate his demands, and thus possibly discover for himself, or enable others to show him their inherent unreasonableness.

May it not be that the Doubter has been content to be discontent, because an indefinite and uncertain something has not been forthcoming? If, however, he has not determined in his own mind exactly what it is he is seeking, he cannot reasonably be surprised if he has failed to find the object of such vague research. Much less can he be justified in affirming that this undefined something does not exist—a conclusion manifestly devoid of evidential confirmation; and yet because he thinks that this uncertain somewhat is not forthcoming—though he has not asked for it in terms—he has forsaken the creed of his childhood and the faith of his fathers, and lapsed into the cheerless negations of unbelief.

In adopting such a position the Sceptic convicts himself of the most serious inconsistency; for whilst in the act of renouncing the central principles of the Christian faith on the alleged ground of inadequate proof, he gravely adopts a destructive and hopeless speculation that is itself entirely unproven and even undefined.

VI.

LET us take a further step.

The temper and tone of sceptical thought in recent years have doubtless been affected to a considerable degree by the methods and results of modern scientific inquiry.

There is a widely diffused but clearly inaccurate opinion, that scientific discovery is the brilliant monopoly of modern times; yet assuredly to earlier ages belongs the honour of having laid broad and deep the foundations on which rises the noble superstructure of modern science; and if those earlier ages were less fertile in results, they were even more remarkable for inventive ingenuity and inquisitive observation. But the quickened activities of intellectual enterprise, enjoying the freer opportunities and improved apparatus of modern times, have made more numerous excursions into the regions of scientific research, and thence have brought their *spolia opima*.

The more striking achievements of recent scientific adventure are popularly stated and rapidly made known, by the facilities now possessed for reaching the public ear. These achievements have been

sometimes much magnified and hastily misconstrued; consequently a feverish and unwholesome condition of popular opinion has obtained. It is by no means uncommon to find it assumed that modern discovery has undermined the ancient faith, and that religious doubt, if not indeed actual unbelief, is the settled attitude of "advanced thought." In short that with religion are old-world notions and "blind faith," whilst the allies of doubt and unbelief are science, culture, and modern enlightenment. We shall be at some pains to show, in the following pages, that this is a mischievous and misleading travesty of actual facts.

In every department of inquiry, physical, metaphysical and philosophical, masculine intelligence, mellowed thought and matured learning, are found asserting and defending the foundational verities of the Christian faith, and affirming that religion is essential to the full satisfaction and development of man.

The remarkable concessions of even unfriendly Scientists are also among the noteworthy and encouraging signs of the times; whilst their mutual hostilities, exhibited sometimes in rather amusing form, illustrate the conflicting uncertainties of "advanced thought," the contradictions of philoso-

phic doubt, and generally the dogmatic sectarianism of modern unbelief.

VII.

IT may be well, however, at this stage of our argument, at least to remind those who encourage their doubts or uphold their unbelief, under the impression that they are on the side of "irrefutable facts" and the "demonstrable conclusions of natural inquiry," that *physical science occupies no infallible chair*. Its primary postulates are questioned, and its entire system is shot through and through with dispute and uncertainty. "Nor am I acquainted," says an eminent writer, "with any kind of defect to which systems of belief are liable, under which the scientific system of belief may not properly be said to suffer."*

Professor Stanley Jevons states "that serious misconceptions are entertained by some scientific men as to the logical value of our knowledge of nature," and he expresses his conviction that "the certainty of our scientific inferences is to a great extent a delusion."†

* *A Defence of Philosophic Doubt*. Rt. Hon. A. J. Balfour, M.P., p. 293.

† *The Principles of Science*. Pref.

The whole superstructure of physical science is based on the foundation of *realism;* but realism and idealism are in active controversy and direct antagonism; and Mr. Herbert Spencer admits that "should the idealist be right, the doctrine of evolution is a dream."

The consideration of the questions involved in the discussion between realism and idealism is quite beyond the purpose of this work; but Doubters who, in the innocence of an undisturbed impression, believe that they have a sure foundation in Nature, and that its "material facts" at any rate are indisputable; who are, in short, dominated by scientific realism, and carried away with the bold assertion that the facts of physics alone are capable of certain verification, and that any hyper-physical beliefs may be rejected, which are not apparently in accord with the conclusions of what is courageously called "positive science," may be profitably awakened from their imaginary security to learn that "doubt" is as busy in the region of the "facts of nature" as in the facts of religion.

In a philosophical work of firm grasp and keen insight,* the late Professor J. M. Herbert examines

* *The Realistic Assumptions of Modern Science Examined.* London: Macmillan, 1886. A very able treatment of the whole question, and worthy of the careful consideration of the scientific doubter.

the realistic assumptions of modern science, and shows that these pressed to their logical result land the physicist in preposterous conclusions, that are destructive of his own position.

The distinguished author of *A Defence of Philosophical Doubt* has challenged the claim of science to erect a determinate standard of belief; and with consummate ability he vindicates his contention "that conformity with scientific teaching is not an essential condition of truth, and nonconformity with it an unanswerable proof of error," that "no such claim can be drawn from the nature of the scientific system itself," and that "a close examination of the philosophical structure of science reveals the existence of almost every possible defect." He further states that "whether science be regarded from the point of view of its promises, its inferences, or the general relation of its parts, it is found defective; and "that the ordinary proofs which philosophers and men of science have thought fit to give of its doctrines, are not only and mutually inconsistent, but are such as would convince nobody, who did not start (as, however we all do start) with an implicit and indestructible confidence in the truth of that which has to be proved."

It is a matter of "great surprise" to which the

author of *Philosophic Doubt* gives very decided expression, that men of the philosophical acumen of Mr. Leslie Stephen and Professor Huxley, should not have detected such causes of doubt respecting "the rational character of their dogmatic system," as would prevent them erecting it as a standard by which to gauge other forms of belief."*

The Sceptical idealist, Hume, "that prince of Agnostics," as Professor Huxley styles him, admits the extreme embarrassments of philosophy when brought face to face with those "infallible and irresistible instincts of nature, which yet lead to fallible and erroneous opinion"; and he adds that "to justify this pretended philosophical system by a chain of clear and convincing argument, or even any appearance of argument, exceeds the power of all human capacity."†

We must conclude then with the author of *Philosophical Doubt* that the believer is at no disadvantage in respect of argument, and that "religion is at any rate no worse off than science in the matter of proof."‡

* *Vide Def. of Philo. Doubt*, "Practical Results," pp. 302, 3, 9.

† *Vide Treatise on Human Nature*, iv., p. 250, § 1.

‡ "Whether Realism or Idealism be true, whether either of them is consistent with science, this broad fact remains, that the world, as represented to us by science, can no more be perceived

The Sceptic thus awakened from his reverie, must cease to dream that "uncertainty dwells alone with faith," that "doubt" inhabits exclusively the region of religious opinion, haunting only the sphere of hyper-physical belief, or that the domain of natural science is the happy home of unquestioned realities and indubitable demonstrations.

Physical science, itself upon its trial, can establish no claim to adjudicate on religion and determine its authority. If that were hereafter found, therefore, which has not yet been discovered, viz., that the conclusions of natural science are averse to the fundamental teachings of religion, the spirit of religious doubt might be stimulated, and new instruments of attack devised, with which to harass the outposts of religion; but, as it has been proven in the works already quoted,* no weapons from the armoury of physical nature can reach, much less destroy, the citadel of our divine faith. Hume even acknowledges the existence of facts that "he

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or imagined than the Deity as represented to us by Theology, and that in the first case, as in the second, we must content ourselves with symbolical images, of which the thing we can most certainly say is that they are not only inadequate but incorrect." —*Philos. Doubt*, cap. xi., "Science as a Logical System."

* *Vide supra*, Sec. vii.

cannot pretend by any argument of philosophy to maintain," that there are postulates which "we must take for granted in all our reasonings," and conceptions which "it is impossible for mere ideas and reflections to destroy."

VIII.

SETTING aside, however, the subtle and long-sustained controversy between *Realism* and *Idealism*, and having said so much by way of caution, let us accept generally the assumptions on which physical science establishes her vast empire. To those who believe that the universe exhibits the handiwork, and declares the glory of a Personal Intelligence and Beneficient Will, discoveries in the region of natural science cannot fail to be of deep and sacred interest.

The scientist is the apostle of natural order, and, by that Christian confederation pre-eminently which recognises the universe as a creation by Intelligent Fatherhood, the scientist should be hailed as an ally and succoured as a colleague—for he too is doing the work of an evangelist. Sometimes, indeed, being a man of like passions with others, he is narrow, bigoted, and intolerant; then he must be "withstood to the face, because he

is to be blamed"; but, sent forth on a noble mission, to lift the veil and penetrate to the inmost shrine of nature, to learn her divine secrets and to interpret them, 'his feet are beautiful upon the mountains, as he bringeth good tidings' of the wisdom, power, and beneficence that underlie matter, force and law.

There is no disposition on the part of enlightened religious thought to regard with fear or suspicion the advances of scientific research, or to minimise their results. The patient assiduity, acute observation and manifold labours of eminent physicists are worthy of respectful acknowledgment and sincere gratitude. And the most eminent Christian apologists recognise and welcome the important services that are being rendered to the cause of truth by the advancement of scientific knowledge.

"It is intended," says the present Bishop of London, "that religion should use the aid of science in clearing her own conceptions. It is intended that as men advance in the knowledge of God's works, and in power of handling that knowledge, they should find themselves better able to interpret the message which they have received from the Father in heaven. Our knowledge of the Bible has gained, and it was intended that it should gain,

by the increase of other knowledge. Science makes clearer than anything else could have made it the higher level on which the Bible puts what is spiritual over what is material. I do not hesitate to ascribe to science a clearer knowledge of the true interpretation of the first chapter of Genesis, and to scientific history a truer knowledge of the great historical prophets. The advance of secular studies, as they are called, clears up much in the Psalms, and much in the other poetical books of Scripture. I cannot doubt that this was intended from the beginning, and that as science has already done genuine service to religion in this way, so will it do still better service with process of time. . . . Science enters into religion and is its counterpart, and has its share to take in the conduct of life and in the formation of opinion. And the believer is bound to recognise its value and to make use of its services."*

IX.

It must be granted, however, by any qualified student, whether of natural or theological science, that every department of human inquiry has its own proper methods and results. The facts of

* *The Relations between Religion and Science.* Lec. viii.

natural science generally, many things being granted, may be so demonstrated as necessarily to produce intellectual conviction. Denial, at this point, would be naturally impossible. But many of the facts belonging to the sphere of religious thought and inquiry are confessedly not capable of the same kind of treatment. The evidences, however, that sustain human trust in the Divine existence, faith in the Christ of history, and the hope of the future life, though different from those that are granted to the natural inquirer, are yet not inferior in degree, and yield to their possessor enlightened contentment and impregnable *moral* conviction.

Professor Huxley, in a passage pertinent to this part of our inquiry, says, with his accustomed boldness, that for the student of natural knowledge "Scepticism is the highest of duties; blind faith the one unpardonable sin . . . Every great advance in natural knowledge has involved the absolute rejection of authority, the cherishing of the keenest scepticism, the annihilation of the spirit of blind faith . . . . The man of science has learned to believe in justification, not by faith, but by verification."*

Let us examine these sentences. They imply

* Lec., *The Desirableness of Improving Natural Knowledge.*

more than they express. Their plausibility is apt to pervert the judgment. It is scarcely possible to read the notable paragraph without feeling that the eminent Professor, apparently propounding the methods proper to the pursuit of natural knowledge, is striking a back-handed blow at religion. Such phrases as "justification by faith," and "unpardonable sin," do not belong to the terminology of natural science; and by their inopportune introduction the scientist himself "disturbs the pure reason," agitates the atmosphere of inquiry with controversial emotions, and overlooks the fact to which G. H. Lewes bears witness in his *History of Philosophy*, that "the provinces of religion and knowledge are separate."

Oblique attacks upon an ancient and honoured faith by the use of supercilious innuendo, and phrases having a *double entendre*, are unworthy of those masters in natural science to whom lovers of God and truth wish to offer the homage of grateful respect for their zealous labours and splendid achievements in the domain of their own proper research. "The too exclusive study of particular branches of physical science seems in some cases to generate an over confident and dogmatic spirit."*

If by "scepticism"—"keenest scepticism," Pro-

* *Principles of Science*, vol. ii., 429. Prof. Jevons.

fessor Huxley means the spirit of earnest and even eager inquiry, there is, at this point, neither disagreement nor difference between religion and science; for the spirit of frank and fearless inquiry is as proper to the one as to the other. The cultivation of the spiritual life in liberal knowledge is an obligation of sacred imposition. The Christian knows nothing of "*blind* faith." Faith is the far-seeing faculty; a lens of higher power which brings within mortal ken "things unseen." It is the intellect without faith that is purblind; but the spirit illuminated by this higher faculty attests "whereas I was blind, now I see."

"The man of science," says Professor Huxley, "has learned to believe in justification not by faith, but by verification." Admittedly so; in the investigations of physical science the methods are intellectual and demonstrative. This is clear and indisputable; but in the region of religious inquiry and experience additional methods of verification find place. Faith is one of the active faculties in ascertaining and certifying the truth and reality of spiritual things, aye and of natural things too sometimes. The man of religion as well as the man of science—and they are often the same man—finds justification in verified facts; but the methods of verification in the one department of

inquiry differs from those employed in the other. The "Science of things Divine," and the science of things natural, have each their proper method and process of inquiry.

X.

With instruments of great inventive and constructive ingenuity, and by calculations of mathematical exactness, the physicist discovers and demonstrates the truth of some of the articles of his belief; yet many of the conclusions of natural science involve hypothesis, the exercise of faith, and a free "use of the imagination."* The undulatory theory of light and its radiant energy, are accepted facts in the creed of science; yet the ether itself is only a hypothesis, and the undulations are an inference.

It is quite true, however, that the questions which lie properly within the region of religious inquiry must be treated by other, though not therefore necessarily less satisfactory, methods than those of ordinary physical research. The Divine existence cannot be demonstrated like the Copernican system or the correlation of forces.

The Christian apologist, confessedly, has not at

* *Vide* pp. 93—95.

his command such methods of proof as are at the disposal of the scientist; yet we aver, and the testimony "of a multitude that no man can number" supports our contention, that the doctrines of Creative Intelligence, a future life, and the central verities of the Christian faith are sustained by evidences quite as powerful to command the confident acceptance of enlightened trust and the loving homage of moral conviction.

The Savilian Professor in the University of Oxford, in a striking and suggestive paper,* says in respect of Christian evidences, "These evidences, from the very nature of the case, cannot be mathematical or demonstrative or scientific; they belong rather to that class of evidence which we call probable; and to that class, be it observed, upon which alone we determine the conduct of our lives, for 'to us probability is the guide of life.' And though these probable evidences range greatly in degree, and although not any of them taken alone and by itself may be sufficient to command entire consent, and enforce an absolute conviction, nevertheless, when taken altogether, they may—they often do—by their consilience from many different and *independent* sources, furnish the mind with the highest moral certainty of which it is capable."

* *Modn. Science and Nat. Religion.* London, S.P.C.K.

And as an *example* of "moral certainty," a distinguished logician says, "the belief that there is a future life, which though not absolutely demonstrable, rests upon such grounds that it ought to influence the conduct (*mores*) of every man."*

To demand that the profound inquiries pertaining to religious thought and conviction shall be conducted only according to the methods proper to the researches of natural science, is on the face of it both unphilosophical and unreasonable. Such conditions of religious research would imprison belief within the narrow confines of the material and the present; and would exclude or put in bondage some of the most helpful faculties of the human mind at the very time that it is engaged on an investigation that should arouse and enlist every energy alike of the intellect and of the heart.

Moreover, it must be remembered that the conclusions of natural science, whilst largely founded on intellectual demonstration, are allied and sustained by other forms of evidence; as, on the other hand, the moral convictions that mainly sustain Christian faith are liberally augmented with various kinds of intellectual corroboration and logical proof.

But, indeed, this very effort to cast discredit

* *Outlines of the Necessary Laws of Thought.* Archbishop Thomson.

on other than purely scientific methods of inquiry indicates one of the dangers that beset the scientist, and that would attend a purely scientific education. "An exclusive study of science," says an eminent scientist, "tends greatly to narrow the mind, and to develop dogmatism, and a spirit most hostile to freedom. It also tends to encourage materialism to the exclusion of all hopes, beliefs, fears, and feelings which form part of our nature."* The author of *Natural Religion* also gives his testimony to the same noteworthy fact. "I find," he says, "the modern scientific zeal sometimes narrow and fanatical."†

The sceptic, therefore, who wishes sincerely to pursue his inquiries in the spirit of liberal, enlightened and unprejudiced thought, must be on his guard against sectarian narrowness and dogmatic bigotry in, it may be, unexpected quarters; for evidently they haunt the schools of science as certainly as the temples of religion.

XI.

In the foregoing observations there is nothing unfriendly in spirit, nor, it is hoped, discourteous

* Address. Liverpool College, by Professor Stuart.

† Cap. 1, "God in Nature."

in phrase, to the scientific inquirer; but only an earnest endeavour to safeguard the honest sceptic or perplexed doubter against the bias of preconception, or the use of unsuitable apparatus in religious inquiry—against "taking an aim at Divine matters by human, which cannot but breed mixture of imaginations."

Let the scientist within his own proper sphere, and by appropriate methods, pursue his investigations, and continually add his valuable acquisitions to the treasures of knowledge; the religious inquirer, however, will find his highest satisfaction not in the proven facts of demonstration, but in the indubitable possessions of moral conviction.

"There is no distrust of science. . . . Its method and its results are worthy of all praise and of all gratitude, if only we recognise their due limits. A calm consideration of them must lead to the conclusion that there are problems set to us by our own knowledge and experience which are utterly insoluble by the methods of science, as these are expounded and applied. . . . Our contention is shortly this, that the method which is sufficient when dealing with the phenomena of inorganic nature is insufficient when we enter on the sphere of organic life; that the method which is adequate for organic life is insufficient to deal with the

phenomena of conscious life ; and even the method which deals with conscious life has to be extended and modified when it deals with the complex phenomena of personal and social life. In every higher sphere to which science comes, it must recognise the existence of new principles and new forces, added differences which cannot be merged in a lower identity. . . . In the Materialistic explanations of the universe, we find that the formula of Materialism works very well until the phenomena of consciousness emerge, and then it breaks down."*

We are further sustained in these observations by the high authority of the Bishop of London. "Science," says Dr. Temple, "rests on phenomena observed by the senses. Religion is the voice that speaks directly from the other world. Science postulates uniformity, and is excluded whenever uniformity can be denied, but compels conviction within the range of its own postulate. Religion demands the submission of a free conscience, and uses no compulsion but that imposed by its own inherent dignity. Science gives warnings, and if you are capable of understanding scientific argu-

* *Is God Knowable?* Iverach, cap. i. *Vide* also cap. iii. "Anthropomorphism"; and cap. v. "The Agnosticism of Science."

ment you will be incapable of disbelieving the warnings. Religion also gives warnings ; it assures you that the eternal moral law is supreme ; that sooner or later those who disobey will find their disobedience is exactly and justly punished ; that no experience to the contrary can be trusted. But religion will not compel you to believe, any more than science will compel you to obey."*

The position maintained in the immediately preceding pages is also admirably illustrated and confirmed by an eminent investigator, who is himself at once a "man of science" and a man of religion, and who finds no incongruity between the highest exercises of faith and the most penetrating researches into physical phenomena. "The loftiest object of human thought," says Dr. Dallinger, "is to discover how far the material universe is an expression of supreme unity, of rhythmic activity, and of rational order. But for this the mind must take a range that transcends without limit all physical sequences, laws, phenomena. Taking the broad basis of our consciousness and reasoning faculties, we must relate sequences, interpret phenomena, and, however remotely and imperfectly, endeavour to account for laws. But in doing this we must remember that we have pushed our way

* *The Relations between Religion and Science.* Lec ii., 63, 64.

beyond the last outpost of physical research. We have passed beyond the region where '*quod erat demonstrandum*' is used. We have threaded our mental path into solitudes where no electrometer will be responsive, no spectroscope analytical, no lens revealing. We have come to the edge of all that we know and can demonstrate; and then impelled by the moral and rational light within us we judge and balance all that we know, and all that we are, and we reach not a demonstration, for that cannot be, but a conviction, a moral and intellectual certainty, of the being of a primordial cause, which is second in its firmness and security to nothing within the area of mind."*

XII.

WE propose now to consider *some popular objections urged by current doubt against those evidences that bear their emphatic witness to the truth of Christian religion.*

These cumulative and "consilient evidences" have been lucidly stated and amply defended in treatises of great skill and learning; our humbler

* *The Creator, and what we may know of Him.* London, 1887, pp. 7, 8.

aim is to bring within easy review the most familiar forms of current objection, to examine their value in words that those who run may read; to exhibit the want of cogency and cohesion in the contradictory plausibilities of different schools of modern doubt and unbelief; to bring forth some of the very suggestive concessions made by representative doubters.

Further, we trust that it may be possible to show, even within the confines of this argument, that the Belief of Modern Unbelief—a creed without God, Christ, or the hope of immortality—life for the present without diligent thought or honest care for the future, is totally inadequate to the measure of human need, intellectually unreasonable and morally degrading; and that it is a creed confronted by the most advanced science and the most cultured thought.

XIII.

It has been laid down in various ages and by different classes of men that "*a supernatural revelation must be supported and can only be supported by supernatural evidences.*"

"Whatever meaning different theologians may

attach to *supernatural religion*, history teaches us," says Professor Max Müller, "that nothing is so natural as the supernatural."* The believer in the Christian religion, however, whilst recognising other than *supernatural* signs as confirmative of his faith, affirms that supernatural evidences have been amply supplied and satisfactorily attested.† We shall see for ourselves presently on what grounds this opinion rests; but meanwhile let us appeal to the testimony of an impartial and competent witness, a distinguished scholar and liberal critic.

The author of *Ecce Homo* says, "The fact that Christ appeared as a worker of miracles is the best attested fact in His whole biography, both by the

* *Natural Religion*. "Sac. Bks.," Lec. xx.

† For an exhaustive examination of the question of the supernatural, the inquirer is commended to Prebendary Reynolds' learned work, *The Supernatural in Nature*, "A Verification by a free use of Science." London, 1888. The volume, admirably arranged and indexed for reference, is a treasury of information and of scientific illustration.

Essays on the Book entitled Supernatural Religion, by the late Bishop of Durham (1889), is a notable volume, characterised by Dr. Lightfoot's exact scholarship and ample learning. It is a trenchant and conclusive reply to the hostile work with which it so effectively deals. See also *Nature and the Supernatural*, Dr. Horace Bushnell (1877). Specially cap. ii., "Definition," &c.; cap. ix., "The Supernatural compatible with Nature, and Subject to Fixed Laws"; cap. xi., "Christ Performed Miracles," and cap. xiii., "The world is governed supernaturally," &c.

absolute unanimity of all the witnesses, by the confirmatory circumstances just mentioned, and by countless other confirmations of circumstances not likely to be invented, striking sayings inseparably connected with them, &c., in particular cases."* And again, "Miracles are, in themselves, extremely improbable things, and cannot be admitted unless supported by a great concurrence of evidence. For some of the evangelical miracles there is a concurrence of evidence which, when fairly considered, is very great indeed ; for example, for the Resurrection, for the appearance of Christ to St. Paul, for the general fact that Christ was a miraculous healer of disease. The evidence by which these facts are supported cannot be tolerably accounted for by any hypothesis except that of their being true. And if they are once admitted, the antecedent improbability of many miracles less strongly attested is much diminished."†

Here, then, is the opinion of an acute and impartial critic, who, standing himself outside the pale of orthodox opinion, and having weighed with dispassionate care the evidences in favour of the supernatural acts in the life and work of Christ, is constrained to confess that "they cannot be toler-

* *Ecce Homo.* Pref. to fifth edition.

† Cap. II. "The Temptation."

ably accounted for by any hypothesis except that of their being true."

This noteworthy testimony we shall sustain by ample corroboration in subsequent pages as our argument proceeds.*

XIV.

WE now confront an opposite objection. A curious and instructive chapter might be written on the "Contradictories of Unbelief."

It is stated, with some variations of phrase, that "*no testimony reaches to the supernatural, but only to apparent sensible facts: testimony can only prove an extraordinary, and perhaps inexplicable occurrence or phenomenon, but not that it is due to supernatural causes.*" Again, that "*an event may be so incredible intrinsically as to set aside any degree of testimony, the probability of mistake somewhere being greater than the probability of the actuality of the event.*"

The contention involved in these statements is twofold.

1. That even supposing supernatual interference with the operation of natural laws actually occurred,

* *Vide infra*, pp. 69—79.

man is in possession of no faculties by which he can detect and verify to himself the supernaturalness of such intervention.

2. That if man possessed powers which qualified him for the detection and verification of the supernatural, there are no means by which he could credibly attest the supernatural occurrence to others.

The possibility of the supernatural is not then at this point in dispute: it is conceded as, at least, possible. But if the sceptic admits that "the supernatural is possible," then he admits that "God is possible," and the most advanced scientist concedes this much. Professor Huxley speaks of the "unsurpassed absurdity of the philosopher who tries to prove that there is no God." But granted the possibility of God, it must also be granted, as at least *possible*, that He may interrupt the usual order of antecedent and consequent in natural phenomena, and produce an event *supernatural;* in other words, 'God may be, He may make a revelation of His will, He may accompany that revelation by supernatural intervention. So much is conceded; but, according to the limitations of the theory before us, though "miracles are confessedly possible, the proof of them is impossible;" therefore if they did occur they would be totally

useless to prove to man the Divine origin and authority of the revelation they came to corroborate, since, as it is contended, man is incapable of assuring himself of the supernaturalness of the signs.

The supernatural is to man, therefore, the "unknown and unknowable language." He can only recognise "the occurrence of an extraordinary and perhaps inexplicable phenomenon," but cannot assure himself of its *supernatural* character or cause.

'Miracles are possible,' then, according to this curious contention, 'but even God can make no use of them as evidential signs of Divine intervention, since man is incapable of detecting that the signs are miraculous.' Infinite Intelligence, possibly indeed, Infinite Benevolence, *may* have some message for man of wonder or of love, the Divine authority of which He would fain attest by supernatural confirmation, but the thing is essentially impossible because of man's incompetency to recognise the supernatural if ever it were displayed before his eyes!

In other words this "theory of unbelief" is, that it is beyond the resources of even Divine power to verify by miracles a revelation to man, since man is only capable of recognising the "extraordinary," or of gazing with perplexed wonder upon "inexplica-

able phenomena," and is constitutionally incapable of detecting the supernaturalness of any hyperphysical intervention. Drawn out at length and pressed to its logical conclusion, this argument contends for the possibility of an impossible God, self-excluded from ever attesting His authority and will by a supernatural interference with natural law, since man is incapable of recognising the supernatural if even he saw it. This surely is a *reductio ad absurdum* to which no reasonable sceptic would put his hand.

The foregoing contention, however, is often held and urged under the following modifications :— "*Miracles are possible, and might be discriminated by the observer, but it is impossible to put them on such authentic record as shall render them permanently valuable as supernatural evidences to other persons*," as "*no testimony can authenticate the supernatural.*"

It is granted, then, that God may be, that He may make a revelation of His will, that He may accredit that revelation by *supernatural* signs which satisfy the immediate witnesses, but that, in the nature of things, it is impossible for one man, or a group of men, *by document*, to certify the occurrence of the supernatural event. The point then in

immediate dispute is not the possibility of a miracle being wrought before the eyes of men; nor that seeing it the witnesses should be able determinately to recognise its *supernaturalism*; but that those who had seen should be able by *documents* to convey authentic and convincing tidings of the supernatural occurrence to other upright cultured and judicious men who had not seen the event; since, it is urged, "no testimony reaches to the supernatural," and "the probability of mistake somewhere is greater than the probability of the actuality of the event."

It is not, then, at this point *the possibility* of the supernatural that is in question, but simply the possibility of its authentication, and even the question of this possibility is to be determined on a "*balance of probability*."

But since *the supernatural may occur*, may not this, also, occur, if even it be miraculous, that men seeing the supernatural may assuredly recognise its occurrence, and so attest it as to satisfy the intellectual and moral requirements of impartial and competent inquirers? This, however, on the theory before us, is the one fact that is denied, but happily it is exactly the fact that can be proved to a demonstration. Witnesses have so attested that

they have seen the miraculous, as to produce the most vivid and profound conviction in the mind and heart of men of every rank, age, and condition, wayfaring men and scholars, peasant and philosopher. This objection, therefore, evaporates under the test of practical experience.

"Circumfusa repente
Scindit se nubes, et in aethera purgat apertum."

XV.

THE form of objection dealt with in the immediately preceding paragraphs, has been set forth, under notable modification, in very explicit and remarkable terms by the late well-known author of *The Creed of Christendom*.*

Now, as Mr. Rathbone Greg held an eminent place in letters, elaborately discussed the question immediately in hand, forcibly represented a considerable school of objectors, was undoubtedly a sincere seeker after truth, and here illustrates the kind of plausible and perilous statements by which so many are wafted across the gloomy sea of religious doubt, we propose to examine at length and with some care his statement in respect of the supernatural.

* *The Creed of Christendom.* By W. Rathbone Greg. Cap. xiii., "Miracles."

"Miracles," says our author, "can never be proved by *documentary* evidence." A less than "never" is an impossible quantity in any calculation; but, he adds, "*least of all* by such documentary evidence as we possess." He, however, further explains and qualifies his meaning as follows: "We fully admit, at the outset of our argument, that a miracle, as well as any other occurrence, is capable of proof by testimony—provided only the testimony be adequate in kind and in quantity. The testimony must be of the same kind as that on which we should accept any of the more sure and marvellous among natural phenomena, and must be clear, direct, and ample, in proportion to the marvellousness, anomalousness, and rarity of the occurrence. This, it appears to us, is all that philosophy authorises us to demand for the authentication of the *fact part* of a miracle."

But "miracles," says the author of *The Creed of Christendom*, "are not, and never can be, a sure foundation for a revealed religion—an historic creed. . . . Miracles are evidence only to those who see them or can sift the testimony which affirms them. Therefore, a revelation, whose credentials are miracles, *can be a revelation only to the age in which it appears.* The superhuman powers of its preacher can authenticate it only to

those who witness the exertion of them, and—more faintly and feebly—to those who have received and scrutinised *their* direct testimony."

In yet further limitation of the practicable possibilities of the case, our author introduces a learned mathematician's "calculation," which, indeed, he says, "many will think puerile," and I venture to add, not a few will think ridiculous, to the following effect: "The *concurring* testimony of *six independent, competent, veracious* witnesses would suffice, *but not less.*"

The ground here taken is theoretically very different from that of the two immediately preceding objections to the validity of Christian evidences, but it produces results equally destructive. The theory of our author, then, is: (1) Miracles may occur; (2) they may convince actual observers—these concessions are so much gained—; (3) they may be satisfactorily attested by the *spoken* testimony of "six" eye-witnesses: "*but not less.*" If, then, by an unhappy accident, since there is apparently some mysterious mathematical merit in the number *six*, these *testes oculati* should be diminished to *five*, the unhappy pentarchy would be as valueless in the witness-box as five ciphers preceded by no numeral in an arithmetical calculation.

Further, if even the "six," whose *spoken* testi-

mony would be sufficient to prove a miraculous occurrence, were to commit, with whatever precautions, their testimony to writing, the document would be evidently valueless, since "miracles can never be proved by *documentary* evidence." *Litera scripta manet*, but in this case, alas! that which constitutes its permanence destroys its validity! Now let us press this elaborate theory to its logical results, and we shall find to what an unreasonable, not to say absurd, conclusion this theory of unbelief inevitably leads.

Suppose, then, by way of illustration, that an event supernatural should occur—the *possibility* has been granted—in the presence of dumb witnesses; and, save for lack of speech, of indisputable competence, intellectual, moral, and numeral; yet they could not prove the occurrence of the miracle, since they would be necessitated to do so in writing, and "miracles can never be proved by *documentary* evidence." We anticipate a probable objection to this inference, and we shall reply to it presently. But, first, let us take another illustration.

Suppose that "*six*" or more competent witnesses should see a miracle in Jerusalem, London, or New York, they could, according to the author of *The Creed of Christendom*, only attest the event satis-

factorily or conclusively to those who could personally interview these witnesses; for, he adds, "the essence of the whole question lies in this, that *we have not* the Apostles and Evangelists to cross-examine"*—manifestly, however, not "wholly in this!" If we had the "Apostles and Evangelists," to whom we owe the Gospel narratives, they would be two short of the mathematical minimum; "not less than *six* eye witnesses." And further surely much would depend in respect of the result of the examination upon the capacity of the cross-examiners!*

This, however, is the distinct contention of our author, that if a miracle wrought, not only before "six" select witnesses, but even "in presence of five hundred brethen," in any of the great centres of civilisation, the miracle could only be satisfactorily proved to those who could personally

* "It is sometimes urged that the evidence, as supplied by the early Christians, is of little value, because it was never cross-examined. . . . St. Paul's evidence on our Lord's resurrection cannot now be put to the test of searching questions. But to make such objections as these is to make what is, on the face of it, an absurd demand. It is to ask that the scientific processes of the nineteenth century should have been anticipated in the first, that men should be miraculously guided to supply a kind of evidence, which would be utterly superfluous at the time, in order to be convincing eighteen hundred years afterwards." — *The Relation between Science and Religion*, Lec. vii. 215—6.

cross-examine the eye witnesses; and that there are no resources available to intelligence and culture by which they could give trustworthy and conclusive publicity and literary perpetuity to their testimony.

In short, supposing a miracle to be wrought in London—and the possibility of a miracle, let it be distinctly remembered, is not now in dispute—it would be simply impossible to transmit to Newcastle or New York the tidings in any written form, so authenticated as to be adequate proof of the occurrence of the supernatural event. If some grave in Westminster Abbey were to give back to life its illustrious dead, it would be impossible to frame documents that could prove the occurrence of the miracle to residents in New England or Northumberland. Such a conclusion, we contend, cannot be seriously accepted. Yet to this impossible conclusion we are reduced if we concede the assumption that "miracles can never be proved by *documentary* evidence."

The more enlightened advocates of such a theory would naturally shrink from being forced, by the inexorable necessities of logical deduction, into such an absurd position. Probably they would endeavour to evade the indefensible conclusion by contending against the foregoing illustrations, that "it is pos-

sible, both in respect of the dumb and the distant, to adopt such cautionary methods in receiving and recording the concurrent evidence of credible eye-witnesses, and of attesting it by the counter-signature of competent cross-examiners, as would amount to a scientifically attested and verified record, that might be multiplied by the press for circulation to the uttermost parts of the earth, and be conclusive proof of the supernatural occurrence." This would be proof by *documentary* evidence; but to admit the possible sufficiency of such evidence surrenders the position taken by the author of *The Creed of Christendom;* and grants that *miracles may be proved on documentary evidence.*

Here we must advance a step.

If it be possible to obtain authenticated documents, that would be legitimate and conclusive evidence of the supernatural to those who are five hundred or five thousand miles distant in space from the occurrence, they would be equally authentic and conclusive to those who are twelve months or twelve centuries distant in time from the occurrence. The documents once sufficiently verified for the absent, *i.e.*, the distant in space or time, they require only to be carefully protected and securely transmitted, for they remain, like the ancient law-giver, with natural force unabated by lapse of years.

Otherwise, we are driven into another absurdity o conclusion. If the credibility of documentary evidence necessarily diminishes in the process of years, we are compelled to acknowledge that there must be, in respect of every event, however remarkable and historically attested, a vanishing point of distance from the date of the occurrence, at which it ceases to be possible to prove the event; that is to say, there is a date in relation to historic events at which the most veracious and accredited historic occurrences descends from the region of accredited fact to flit and fade amid the shadowy ranks of fiction.

This is, in other words, to confess that in respect of the most notable events, there is a line in time somewhere, not by any means determined, nor indeed determinable, up to which the authenticated record of an event goes in and out among men in bodily form and vital reality; but crossing that fatal frontier, the solid historic fact exhales and becomes henceforth a pale and disembodied ghost, flitting with the phantoms of fiction about the troubled memory of the world.

We contend that this is neither a reasonable nor credible opinion; but it is the logical result of the theory in respect of the testimony to Christian miracles given by the late author of *The Creed of Christendom.*

"The Evidence of a Miracle," says Canon Mozley, "is not only contemporary with the miracle, but extends in the nature of the case through all subsequent ages into which the original testimony of such a miracle is transmitted. . . . Scientific men have sometimes indeed speculated upon the effect of time upon the value of historical evidence; practically speaking, however, between an event's first standing in regular history, and its very latest, which is at this very moment, we see no difference. The testimony to the battle of Pharsalia is as strong now as at its first insertion in the page of history; nor can we entertain the notion of a time, however remote, when it will not be as strong as it is now. Whatever value then the testimony to the Christian miracles had when that testimony first took place in public records, that it has now, and that it will continue to have as long as the world lasts."

"If it was the will of God," says the same distinguished writer, "to give a revelation, there are plain and obvious reasons for asserting that miracles are necessary as the guarantee and voucher for that revelation. A revelation is, properly speaking, such only by virtue of telling us something which we could not know without it. But how do we know that the communication of what is undis-

coverable by human reason is true? Our reason cannot prove the truth of it, for it is by the very supposition beyond our reason. There must be, then, some note or sign to certify to it, and distinguish it as a true communication from God, which note can be nothing else than a miracle. The evidential function of a miracle is based upon the common argument of design, as proved by coincidence."

. . . .

"Miracles are the direct credentials of a revelation; the visible supernatural is the appropriate witness of this invisible supernatural—that proof which goes straight to the point, and, a token being wanted of a Divine communication, is that token. We cannot, therefore, dispense with this evidence. The position that this revelation proves the miracles and not the miracles the revelation, admits of a good qualified meaning; but taken literally, it is a double offence against the rule, that things are properly proved by the proper proof of them; for a supernatural fact *is* the proper proof of a supernatural doctrine; while a supernatural doctrine, on the other hand, is certainly *not* the proper proof of a supernatural fact."*

The subject of miracles will be further considered

* *Eight Lecs. on the Miracles.* Bamp. Lec., 1865.

somewhat later in the course of our argument, in dealing with the central miracle of our Lord's resurrection.*

XVI.

LET us now examine another aspect of sceptical thought.

The Sceptic pleads: "*I live for the present life, because I have it and enjoy it; but the future life I leave to take care of itself, because it is an*

> "'Undiscovered country, from whose bourn
> No traveller returns.'

"A continuous stream of emigrants has flowed for centuries thitherward; let one return and tell us, at least, the fact of the existence of that land which is said to lie beyond the sun: let one come back from the dead, and thus prove that what we call death is life elsewhere; then I will believe and live for the future life also."

We have here, broadly stated, a current form of objection. It is one that has the merit of antiquity. Eighteen centuries ago it found place among the "difficulties of belief," and was replied to by that unique Teacher, of whom Jean Paul Richter says, that "being the holiest among the mighty, and

* *Infra*, pp. 69—79. And footnote, p. 79.

the mightiest among the holy, lifted with His pierced hand empires off their hinges, turned the stream of civilisation out of its channel, and still governs the ages." He said, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."* His own subsequent history too terribly confirmed the truth of that statement.

The testimony of Apostles and Evangelists has been added to that of Law-givers and Prophets. We have it on the evidential authority of the four Evangelists, and even M. Renan admits their authenticity,† that One has risen from the dead, and yet the Sceptic is not persuaded.

* St. Luke xvi. 31.

† The concessions made by M. Renan in his *Vie de Jesus* are very striking and suggestive. They are, however, too long to be given adequately in a note; but they have been so fairly stated and so effectively dealt with by Professor Wace in his tract, *The Authenticity of the Gospels*, that the inquirer is recommended to read this popular but powerful statement of the case. Professor Wace's tract is No. 16 of the very useful series of *Present Day Tracts*, published by the Religious Tract Society.

The inquirer will find further information respecting the documentary validity of the Gospels, and the formation of the New Testament canon in the following works: *History of the Canon of the New Testament During the First Four Centuries.* Canon Westcott; also by the same author, *The Bible in the Church*, "A Popular Account of the Collection and Reception of the Holy Scriptures in the Christian Church"; *The New Testament Scriptures.* Professor Charteris. *Reasonable Apprehension and Re-*

XVII.

THE *doubter objects*, "I decline *to accept the evangelical narrative of Christ's resurrection from the dead as historic, the evidences being insufficient to sustain the Gospels as trustworthy documents.*"

Such an objection ought not to be lightly stated, nor vaguely held. It is an inaccurate opinion gathered from errors loosely floating on the currents of popular opinion. The issues are too grave for any serious minded inquirer to adopt without the exercise of careful thought and an honest and deliberate judgment. If the objection expresses a sincere conviction brought about by earnest, honest inquiry, it implies either—

1. That the Sceptic has himself examined with independent scrutiny the varied and somewhat ex-

assuring Hints. Rev. H. Footman. A little book written with skill and courage, "Designed to Attract Attention to the Nature of Modern Unbelief, and to meet some of its Fundamental Assumptions," Sec. iii., "Critical Difficulties," gives suggestions respecting the testimony to Christ of the first and second centuries. *The Bridge of History over the Gulf of Time*, by Thomas Cooper, is a popular handbook; in which the author has answered in easy form objections, the frequency and force of which he himself had known too well.

For a learned vindication of the early recognition and use of the books of the New Testament see *Canonicity*, by Professor Charteris, Edinburgh.

tensive system of external, internal and collateral evidences, which combine to prove the genuineness and authenticity of the Gospel naratives; and that he has by such personal research arrived at his deliberate conviction, that the evidences are insufficient to support the fabric of Christian belief. Or,

2. That on the testimony of those who tell him that they have sufficiently examined the Christian evidences and have found them inadequate, the Sceptic has freely—may we add regretfully—determined to renounce the faith of his childhood and the religion of his fathers. There are unquestionably Sceptics who have reached their doubt or unbelief by the first-named method of independent research, conducted they think with sufficient qualifications both of mind and training; necessarily, however, such investigators must be "few and far between." The vast majority of those who doubt or disbelieve, do so solely on the testimony of others as to the inadequacy of Christian evidence.

The Sceptic who takes the second ground is an unbeliever "on testimony." That is to say, he rejects the testimony of the evangelists, though they are corroborated by collateral, coincidental, and other constructive confirmation, on the testimony of teachers in the school of unbelief who deny the credibility of the Gospel narratives. In other words,

he refuses to believe "on testimony," but "on testimony" he disbelieves.

Of such an unbeliever, it is important to ask—and the question should have a conscientious answer—whether he has duly remembered and honestly considered the nature and character of the testimony borne by Christian apologists, who with masculine vigour of thought, profound learning, and high character, have vindicated the historic veracity of the Gospel records; and whether he has balanced the weight of their judgment against the opinions of those whose leadership he elects to follow. If he has not done so, he has not dealt with the solemn question at issue with judicial impartiality, nor even with common fairness; but if he thinks that he has so balanced conflicting opinions, and yet chooses the testimony of unbelief, he casts away the vital facts of the Christian faith, despite their vindication by the apologists of many ages, and the consensus of catholic conviction, on the testimony of such writers in the school of unbelief as he has elected to follow. He rejects the sacred Scripture of the Bible and accepts the scriptures of unbelief. "He will not believe the mountain, but he swears by the mole-hill,"

The Sceptic who contends, whether as a result of personal examination of the documents, or

"on testimony," that the Gospel miracles, including the supreme one of Christ's resurrection from the dead, are not sustained by adequate evidence as historic facts, but owe their origin either to the disordered imagination of Christ's first disciples, or the fanatical invention of a later age. "destroys," as the author of *Ecce Homo* asserts, "the credibility of the documents not partially, but wholly, and leaves Christ a personage as mythical as Hercules."*

Is our frank and honest doubter prepared for such a conclusion? Will he affirm that he has come carefully by sufficient enquiry to the sorrowful conclusion, that Christianity is founded in falsehood; that the Christ of history is a myth, like the ancient demi-gods; or that His historic reality being granted, He must be stripped of "the gorgeous robe" of the supernatural, descend from the sublime elevation to which the faith and love of eighteen centuries have raised Him, and take rank with Plato and Aristotle, Zeno and Seneca, Confucius and Mahomet, one among other great world-teachers, to be crowned only, if crowned at all, with the martyr's wreath of "plaited thorns"?

Is this conceivably the melancholy end of the world's noblest efforts, aims, and hopes? Are we to believe that modern unbelief has made the

* *Ecce Homo.*, Cap. v.

heart-rending discovery that the majestic fabric of Christendom, altars, temples, literature, arts, and "living stones" (λίθοι ζῶντες), is a pretentious superstructure without a solid foundation; that the cherished work of two thousand years of suffering and endeavour, consecrated by prayer and cheered by song, is built upon a treacherous morass of error, myth, untruth, superstition; and that sooner or later the resplendent structure must fall, leaving only the broken disorder of a mighty ruin, to amaze future ages with the noble work and ambitious proportions of that edifice raised by the credulity of mankind to the honour of Jesus of Nazareth—"a personage as mythical as Hercules"?

XVIII.

THE Doubter must admit, at any rate, that the enlightened and busy enthusiasm of Christian worship, and Christian work, foremost among the beneficent activities of this eager age, betrays no sign that the intellect or the heart of the world has detected any indications of insecurity in the foundations of the ancient faith, or of shaken love and devotion to its Divine Founder.

The historic reality of this sublime personage is

indeed no longer in dispute among the most acute and advanced thinkers. They may stand at different points of view, and in different relations of thought to Jesus, but they are agreed in offering the homage of their eloquent admiration to the solitary grandeur of His character and the immortal greatness of His work.

Theodore Parker, despite naturalistic and unitarian views, felt and acknowledged the unique and everlasting ascendancy of the Christ, and with generous candour, in his *Life of Jesus*, urged eloquently this argument from results. "Consider what a work His words and deeds have wrought in the world. Remember that the greatest minds have seen no farther, and added nothing to His doctrine of religion; that the richest hearts have felt no deeper, and added nothing to the sentiment of religion; have set no loftier aim, no truer method than His of perfect love to God and man. Measure Him by the shadow He has cast into the world—no, by the light He has shed upon it. Shall we be told such a man never lived—the whole story is a lie? Suppose that Plato and Newton never lived. But who did their wonders and thought their thoughts? It takes a Newton to forge a Newton. What man could have fabricated Jesus? None but Jesus."

Another eminent writer in the ranks of critical doubt says, "The teaching of Jesus carried morality to the sublimest point attained, or even attainable, by humanity. The influence of his spiritual religion has been rendered doubly great by the unparalleled purity and elevation of his own character. Surpassing in his sublime simplicity and earnestness the moral grandeur of Châkya-mouni, and putting to the blush the sometimes sullied, though generally admirable teaching of Socrates and Plato, and the whole round of Greek philosophers, he presented the rare spectacle of a life, so far as we can estimate it, uniformly noble and consistent with his own lofty principles, so that the 'imitation of Christ' has become almost the final word in the preaching of his religion, and must continue to be one of the most powerful elements of its permanence."*

A brilliant author, to whom the Sceptic will give ready ear, M. Renan, expresses his convictions in respect of the personal reality and matchless character and power of Christ, in the following eloquent apostrophe:—"Rest now in Thy glory, noble initiator. Thy work is completed; Thy divinity is established. Fear no more to see Thy efforts crumble through a flaw. Henceforth beyond

* *Supernatural Religion*, vol. ii., "The Teaching of Jesus."

the reach of frailty, Thou shall be present, from the height of Thy divine place in the infinite consequence of Thy acts. At the price of a few hours of suffering, which have not even touched Thy great soul, Thou hast purchased the most complete immortality. For thousands of years the world will extol Thee. Banner of our contradictions, Thou wilt be the sign around which will be fought the fiercest battles. A thousand times more living, a thousand times more loved since Thy death, than during the days of Thy pilgrimage here below; Thou wilt become to such a degree the corner-stone of humanity, that to tear Thy name from this world would be to shake it to its foundations. Between Thee and God, men will no longer distinguish. Complete conqueror of death, take possession of Thy kingdom, whither, by the royal road Thou hast traced, ages of adorers will follow Thee." *

"The great surprise of human history was the coming of Jesus Christ," says another writer, who bears his testimony to the Christ Himself as the greatest miracle. "The uniqueness of His Person

* *Vie de Jesus*, Cap. xxv., "Le Mort de Jesus." *Vide* also *Some Supposed Consequences of the Doctrine of Historic Progress*, Goldwin Smith, p. 15. And *Life of Dr. Arnold*, Stanley, p. 17.

is an ultimate fact of Christianity. Whoever would deny the presence of the Divine power in human history must first reduce the character of Jesus of Nazareth to the level of the possibilities of common human nature. He is Himself the greatest of His miracles. If by close historical scrutiny, or critical questioning, we fail to resolve the miraculous character of Jesus—the ultimate fact of Christianity—into the common, known elements of our human nature; if the laws of heredity prove insufficient to explain His generation, then the further question will at once arise whether there may not be other than natural elements present in human history, which come to their perfect power in Jesus of Nazareth; whether we may not find in the laws and in the forces of a supernatural evolution the sufficient explanation of His miraculous Person. If the appearance of Jesus is not natural in comparison with other lives; if the Christ of the Gospel seems to be a miraculous fact contrary to human experience, then, before we throw aside the historical evidences which centre in the uniqueness of His Person, and flow from the originality of His life, we are at least bound to inquire whether there may not be a broader view of human history and a deeper science of the Creation, in which we may find revealed an unsuspected and larger natural-

ness in this greatest miracle of the ages—the personality of Jesus Christ." *

XIX.

Miracles—pre-eminently the central one of our Lord's resurrection—are *essential elements in the Life and work of Christ.* "The gospel miracles are the force of the Christian ethics." †

The Bishop of London has forcibly urged that "the miracles are embodied in, are indeed intertwined with the narrative. Many of our Lord's most characteristic sayings are so associated with miracles that the two cannot be torn apart. . . . While the exclusion of any one miracle as insufficiently attested is not impossible, the exclusion of the miraculous element altogether is not possible without a complete surrender of the position taken by the first Christian preachers." ‡

* *Old Faith in New Light.* Newman Smyth. Cap. v. An admirable handbook, well worthy of the Sceptic's or Doubter's careful examination. For a further consideration of the subject of Christ's unique place in history, see *The Christ of History*, by Dr. John Young; the masterly chapter (x.)—"The character of Jesus forbids His possible classification with men" in *Nature and the Supernatural*, by Dr. Horace Bushnell; and Cap. ix., "The Great Moral Miracle," in *The Miraculous Element in the Gospels.* Dr. A. B. Bruce.

† *Restoration of Belief*, p. 274, *et seq.*

‡ *The Relation between Religion and Science.* Lec. v.

On the same lines Dean Mansel contended that "the denial of the reality of miracles as facts of a supernatural kind does not merely remove one of the supports of a faith which may yet rest securely on other grounds. On the contrary, the whole system of Christian belief with its evidences, the moral no less than the intellectual influences, the precept and example for the future no less than the history of the past—all Christianity in short, so far as it has any title to that name, so far as it has any special relation to the person or teaching of Christ, is overthrown at the same time. . . .

"There is a yet higher witness to this intimate association of the Christian evidences one with another, in that great fact which forms at once the central point of apostolical preaching, and the earnest of the *future* hope of all Christian men. If there is one fact recorded in Scripture which is entitled, in the fullest sense of the word, to the name of a miracle, the RESURRECTION OF CHRIST is that fact. Here, at least, is an instance in which the entire Christian faith must stand or fall, with our belief in the supernatural."*

"It is not possible to get rid of miracles nor the

* *Aids to Faith.* London, 1861. Essay i., "On Miracles as Evidences of Christianity."

belief in miracles from the history of the Apostles," says the Bishop of London. "They testify to our Lord's Resurrection as to an actual fact, and make it the basis of all their preaching. They testify to our Lord's miracles as part of the character of His life. . . . It is difficult to maintain even their honesty if they preached the Resurrection of our Lord without any basis of fact to rest upon. No man who is not determined to uphold an opinion at all hazards can question that St. Paul and St. Peter believed that our Lord rose from the dead, and that they died for, and in that belief.

"But . . . behind the Apostles stands our Lord Himself, and whatever may be said of the documents that compose the New Testament, they are at any rate sufficient to show that our Lord was universally believed by His disciples to have the power of working miracles and to have often worked them. . . . . He must have known that His disciples believed Him to possess the power. There is not the slightest trace of His ever having implied that this was a misconception. . . . It is plain that He accepted the belief that assigned Him powers above those of other men—powers given Him by His Father in heaven—and never discouraged it. . . . And if He claimed to possess and exercise this power, the evidence becomes the evidence of One

Who must have known and Whom we cannot disbelieve."*

This bold and decisive contention is in entire agreement with the argument of the greatest of the Apostles, a man of powerful intellect and liberal culture. St. Paul rests the whole superstructure of Christianity upon Christ's resurrection. "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ."

The Doubter, therefore, who refuses to acknowledge the resurrection of Christ, *i.e.*, that "One *has* come back from the dead," is left to a conclusion lying within the dark and desolate region of irrational belief, viz., that the Gospel narratives are either the product of fanatical superstition or malicious conspiracy; that they inexplicably combine the finest spiritual insight and the purest ethical instruction, with the most misleading ignorance or wilful perversion of facts ever found in historic religious literature; and that, therefore, the vast edifice of Christianity has its foundations on falsehood, if, indeed, it is not actually reared in fraud.

* *The Relations between Science and Religion.* Bp. of London, Lec. vii.

Does such a disastrous conclusion lie within the scope of reasonable belief? Is the Sceptic prepared, even on "the balance of probabilities," to accept such a preposterous theory?

XX.

TRUE or false, however, *it is beyond dispute that multitudes in the first age of Christianity did believe in the resurrection of our Lord; they*, at least, were convinced that "One had verily risen from the dead"; yet even so, whilst some remained to worship, others departed to persecute. They "took counsel." To what end? That they might fairly "cross-examine the witnesses"? Not at all; but that they might destroy the testimony.

Evidence of the supernatural, then, whilst it satisfied some, and carried conviction to their heart, so far from attracting the trust and evincing the will of others, only inflamed their blind prejudice and organised their enraged hostility—"they would not be persuaded, though One rose from the dead."*

"There can be no doubt at all where the central, originative and distinctive point is to be dis-

* St. Luke xvi. 31.

covered in the Christian religion. St. Paul has signified it for us, once for all, in words that can never lose their tingling force of truth. 'If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.' Belief in the resurrection is the root of Christianity. Everything runs back to it; everything flows down from it. . . .

"In the resurrection it was not the Lord only who was raised from the dead. His life on earth rose with Him; it was lifted up into the real light. That which had been but a suggestion, but a fragment, but a disappointment, but a failure, won for the first time out of the Resurrection a force which gave it significance and cohesion. . . .

"With our Lord it is not the *life* which makes the supernatural myth intelligible. Here is no faint supernatural vapour, embosoming a solid core of impressive natural incidents. Nay! it is the human career which is so fragmentary, so slight, so rapid, so fleeting, until it is endowed with the solid core of substance and force by the marvel of the Resurrection. On that it stands; it is compacted by that; out from the Resurrection flows the energy which carries the entire story. It is by believing in His Resurrection that His followers first lay hold of the real significance of His life on earth, and first

acquire that vital faith in Him which constitutes them missionaries of a new religion."*

XXI.

THE Sceptic, however, occasionally offers this form of objection: *The miraculous events in the Gospel narratives are now so remote, so obscured by the mists of temporal distance, that he cannot admit their reality or yield to their recital.*

Yet surely he does not propose to confine his belief within the narrow orbit of his own personal observation, or the contracted circle of the present. "No; not exactly that;" but he urges again that "Christian antiquity is too far removed for us to take security in respect of its surprising statements."

Such a proposition has two serious defects.

First, it implies that if we were nearer by some centuries, more or less, we should be better able to test the veracity of the witnesses, or the genuineness and authenticity of the documents, and at any rate feel more inclined to accredit their statements. We deny that. The theory fails under a practical

* *On Behalf of Belief*. Rev. Scott Holland. Disc. 1, "Criticism and the Resurrection." See the four beautiful and suggestive Discourses, "Concerning the Resurrection."

test. The first century as well as the nineteenth had its doubters and deniers; and every intervening age has its ample records of unbelief.

Secondly, pressed to its logical result, the objection lands us in the absurdity already noted; viz., that if evidence in respect of an event must necessarily grow fainter in process of time, there is inevitably a vanishing point of distance from the date of its occurrence, however remarkable, at which it is impossible to prove it.

In other words, historic truth cannot by any possibility enjoy immortality; it must, under some occult law, fade into fiction; for however rooted in fact and sustained by corroboration it must find its "threescore years and ten," its limit of life, and die of sheer old age!

Coleridge thought that the evidences in favour of the main facts of the Christian faith were an increasing quantity in history. The sustained vigour of its vitality, its widening influence and accumulating work is its growing evidence—Christendom the proof of Christianity.

It will be admitted, however, on all hands as beyond dispute that millions of people believe that "*One has* risen from the dead"; and that whilst with a certain proportion of these, this belief has

wrought itself into the very fibre and tissue of their character, and gives motive and direction to their life, that there is yet another proportion—possibly the larger proportion—of those who do not doubt the fact of Christ's resurrection, and have no scruples as to the sufficiency of the historic evidences, who are yet unchanged in life and character by these acknowledged events.

"Precisely," retorts the Doubter, "because these events are too remote and dim to take a firm and effective hold of the imagination, the conscience, and the will. What I want," he continues, "is a revelation to myself, attested by some supernatural manifestation; a life from the dead which shall prove to me a life beyond life, a future life: or such a fact authenticated to living and trustworthy witnesses; then I can accept the doctrine, and yield my will."

In that case then what the Doubter demands is not clear, definite, sufficiently authenticated general evidence, but such demonstration to himself personally, as shall compel his conviction, or such a manifestation to his friends or compatriots as would awaken his imagination, incline his sympathies and command his belief. Without pausing to dwell further on the fact that the experiment of undisputed miracle has been tried, and that it failed to

convince ; and further, that men may be constrained to hold the doctrine and yet withhold the will ; let the Sceptic who asks for some such direct evidence —and his name is legion—consider whether his demand is rooted in reason, and whether the conditions he proposes are such as could be granted consistently with the order of the universe.

It is not *One* resurrection from the dead, or other such supernatural evidence that the Doubter demands, but thousands of them. If miracles, wrought under such conditions, are necessary to convince the unbeliever, they must appear on demand in every age, in every locality and to individual observation, or to select groups of witnesses ; but their very frequency and the facility of their recurrence would superinduce the indifference that comes of familiarity. Furthermore, events occurring with assured regularity on prescribed conditions would cease to be miraculous. The supernatural would become the natural.

Events are taking place constantly by what is called natural process not less wonderful than any miracle, but they cease to strike with surprise because they recur with regularity. Moreover a message from God brought home to the mind by such methods as the Sceptic proposes would be no

longer an appeal to faith. It would be to conquer by intellectual demonstration, not to win by moral conviction. It is not, however, the aim of religion to compel the unwilling reason to assent to doctrinal facts by irresistible demonstration, but rather through enlightened moral conviction to allure the affections and captivate the will. Concession without consent has no moral value or practical utility.

> "He that complies against his will,
> Is of his own opinion still."

By appeals to the reason and the conscience, therefore, by intellectual and moral suasion Christianity strives to win men to enlightened and cheerful citizenship in its new kingdom of light and love. By many and varied voices she makes her great appeal. Both Nature and the supernatural are in the train of her service, and aid her beneficent achievements.*

* The Doubter who is troubled with the difficulty of Miracles, is referred to Dean Mansel's masterly argument, which even Prof. Tyndall designated "his admirable defence of Miracles." *Aids to Faith*, Essay 1, "On Miracles as Evidences of Christianity." See also *The Mystery of Miracles*, "A scientific and philosophic investigation." By Prebendary Reynolds. A suggestive and eloquent volume. *Eight Lectures on the Miracles*. Canon Mozley. (Bampton Lec. 1865.) *The Miraculous Element in the Gospels*, Dr. A. B. Bruce, specially cap. vi., "Gosp. Mirs. in relation to Exegesis"; vii., "In relation to the worker"; and viii., "In relation to Revelation." See also Lec. v., "The modern

XXII.

We are now challenged by another request. *Modern doubt demands "such evidences as are sufficient to satisfy intellectual requirement"—"give us logical proof."*

On what grounds of reasonableness is the demand made for such proofs in respect of God, Christ, and the future life as shall satisfy the "pure reason," or meet the rigid requirements of logical analysis? Logic is not our sole guide in human affairs, nor do purely intellectual considerations rule us in the movements and decisions of everyday life. Nay indeed it is the lower and narrower rather than the higher concerns of life that are amenable to intellectual verification or subject to the scientific conditions of logical investigation.

Negation of Miracles," in *Modern Doubt and Christian Belief*, by Dr. Theo. Christlieb. An able vol., containing chapters of great value on many aspects of the controversy with modern unbelief. *Can we Believe in Miracles?* G. Warrington, S.P.C.K.

"There is no way to escape the Faith of Miracles," says Dr. Bushnell, "and hold the faith of a Personal God and Creator. It is only pantheism, or what is not far different, atheism, that can rationally and consistently maintain the impossibility of miracles. Any religion too absolute to allow the faith of miracles is a religion whose God never did anything, and is therefore no God." "Christ performed Miracles." Cap. xi. *Nat. and Supernat.*

"We may admit," says Principal Caird, "that there are notions, ideas, beliefs, which cannot be deduced syllogistically, which the logic of the understanding cannot justify, and yet maintain that by a profounder logic, which enters into the genesis and traces the secret rhythm and evolution of thought, they can be shown to rise out of, and be affiliated to, other ideas, and to form constituent elements in that living process of which all truth consists."*

"On the whole," says one of the greatest of living logicians, "I think it is the fact that many of our most obstinate and reasonable certitudes depend on proofs which are informal and personal, which baffle our powers of analysis, and cannot be brought under logical rule because they cannot be submitted to logical statistics."†

And again Dr. Newman urges, "As to logic its chain of conclusions hangs loose at both ends; both the point from which the proof should start and the point at which it should arrive are beyond its reach; it comes short both of first principles and of concrete issues. Even its most elaborate exhibitions fail to represent adequately the sum

* *Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*, Cap. i. "Relativity of Human Knowledge."

† *Gram. of Assent.* Cap. viii. Informal Infer. 2.

total of considerations by which an individual mind is determined in its judgment of things; even its most careful combinations made to bear on a conclusion want the steadiness of aim which is necessary for hitting it."*

In short, as has been elsewhere shown, "we are not capable of proving beyond dispute any of the most comprehensive truths of human life."† The Doubter makes, therefore, an unfair and an unreasonable demand, who requires a demonstration of the Divine existence by purely intellectual process, and who asks that our convictions in respect to the life immortal should be stated in syllogistic form or proved by logical process.

> "Nothing worthy proving can be proven,
> Nor yet disproven. Wherefore thou be wise,
> Cleave ever to the sunnier side of doubt,
> And cling to Faith beyond the forms of Faith."‡

XXIII.

FURTHER, engaged on an inquiry in the highest department of human investigation, the Sceptic does injustice alike to his subject and himself if he neglects to employ all his faculties of research and

* *Gram. of Assent.* Cap. viii. Informal Infer. 2. *Vide* also pp. 12, 13, *supra.*

† *Supra*, pp. 10—15. *Vide* also Canon Traver Smith's *Man's Knowledge of Man and God.* Cap. vi., "God Revealed."

‡ "Tiresias."—*Tennyson.*

verification ; or if he shuts up in durance any of those sentinel senses which should aid his outlook from the watch-tower of life. In this supreme concern no sense should sleep, no faculty be idle, no feeling indifferent. With loins girt, and all the energies alert, the earnest seeker for the light should keep a sleepless vigil, scanning the dim horizon, if peradventure he may detect signs of a dawn that shall grow into the eternal morning.

"In truth the question as to what special faculty or division of human consciousness it is to which religion distinctively belongs, whether, in other words, religion is characteristically a thing of knowledge, or of feeling, or of volition and action, is one," Principal Caird contends, "which rests on a false or defective psychology. The spiritual life and consciousness of man cannot be broken up, as this inquiry implies, into independent divisions or departments, existing side by side, or into separate powers and faculties having a common substratum in something which is called 'the mind'; nor is it possible to assert with respect to any of these concrete manifestations of man's spiritual nature that it is confined to any one form of activity to the exclusion of other and cognate forms."*

* Introd. to *The Philosophy of Religion*, pp. 161—2.

The use of the emotions as aids to the intellect in guiding inquiry and determining opinion is not only acknowledged but urged by most accomplished and capable thinkers; and indeed that it is impossible to attain by purely intellectual endeavour to some of our most cherished convictions, or to certify them by the strict methods of scientific logic.

"Feeling and conscience are more than helps to logic in finding truth. They are themselves organs for the discovery of truth. . . . We are all agreed that the understanding must not be left at the mercy of the feelings, or even of the moral impulses, which, if allowed to walk unchecked, become a higher kind of sensuality. There ought to be harmony and union between conviction and emotion. . . . But this does not impose on us in the affairs of life a fixed sequence by which logical conviction must be first acquired, and the feelings duly admitted when their time comes, moderated in their behaviour by the strict demands of logical demonstration."*

"There is a sense," says Principal Caird, "in which all intense feeling transcends the limits of logic, and is capable of a richness and fulness of

* *Man's Knowledge of Man and God.* Introd. and Cap. vi., where the relations between intellect and feeling are ably discussed. See also "the Agnosticism of Science," Cap. v. in Iverach's *Is God Knowable?*

content, which baffle definition, and outstrip the comprehension of the hard and fast categories of the understanding. Our most exalted spiritual experiences are those which are least capable of being expressed by precise scientific formulæ."*

"There are subjects of grave moment and questions of primary importance," Joubert contends, "in which the governing ideas ought to spring from the sentiments: all is imperilled if they arise from other sources. To think that which we do not feel, is to lie to oneself. Whatsoever we think should be thought with the whole being, body, and soul."†

Yet in respect of those questions that deal with God, the historic Christ, and the future life, modern doubt asks for "logical proof," and for such evidences as shall command the recognition of the "pure reason," as though logic were our only "guide, philosopher, and friend," and the conclusions of the pure reason our only satisfying portion. Nevertheless, whilst resisting a demand so

* Introd. to *The Philosophy of Religion*. Cap. i.

† "Il est de tres grâves matières et de questions fort importantes où les idées decisives doivent venir des sentiments: si elles viennent d'ailleurs tout se perdra. Penser ce que l'on ne sent pas, c'est mentir a soi-même. Tout ce que l'ón pense il faut le penser avec son être tout entier, ame et corps."

Pensées, vol. i., pp. 123, 124. 2d. in *Man's Knowledge, &c.*

manifestly unreasonable, it needs to be stated yet again and again, that such proofs, intellectual and experimental, are available as should carry conviction to the candid and pains-taking inquirer and to the willing heart.

Professor Tyndall complains that "the action of the pure reason is disturbed by the emotions."

Yes; and why not? Man cannot live on bread and logic. He cannot satisfy the activities and aspirations of his many-sided life with the cold and partial exercises of "the pure reason." Shall we give no heed to the hunger of the heart, or the filial cries of the life within? Do the hopes "that wander through eternity" bring back no message to the soul? Is there no argument in the deep and joyous content of the life of faith?

We contend that human life cannot grow into true and symmetrical proportions in the continuous cold of "the pure reason"; but that in the genial atmosphere and balanced exercises of reason and faith,* the intellectual and moral capacities, man attains to the highest and the best, alike in knowledge and experience. The moral and emotional faculties play of inborn necessity their mighty part in the formation of opinion, the moulding of cha-

* See an able essay, *Reason and Faith: their claims and conflicts.* By the late Professor Rogers.

racter, and in giving force and aim, grace and colour to life—

. . . "Nor can it suit us to forget
The mighty hopes that make us men."

XXIV.

AT this point as we find so often in this controversy, *the professors of discrepant unbelief answer each other*, and sometimes indeed conceding in brighter hours what under other conditions they have doubted or denied, they neutralise the force of their own negations and half answer themselves.

The theologian is not left alone to defend the moral sentiments as aids in the pursuit of truth, or religious emotion as an important factor in promoting the breadth, culture, and refinement of the personal life. The positivist replies to the physicist.

Mr. Frederic Harrison demands to know, "why are we to discard the irrepressible appeal to emotion? If human life is to be warmed and guided by a high purpose and a noble affection, we must cultivate that affection, consciously appeal to it, stimulate it, give it fair play, frankly and heartily show our sense of the beauty of it, without shame or stint."*

* "Creed of a Layman." *Nineteenth Century*. March, 1887.

Indeed, the physicists themselves, in moments of happy oblivion, forget consistency. Driven by the necessities of actuality, they concede at one time what they controvert at another.

We overtake Professor Tyndall himself eloquently arguing that "the circle of human nature is not complete without the arc of feeling and emotion. The lilies of the field have a value beyond their botanical ones—a certain lightening of the heart accompanies the declaration that 'Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.' The sound of the village bell, which comes mellowed from the valley to the traveller upon the hill, has a value beyond its acoustical one. The setting sun, when it mantles with the bloom of roses the Alpine snows, has a value beyond its optical one. The starry heavens . . . had for Immanuel Kant a value beyond their astronomical ones. Round about the intellect sweeps the horizon of emotions from which all our noblest impulses are derived."* Further, he has acknowledged that "religious feeling is as much a verity as any part of human consciousness, and against it, on its subjective side, the waves of science beat in vain."† And again, in even more suggestive terms, he says, "Feeling

* *Fragments of Science*, v. "Address to Students."

† "Virchow on Evolution." *Nineteenth Century*, Nov., 1878.

appeared in the world before knowledge; and thoughts, conceptions, and creeds, founded on emotion, had, before the dawn of science, taken root in man. Such thoughts, conceptions, and creeds must have met a deep and general want, otherwise their growth could not have been so luxuriant, nor their abiding force so strong."* Precisely so; the moral nature was quicker in its movement than the intellectual, the emotions acted in advance of the "pure reason," instinct and intuition were before logic; "before the dawn of science," a hunger of the heart impelled human life to seek after God.

It is the modern scientist, then, rather than the theologian, who teaches that "a deep and general want" impelled the first prompt movements of human life towards "conceptions and creeds" founded on the emotions. And the Professor argues further, that since man is "not all intellect, but thinks and feels," science cannot be his "proper nutriment"; and he urges that even "the intellectual action of a complete man" is "sustained by an under-current of the emotions," that "moral motives push the intellect into action"; whilst he acknowledges the "aid that comes from a universe

* "Virchow on Evolution." *Nineteenth Century*, Nov. 1878.

which, though it baffles the intellect, can elevate the heart."*

The right use of the emotions, then, even according to the showing of the scientists, is a proper exercise of the well-developed life; and the heart must take its proper place in the great inquiry. "Thou criedst to me from far," says S. Augustine, "and I heard even so as the heart hears, a hearing which leaves no place for doubt; and I could doubt more easily my own being than the existence of the truth."†

Mr. F. Harrison tells us that "the first of all our duties is to obtain for ourselves, and procure for others, a sound, complete, real education, an education not merely scientific, but moral and emotional"‡ With what consistency, then, can it be urged that the emotional energies which were alert "before the dawn of science," and that "religious feeling which appeared before knowledge," and that "expresses some eternal fact," be "cabin'd, cribb'd, confined," as "disturbers," whilst "the pure reason," in cold and crippled solitude, pursues

* *Fragments of Science*, v.

† "Et clamasti de longinquo: Imo vero, *Ego sum qui sum*. Et audivi sicut auditur in corde, et non erat prorsus unde dubitarem; faciliusque dubitarem vivere me, quam non esse veritatem."—*Confessiones*, Lib. vii., Cap. x., p. 16.

‡ "Creed of a Layman." *Nineteenth Century*, March, 1881.

those momentous inquiries that concern the very core of life and mould of character? It is not thus that men act in the best and most important movements of life; nor exercise themselves in other pursuits intimately allied with their happiness and destiny; our "advanced" adversaries themselves being witnesses.

The Scientist does not select and cement his friendships by efforts of "the pure reason"; nor make his closest and dearest alliances in life by logical process. The affections clear their way and reach some of their noblest conclusions without the aid of scientific methods, or the succour of logical formulae.

Buckle even, who endeavoured with so much learning to prove that *intellectual* growth is the progressive force of civilisation, says, "The emotions are as much a part of us as the understanding; they are as truthful; they are as likely to be right. Though their view is different from that of the understanding, it is not capricious. They obey fixed laws; they follow an uniform and orderly course; they run in sequences; they have their logic and methods of inference."

"Le cœur a ses raisons," says Pascal, 'que la raison ne connait point."

The emotions then are the fitting helpmate

of the intellect, and especially in laying hold of those truths and hopes of religion that purify the character, strengthen and ennoble life. "As the hart panteth after the waterbrooks," so the emotional energies of human nature athirst for God, may justly claim to take their place and part in seeking for Him, who is the final aim of their most eager endeavours.* "He alone believes truth who feels it."

XXV.

EVEN *in the pursuits of natural knowledge the masters in the school of material science, do not confine themselves to "experimental evidence" and "demonstrative conclusions," nor restrain their researches within the limitations of the "pure reason," or logical process.*

Leaving microscope and scalpel and the region of the experimental, they adventure forth on "imagination's airy wing," and in speculative thought enlarge the range and ennoble the spirit of investigation. Indeed the ability to pass from "the experiential to the ultra experiential," to perceive "something finer than mere experience," to enjoy in a high degree the power of ideal extension, are

* *Vide* Mr. Herbert Spencer's *Education: Intellectual, Moral, and Physical*, Cap. i., on the reaction of feelings on the reflective powers. "Science poetic."

considered notes of competency in physics, and differentiate "the great from the mediocre investigator."*

"Imagination—that wonderful faculty, said Sir Benjamin Brodie, . . . which properly controlled by experience and reflection, becomes the noblest attribute of man; the source of poetic genius, the instrument of discovery in science, without the aid of which Newton would never have invented fluxions, nor Davy have decomposed the earths and alkalies, nor would Columbus have found another continent." †

Professor Tyndall has used this very passage as the motto to head an elaborate treatise on *The Scientific use of the Imagination.* In that paper the Professor contends that, "Bounded and conditioned by co-operant reason, imagination becomes the mightiest instrument of the physical discoverer. Newton's passage from a falling apple to a falling moon was, at the outset, a leap of the imagination. When William Thomson tries to place the ultimate particles of matter between his compass points, haply to them a scale of millimetres, he is powerfully aided by this faculty. And in much that has been recently said

* *Fragments of Science.* "Apology for Belfast Address."

† *Add. as Presdt. of the Royal Society.* Nov. 1859.

about protoplasm and life, we have the outgoings of the imagination, guided and controlled by the known analogies of science."

In the same paper we read, "Two things," said Emmanuel Kant, "fill me with awe; the glorious heavens and the sense of moral responsibility 'in man.' And in his hours of health and strength and sanity, when the stroke of action has ceased, and the pause of reflection has set in, the scientific investigator finds himself overshadowed by the same awe. Breaking contact with the hampering details of earth, it associates him with a power which gives fullness and tone to his existence, but which he can neither analyse nor comprehend."

In his famous *Belfast Address* Professor Tyndall makes statements even yet more noteworthy. "Believing," he says, "as I do in the continuity of nature, I cannot stop abruptly where our microscopes cease to be of use. Here the vision of the mind authoritatively supplements the vision of the eye. By an intellectual necessity I cross the boundary of the experimental evidence."* Afterwards in defending himself for "crossing the boundary of the experimental evidence," he says, "This, I reply, is the habitual action of the scientific mind, at least of that

* *Fragments of Science. Belf. Add.*

portion of it which applies itself to physical investigation. Our theories of light, heat, magnetism, and electricity, all imply the crossing of this boundary. My paper on the 'Scientific use of the Imagination,' and my 'Lectures on Light,' illustrate this point in the amplest manner; and in the brief discourse which follows this address I have sought incidentally to make clear that in physics the experiential incessantly leads to the ultra-experiential, that out of experience there always grows something finer than mere experience, and that in their different powers of ideal extension consists, for the most part, the difference between the great and the mediocre investigator. The kingdom of science, then, cometh not by observation and experiment alone, but is completed by fixing the roots of observation and experiment in a region inaccessible to both, and in dealing with which we are forced to fall back on the picturing power of the mind."*

XXVI.

IT is conceded, then, on the highest scientific authority that the methods of research necessary to large and successful results in the region of physics, are closely related in some important

* *Frag. Sci.*, "Apology for Belf. Add." See also "Crystals and Molecular Force."

aspects to the methods necessary in religious inquiry. The kingdom of science, like the kingdom of Christ, "cometh not with observation"; * and natural science, as truly as spiritual religion, fixes its roots in a region inaccessible both to observation and experiment.

If in physics, he only is the great and successful investigator who "crosses the boundary of experimental evidence," and "supplements the vision of the eye with the vision of mind"; on what rational ground is the inquirer in respect of those momentous subjects that belong to religious conviction to be confined within the limits of the "pure reason," or to be expected to prove the validity of his conviction by such logical methods as shall satisfy a purely intellectual requirement? This question requires an answer.

"Religious feeling," says Professor Huxley, "is the essential basis of conduct."† That is not an accurate statement, but at least the Scientist concedes so much. "The facts of religious feeling," says Professor Tyndall, "are to me as certain as the facts of physics."‡

These emotional energies then that are thus

* St. Luke xvii. 20.

† *Vide infra*, pp. 210, 211.

‡ *Belfast Add.*, Pref. remarks, 1. *Vide supra*, pp. 82—92.

confessedly indisputable factors in the constitution of man, and in the formation of character, must take their proper part and regulated function in the supreme inquiry of life. The Christian, as justly as the Scientist, refuses to stop abruptly where the instruments of observation fail, logic halts, and the processes of the reason are at fault.

For the Christian disciple as well as for the man of science there is "the picturing power of the mind"; and by a necessity as deep as life and thought and feeling, he too crosses the boundary of experiment and observation, and supplements his survey of material order and magnificence with the yet fairer visions of that faculty, which is "the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen."*

It is a law, operative in the region of natural research, as well as in the sphere of spiritual apprehension, that "he that hath not faith is condemned already."†

XXVII.

THE *most advanced scientific thought, as we have seen, and shall further show, acknowledges that religion is a primary movement of human life, and an undying necessity of man.*

* Ep. Heb., Cap. xi. 1. † St. John iii. 18.

The advances of science and the progress of knowledge can make no inroads on this eternal fact—religion a necessity of the highest life. They may correct errors in opinion, enlighten interpretation, and modify the aspects of religious thought, but religion itself is confessedly an impregnable reality.

Auguste Comte, so far from agreeing with the superficial impression that religion is waning before the advancing light of knowledge, urges that "man becomes more and more religious." Mr. Frederick Harrison, corroborating the opinion of his famous positivist chief, says, "It is the delirium of revolt which screams out to us to cast out the faculty of faith, along with the object or the form of our old faith. Besides it is cant, mere delusion to suppose it is done or can be done. Neither enthusiasm, nor discipline, nor faith, nor reverence, nor devotion to a cause, nor love for a Power greater than ourselves, are at all dying out of the world." And he adds, "away with the peevish paradox of pedants and cynics that mankind has outgrown worship."*

Religion is the *sine quâ non* of the completely developed life. Unbelief is not the native air of man. He cannot flourish in full proportions on

* *Creed of a Layman. Supra*, p. 87.

the negation of God and futurity. He has in him, as constituent elements, capacities and desires that terminate only in the Eternal and Divine—a heart-hunger for "the bread of God"—"the bread which cometh down from heaven"; that satisfies the hunger of the soul and sustains it to eternal life.* Capacity implies opportunity; appetite, satisfaction; function, use. The exquisite structural arrangements of the organs of sight and hearing imply vision and sound. The functions of respiration signify an atmosphere. The scientific naturalist, disinterring the fragments of pre-historic fauna, infers, from the structure of their remains, what were the elements in which these living creatures existed and the aliment on which they were nourished.

The psychologist finds faculty and potentiality in the spiritual nature of man; and these the student of human history discovers, working themselves out in "strong" and "luxuriant" religious growths: "conceptions and creeds," the inborn life of man, feeling after God, as plants feel after light.

What is this but human consciousness interpreting its own inbred need? It is psychology and history together bearing their united testimony that man needs God and the hopes of religion, as

* *Vide* St. John, vi. 31, *et seq.*

plants need light and animals and air. Indeed, Mr. Herbert Spencer himself makes the notable admission that "An unbiassed consideration . . . forces us to conclude that Religion, everywhere present as a weft running through the warp of human history, expresses some eternal fact."*

In seeking to know the essence and true proportion of this "eternal fact," the inner sense which yearns for the deeper springs, the emotional aspirations which feel the want of "more life, and fuller," may surely aid the intellect in its search for the fount of immortality and the light of God.

It was one of the great masters of spiritual instruction who said, "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness;" † and, with a profound insight both in respect of the proportions of religion and the necessities of man, addressing the first European disciples of Christianity, he urged the necessity for the growth of the vital principle of religion, not only by the exercises of the intellect, but in quickened perceptions by the internal sense —*ἐν ἐπιγνώσει καὶ πάσῃ αἰσθήσει*—"in full knowledge and in active emotion."‡

There is, indeed, no infallibility in the action of religious feeling any more than in that of intel-

* *First Principles*, Cap. i., "Religion and Service."

† Rom. x. 11. ‡ Phil. i. 9.

lectual effort. Either may be betrayed, but in the due balance and exercise of reason and faith, the intellect and the emotions, enlightened Christians sustain their convictions and nourish their spiritual life.

A philosophical exponent of Christian Theism has justly said, "Feeling is in consciousness essentially dependent on, and necessarily subsequent to, knowledge. Mere feeling — without knowing—is an utterly inconceivable and impossible experience. . . . If Theism have no other basis than feeling it is a house which foolish men have built upon the sand. The first storm will cast it down, and no wise man will regret its fall. Whatever is founded on mere emotion—on emotion which is not itself explained and justified by reason —stands but by sufferance ; has no right to stand; ought to be cast down and swept away from the earth. But the storms which have already in the course of ages spent their force against Theism with no other effect than to make its strength more conspicuous, and to carry away what would have weakened or deformed it, are sufficient to show us that it has been built on eternal truth by the finite human reasons which have been enlightened by Infinite and Divine Reason." *

* *Theism.* Prof. Flint. Lec. iii., pp. 83—85.

Reason, of course, has an important part to play, within its own limits, in the inquiry after truth, appropriately uses its most skilful apparatus, and every branch of science contributes its valuable aid in the great inquiry. But it is alike beyond the scope of science and the prerogatives of logic to pass within the hallowed precincts of religious feeling, and determine its measure or regulate its activities.

In the court of reason science may submit its facts and logic indulge its serviceable methods; but the chords of religious emotion vibrate to a subtler touch. That Divine breath which bloweth where it listeth, can alone awaken the Æolian music. The heart, like the head, has methods of its own.

The physical scientists are again at one with us. Professor Tyndall says, "No atheistic reasoning can, I hold, dislodge religion from the heart of man. Logic cannot deprive us of life, and religion is life to the religious. As an experience of consciousness it is perfectly beyond the assaults of logic." * And Professor Huxley, in acknowledging "religious feeling as the essential basis of conduct," confesses himself perplexed to know how it is to be

* *Belf. Add.* Pref. Remarks, ii.

maintained "without the use of the Bible."* We welcome his confession and appreciate his perplexity.

It is most true that the need of authoritative guidance in affairs pertaining to the spiritual life is clear and manifest; but in ascertaining that guidance and verifying its authority there is certainly legitimate scope and ample opportunity for the exercise alike of the intellectual and emotional functions. Both of these have their place, and proper methods of activity, but we find our best security, in religious research, by their combined endeavours.

XXIX.

In controverting the creed of *Life for the present*, alike uninspired, and unrestrained by considerations of a life in the future, as logically untenable and morally degrading, we have urged only those central verities of the Christian faith which confessedly on all hands exalt the thought, purify the affections, and give dignity to human life. Against these science has no record, and advanced thought no plea.

Professor Huxley shall again give us his wel-

* *Vide infra*, pp. 210, 211.

come support, "The lover of moral beauty," says he, "struggling through a world full of sorrow and sin is surely as much stronger for believing that sooner or later a vision of perfect peace and goodness will burst upon him, as the toiler up a mountain for the belief that beyond crag and snow lies home and rest."*

Professor Clifford acknowledged that "belief in God and a future life is a source of refined and elevated pleasure to those who can hold it."†

"To believe in an ever living and perfect Mind, supreme over the universe," says a distinguished writer, "is to invest moral distinctions with immensity and eternity, and lift them from the provincial stage of human society to the imperishable theatre of all being. When planted thus in the very substance of things, they justify and support the ideal estimates of the conscience; they deepen every guilty shame; they guarantee every righteous hope; and they help the will with a Divine casting vote in every balance of temptation."‡

Confessedly, then, faith in God, and the anticipations of immortality, adorn and enrich life,

* "A Modern Symposium." *Nineteenth Century*, May, 1877.

† Same "Symposium." For an examination of Professor Clifford's atheistic theories, see Mallock's *Atheism and the value of Life*. "The Professor in the Pulpit."

‡ Martineau, same "Symposium."

inspiring it with vigour, courage, and content; rendering it more patient under burthens, calmer in peril, sounder in moral judgment; and enabling it to scale the heights of enterprise and effort with a surer footstep and a cheerier heart.

Far be it from science or philosophy to admit that such practical and beneficial results are obtained by beguiling human life into the acceptance of some cunning potion of superstition, or concoction of theological craft, alien to the true nature and need of man.

Human life, according to the teaching of science, can only be nourished into more refined and elevated vigour by supplying it with that wholesome aliment that is suited to its constitutional necessities. Physical life is not invigorated by a regimen alien from its natural requirements. In the nature of things it is impossible that the higher life of man can ripen in force, comeliness and joy upon a diet of "cunningly devised fables," mystic fancies, or night-born superstitions.

It is admitted, however, that faith in God and anticipations of the life immortal, add work-day strength to man's energy, and exhilarate his life with refined enjoyment. But if these wholesome and cheering effects are wrought in a human

life by a sincere faith in God, Christ, and immortality, we have practical evidence in the manifest fitness of things—proof from results—that such elements of thought and conviction are needful to satisfy man's inmost requirement, to quicken and sustain the highest possibilities of his being, and to give his life ample growth and just proportion, "*Cor humanum inquietum est, donec requiescat in Deo.*"

XXX.

WE retort upon the unbeliever the question, "*where or how otherwise shall man find his satisfying portion?*"

Whither shall he go to find the words of this higher life? At what other fountain can he drink the living water that shall be in him a well-spring of ever-satisfying sweetness and refreshment?

The inadequacy of ethics, science, or culture to give peace and cheer, strength and contentment to the deep and ever-widening needs of human life, has been freely conceded by positivists, professors of natural science, and representatives of various schools of "advanced thought"; and, further, indeed, they have admitted that religion is necessary to the progress of civilisation, the evolution of society, and the stability of nations.

Let the Doubter give good heed to the following further proofs of these statements.

Mr. Herbert Spencer censures the "bias that undervalues religious systems," and adds, "a religious system is a normal and essential factor in every evolving society."*

"I have noticed during years of self-observation," says Professor Tyndall, "that it is not in hours of clearness and vigour that this doctrine (Atheism) commends itself to my mind; that in the presence of stronger and healthier thought it ever dissolves and disappears, as offering no solution to the mystery in which we dwell, and of which we form a part." †

"Society rests upon conscience and not upon science," says Amiel in his *Journal Intime*. "Civilisation is first and foremost a moral thing. Without honesty, without respect for law, without the worship of the Deity, without the love of our neighbour, in a word without virtue—the whole is menaced and falls into decay, and neither letters nor art, neither luxury nor industry, nor rhetoric, nor the policeman, nor the Custom House officer can maintain erect and whole the edifice of which the foundations are unsound." ‡

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* *The Study of Sociology*. Cap. xii.

† *Pref. Belfast Address*, 1. ‡ Vol. ii.

"On religion," says the author of *Ecce Homo*, "depends the whole fabric of civilisation and the future of mankind."*

"Without a sense of responsibility to a supernatural power," writes an eminent historian, "human beings would sink into ingenious apes."†

Even Sir James Stephen contends that we cannot judge of the effects of atheism from the conduct of persons who have been educated as believers in God, and in the midst of a nation which believes in God. "If we should ever see a generation of men, especially a generation of Englishmen, to whom the word God has no meaning at all, we should get a light upon the subject which might be lurid enough. Great force of character restrained and directed by a deep sense of duty, is the noblest of noble things."‡

It was the opinion of Voltaire that "Not to believe in any God would be an error incompatible with wise government."§

Thomas Carlyle wrote to his brother, "I was very glad that you had promised to my mother to keep religion in your house. Without religion con-

* *Natural Religion*, p. 218.

† *The Eng. in the West Indies.* Froude, p. 329.

‡ *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity*, cap. vi.

§ *Life of Voltaire.* J. Morley, "Religion," cap. v.

stantly present to the heart, I see not how a man can live otherwise than unreasonably — desperately."*

Mr. F. Harrison instructs us that "those who teach that the future can be built upon science and civilisation are attempting to build a pyramid of bricks without straw." And, further, he admits that "morals are not adequate to direct human life until they are transfused into that sense of resignation, adoration, and communion with an overruling Providence, which is the true mark of religion."

In another paper the same writer has said, "It is mockery to talk about science, enlightenment, progress, freethought, to the myriads of men and women, and to tell them that these ought to serve them. What can they want more—why ask for religion? The rude men who sweat and swelter in mines, in furnaces, in factories, the hedger and the ditcher, and the cottager, with his pinched home, the women who stitch and serve, the children wandering forlorn and unkempt into rough life—how are these to be sustained and comforted by science and enlightenment? How will freethought teach discipline to the young and self-restraint to the wild? What sustenance will the imagination

* *Life*. Vol. ii., p. 264.

and the devotional nature receive from the principle of free inquiry? Human nature is not a thing so docile and intellectual that it can be tamed by fine thoughts, nor is society amenable to pure ideas."*

The Positivist Professor admits further, "How often has the overburdened spirit felt peace amid agony and bereavement; how often have the dying lips smiled in peace; what trust and calm have beamed in the eyes of the weakest, the most afflicted, the most forsaken! We know it all. We, too, have felt all these things. We are not cynics, swinishly deaf to the spiritual voices. Why ask us if we have any such thing in our faith, if we can give these seraphic raptures, these superhuman joys and hopes? Certainly not. It is quite possible that no rational faith whatever has any exact equivalent to those miracles in subduing sense, and galvanising certain chords of emotion."†

XXXI.

So it stands: *Scientist, positivist, rationalist, "advanced thinker," all admit the necessity of religion*, and that their systems, call them what they may, cannot touch the deeper springs of being,

* "Creed of a Layman." *Nineteenth Century*, March, 1881.

† *Ibid.*

nor thrill life's inmost fibres with a rapturous joy, nor brighten dying eyes with the dawn of a lovelier day. For these Divine triumphs we must have a revelation of an Infinite goodness and eternal life—a religion that brings home to the heart Fatherhood, reconciliation, and immortality.

John Stuart Mill says, "If religion, or any particular form of it, is true, its usefulness follows without other proof." But is this statement not to a certain degree convertible? If religion demonstrates its "usefulness" by purifying, ennobling, and enriching life—making it stronger to endure and do, awaking otherwise unstirred sensibilities of exalted emotion, and evoking the highest energies of enterprise and hope—does not its general truth follow from these results?

Mill admits that "some of the precepts of Christ as exhibited in the Gospels . . . carry some kinds of moral goodness to a greater height than had ever been attained before." He says that religion, like poetry, supplies "ideal conceptions grander and more beautiful than we see realised in the prose of human life."

Again, "So long as human life is insufficient to satisfy human aspirations, so long there will be a craving for higher things, which finds its most obvious satisfaction in religion. So long as earthly

life is full of suffering, so long there will be need of consolations, which the hope of heaven affords to the selfish, the love of God to the tender and grateful. The value, therefore, of religion to the individual, both in the past and present, as a source of personal satisfaction and of elevated feelings, is not to be disputed." And one further notable and deeply pathetic concession Mill makes—evidently the still small voice of some tender memory. He grants that "the Sceptic by his scepticism loses one valuable consolation," if only one: "the hope of reunion with those dear to him who have ended their earthly life before him. That loss indeed is neither to be denied nor extenuated. In many cases it is beyond the reach of comparison or estimate."*

But a religion exercising such power over human life, bringing such consolations, bestowing such gifts of holy joy, and attended by such noble results —in short, the complement of man's necessity— must be founded in truth. Superstition is a distempered dream—a nightmare, not the wakeful, healthful activity of the morning. Lies cannot be a gospel of peace, strength, and joy to the toiling, suffering, sinning, dying multitudes. Untruth cannot be a necessary or secure basis on which to build

* *Three Essays on Religion.* (2.) "Utility of Religion."

wider and higher the noble superstructure of civilisation and freedom. Falsehood is a treacherous morass, not a firm highway for the advancing footsteps of human society. "Man," said Carlyle, "is everywhere the born enemy of lies."

XXXII.

WE now advance another step in our argument, aided by *a most notable concession of a distinguished scientist.*

Professor Huxley says, "If it is demonstrated that the theological dogma is needful to the higher life of man, then he asks for proof of the dogma." —We reply is not the necessity itself a "proof"? —He adds, "If this proof is forthcoming, it is my conviction that no drowning sailor ever clutched a hen-coop more tenaciously than mankind will hold to such dogma, whatever it may be. But if not, then I verily believe that the human race will go on its evil way."*

Proceeding from such a quarter this is a very remarkable statement. Let us examine it.

First from a scientist's point of view, it is confessed that something has gone radically wrong in human nature: it is going on "an evil way." But

* "Modern Symposium." *Nineteenth Century*, May, 1877. *Vide* also *infra*, pp. 121—3.

the seasons are not going on an evil way; day and night are not in confusion; the forces of the material world keep the laws and do their duty without reproach. What has science then to say in respect of this phenomenon of disorder in the moral world—that whilst nature in its lower sphere goes on the good way of order and regularity in admirable fulfilment of law, there has stolen into the higher nature of humanity *ἀνομία*—lawlessness, "confusion, and every evil work?"

The fact of moral disorder, that Christianity so strenuously urges, the Professor here admits, but, alas! he can only "fear" that if "the dogma" cannot be proved the acknowledged mischief must go on. Then science, at least, has no gospel for this acknowledged moral and social disorder. This is sad enough.

Our scientist further represents the human race as a "drowning sailor," eager, in his misery, to clutch at any flotsam. Then, in this view, humanity is "at sea," wrecked too; buffeted by waves against which it has no adequate force to contend, and must sink unless it finds an extraneous deliverance. This is, the very ground-work of Christian doctrine; an elementary principle of the faith. Consenting to this, science concedes half the "dogma"—human nature wrecked and ruined.

A drowning sailor, however, with evidence enough in his desperate need, does not wait for "logical proof" of the sufficient buoyancy of the "hen-coop," but hopefully clutches at it—"drowning men catch *even* at straws"—like those seamen and prisoners, in a famous shipwreck off the coast of Melita, who seized what the perilous occasion offered, and "some on boards and some on broken pieces of the ship . . . escaped all safe to land."* Is it not simply reasonable, therefore, for the Sceptic to prove the Christian "dogma" by trying it? Proof by experiment is surely most agreeable with scientific method.

XXXIII.

CHRISTIANITY is no broken fragment, no waif on the waves of time.

It is a life-line thrown by a strong yet gentle hand to wrecked and struggling souls; and from the shores rises a great shout of thousands of already rescued men, encouraging the "drowning sailors," to trust and try the life-line; and myriads more that are gone for ever from the perilous coasts of time, having passed beyond the region of gloom and storm and tempest, have left their

* Acts xxvii. 44.

testimony behind that that lifeline is "mighty to save," "even to the uttermost."

"Try it," said that profound student of human life, Samuel Taylor Coleridge. "Try it. It has been eighteen hundred years in existence, and has one individual left a record like the following? . . . I have given Christianity a fair trial. I was aware that its promises were made only conditionally. But my heart bears me witness, that to the utmost of my power, I have complied with these conditions. Both outwardly and in the discipline of my inward acts and affections, I have performed the duties which it enjoins, and I have used the means which it prescribes. Yet my assurance of its truth has received no increase. Its promises have not been fulfilled; and I repent me of my delusion. If neither your own experience nor the history of almost two thousand years has presented a single testimony to this purport; and if you have read and heard of many who have lived and died bearing witness to the contrary; and if you yourself have met with some *one*, in whom on any other point you would place unqualified trust, who has on his own experience made report to you that 'He is faithful who promised, and what He promised He has proved Himself able to perform': is it bigotry if I fear that the Unbelief, which pre-

judges and prevents the experiment, has its source elsewhere than in the uncorrupted judgment; that not the strong, free mind, but the enslaved will, is the true original infidel in this instance?"*

XXXIV.

CHRISTIANITY *should be tried*, if tried at all, *according to its own prescribed methods*. It is no honest test that disregards the conditions distinctly set down as necessary in order to conduct the experiment successfully.

Dr. Tyndall, in a remarkable paper on "Spontaneous Generation," gave an account of a series of experiments and their conclusive results. It is competent to any other scientific inquiry to demonstrate the same conclusions; but he must be willing to conduct his experiment with like labour, patience, and accuracy of observation. If, however, he permits defects in his apparatus, impatience or inexactness in his observations, he will fail in his results; but he can have no right to impugn Dr. Tyndall's conclusion, till he has accurately followed his experiment

Now the Founder of Christianity said, "If any man willeth to do His will—ἐάν τις θέλῃ τὸ θέλημα

* *Aids to Reflection*, Aphor. civ.

αὐτοῦ ποιεῖν—he shall know of the doctrine."* He demands, then, "the willing mind," the friendly disposition, the experiment of docile obedience. Prejudice and hostile preconceptions are obstructive elements to the ingress of spiritual light and moral conviction. The perceptions must be clarified by the sympathetic will:—

> ". . . . Then purg'd with euphrasy and rue
> The visual nerve"

shall have revelations bright, definite and clear —reaching

> "Even to the inmost seat of mental sight."

The Doubter, however, who, as Descartes says, "doubts only that he may doubt, and seeks nothing but uncertainty itself; feeding his heart on the east wind of a cheerless unbelief," who is always ready to fling his gibe at "the faith of our fathers," who hails with delight every new objection to Christianity that glides over the currents of human opinion, and is eager to shake hands with the latest "difficulty of belief," is self-disqualified for the experimental inquiry. "There be," says Bacon, "that delight in giddiness, and count it bondage to fix a belief."†

The heart that is at inward war with good, or the life that is simply too busy with self and time

* St. Jno., vii. 17. † *Essays*, "Truth."

—the things seen that are temporal—to engage in any serious search after God, or too impatient of control to bear the restraints of religion, is in no fitting mood to try fairly the Christian experiment; and is assuredly as little entitled to pass judgment on the grave issues involved as the careless and prejudiced experimentalist would be warranted in denying the results of Dr. Tyndall's elaborate experiments in respect of "spontaneous generation."

The Christian has satisfied himself by experiment that the results promised are attainable. To him belong the forces of inward conviction; but if the Sceptic will not prosecute the inquiry on scientific principles and by scientific methods, that is to say, on such exact conditions as can alone give a true result, he has no right to deny the conclusion.

The Sceptic may say, "I decline to make this experiment." If so—why? Either because he is not anxious in respect of the question, or he is unwilling to reach the foretold conclusion. But this indifference or unwillingness, whichever it may be, "makes his judgment blind" on the whole question, and discovers at work within himself causes that may, at least as probably, be the secret

of his unbelief, as any presumed inadequacy of Christian evidences.

The earnest Sceptic is assuredly bound either to adopt the test of practical experiment, or failing carefully to prosecute the grave inquiry, to preserve at least a respectful silence on the important question that, under the circumstances, he is not qualified to discuss.

We seem to hear from Doubters and Unbelievers a murmur of reply, "We fear to believe in the Unseen, to trust the Unknown; we want some evidential facts that will hush intellectual cavil; we want a feeling of certainty:

"'Could we but know
The land that ends our dark uncertain travel,
Where lie those happier hills and meadows low,—
Ah, if beyond the spirit's inmost cavil,
Aught of that country could we surely know,
Who would not go?

"'Might we but hear
The hovering angels' high imagined chorus,
Or catch, betimes, with wakeful eyes and clear
One radiant vista of the realm before us,—
With one rapt moment given to see and hear,
Ah, who would fear?

"'Were we quite sure
To find the peerless friend who left us lonely,
Or there by some celestial stream as pure,
To gaze in eyes that here were love-lit only,—
This weary mortal coil, were we quite sure,
Who would endure?'"*

* *Latter Day Lyrics.* E. D. Stedman.

We contend that, by an inward sense, surety is attainable, a confidence may be gained that casts out fear, an assurance that "calms the spirit's inmost cavil." There must, however, be first a willingness to do His will: the ready heart.

As the "drowning sailor" struggles with desperate endeavour to "clutch the hen-coop," so the Sceptic in earnest to find deliverance and sure rescue must "lay hold upon the hope set before *him* . . . an anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast."*

"There is but one chance of life," says Professor Ruskin, "in admitting so far the possibility of the Christian verity, as to try it on its own terms. There is not the slightest possibility of finding whether it be true or not first. 'Show me a sign first, and I will come,' you say. 'No,' answers God, 'come first, and then you shall see a sign.'" †

XXXV.

THE *disciple of modern doubt or unbelief*, however, *is not required to adopt a faith unsustained by outward evidence.*

There are external, internal, and collateral evi-

* Heb. vi. 18, 19.

† An Oxford Lecture. *Nineteenth Century*, Jan., 1878.

dences in ample and varied abundance to commend and confirm the Christian faith. Possibly, the Doubter may reply, "I cannot accept these evidences as sufficient to authenticate the Divine origin and historic truth of Christianity."

The evidences that sustain the Christian religion satisfied the philosophic insight, the acute research, the ample learning, the keen cross-examination of the great apologists of Christianity. Augustine and Anselm, Pascal and Grotius, Newton and Locke, Watson and Paley and many others—some of whom "are not," and others remain with us to this present—not inferior to any Sceptic in masculine grasp of thought, extent of learning, or earnestness of inquiry, have recognised the irrefutable force of the Christian argument, have added the weight of their devout conviction, and have yielded the homage of their life to its authority.

This is not the place to examine or even to state the Christian evidences; but the fact of their thorough acceptance by men of the highest probity, keenest intellect, and ripest culture, lends, at least, a high degree of *probability** to their strength and sufficiency, and proves, at any rate, that they are

* *Vide supra*, pp. 10—15.

worthy of the most careful and respectful consideration by the earnest-minded inquirer. They cannot be ignored by any honest seeker after truth.

"What I mean," says a philosophic inquirer, "by the rationality of a belief in any hypothesis is its fitness to be accepted and acted upon because it has in its favour the strongest probabilities of the case so far as we can grasp these probabilities. I know of no other foundation for a belief in anything; for belief is the acceptance by the mind of some proposition, statement, or supposed fact, the truth of which depends upon evidence addressed to our senses, or to our intellectual perceptions, or to both."*

XXXVI.

THE *Sceptic confronts us now with another "difficulty of belief," viz., that the Christian religion involves inexplicable mysteries.*

Granted; but the Christian is not moving alone amid the shadows of the inexplicable. "We are all," said Goethe, "groping amid mysteries and won-

* *Creation or Evolution.* Geo. Ticknor Curtis. New York. Cap. i., "Foundn. of Belief." A very careful and elaborate examination of the Spencerian and Darwinian Philosophy. *Vide* also, *supra*, pp. 10—15, on Probability.

ders." Mysteries shadow life on every side. "Now men see not the bright light that is in the clouds."* The disciples of physical science, as well as the disciples of Christianity, are confronted with the incomprehensible and the mysterious.

Mr. Herbert Spencer warns us that "those who think that science is dissipating religious beliefs and sentiments seem unaware that whatever of mystery is taken from the old interpretation is added to the new. Or rather, we may say that transference from the one to the other is accompanied by increase; since, for an explanation which has a seeming feasibility, science substitutes an explanation which carrying us back only a certain distance, there leaves us in the presence of the avowedly inexplicable."†

Professor Tyndall says that having "exhausted physics and reached its very rim, the mighty mystery still looms beyond us. I have, in fact, made no step towards its solution;" and, again, he speaks of being in the presence of "two Incomprehensibles instead of one Incomprehensible."‡

Professor Huxley says: "From the region of disorderly mystery, which is the domain of ignor-

* Job xxxvii. 21.

† *Nineteenth Century*. Jan., 1884, Art. "Retrospect and Prospect."

‡ *Nineteenth Century*, Nov., 1878.

ance, another vast province has been added to science, the region of orderly mystery."* Mr. Geo. H. Lewes said, concerning the problems of psychology, "Those mysteries will most probably remain for ever unsolved."†

"The known is finite," said Darwin, "the unknown is infinite; intellectually we stand on an islet in the midst of an illimitable ocean of inexplicability."‡

It must be admitted that "a Science without mystery is unknown; a Religion without mystery is absurd."§

The scientist, then, and the psychologist bear testimony to the presence of mystery both in material phenomena and in the laws of mind. By forsaking religion, therefore, the perplexed Doubter finds no relief from the darkness of mystery and the doctrine of the inexplicable. Into the temple of Science the ghostly shadow follows him; and even in that sanctuary of the reason he finds that the articles of belief still include "the doctrine of the incomprehensible."

* Quoted by Lewes, *Physiology of Common Life*, vol. ii., c. 8.

† *Ibid.*

‡ *Life and Letters.* Cap. v. "On the Reception of the Origin of Species."

§ *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*, p. 48. *Vide* also cap. "Biogenesis," pp. 91, 92.

XXXVII.

LIFE *itself is a mystery.*

What is life? No man has grasped, or even seen, the subtle entity. Hinting in a throb, a movement, a perfume, the nearness of its hiding-place; it yet mocks the seeker. It evades the edge of the keenest scalpel. Across the field of the microscope it flutters a fringe of its delicate robe, but no eye has ever caught a glimpse of the unveiled mystery. The eager scientist admits that "it trembles all along the line" of his research, yet it ever eludes his approach; like the fabled chalice, that lies where the rainbow touches the earth, but as the seeker advances the phantom arch recedes. So the mystery—life, evades the keenest inquisitor, and shrinks from the advances of the most eager devotee.

If the physical universe, then, involves the incomprehensible, and life itself is a mystery, with what reason does the Doubter stagger at religion because of its mysteries, or reject Christian dogma because it propounds the incomprehensible? A religion without mystery would be a religion alike without nature and God. Both are robed in mystery as in a garment. Nature veils many

"secret things." And "He maketh darkness pavilions round about Him."*

The ostrich, when hard pressed with pursuit, is said to thrust its head into the sand or bush, and thenceforth sees no danger; but the intelligent inquirer does not imagine that by thrusting his head—where his *heart* cannot follow—into a creed without God, Christ, or immortality, that he has got rid of mysteries, and settled all "difficulties of belief," save indeed as the ostrich has settled its danger by refusing to see it.

This, is, however, no settlement of the difficulty. The Sceptic is an inquirer. Let us remind him of some of the problems, from the urgency and difficulty of which, his rejection of revealed religion, gives him no release. He must confront "*the difficulties of unbelief.*" And, as Dr. Arnold truly said, "the difficulties of unbelief are intellectually far greater" than those implied in belief.† But how does the Doubter propose to settle them?

XXXVIII.

WHAT *answer has modern doubt to give to the great question in respect of the origin of nature and man?*

* Ps. xviii. 11.

† *Life and Correspondence.* Letter 45. See also 207.

Whence proceeded the physical universe, and by what power is it sustained, with its magnificent structural arrangements, the continued action of forces, the exact and admirable system of laws, *according* to which, not *by* which it is governed? "The fortuitous concourse of atoms" theory was recognised as preposterous even by a pagan philosopher.

To put Cicero's argument in modern form: as well indeed imagine that the Bodleian Library, with all its treasures of thought, was the product of a series of happy accidents, or that the railway system of Great Britain, with its stupendous work, elaborate organisation, and constant activity, is the outcome of most fortunate chances, as believe that the magnificent order of the universe originated and is sustained without a creative intelligence and a governing will.*

What account has the Doubter to offer of the origin of that complex personality—himself? With a physical structure "fearfully and wonderfully made;" with a mental and moral organisation that enables him to reason and resolve, to conceive an

* "Hoc qui existimat fieri potuisse, non intelligo, cur non idem putet, si innumerabiles unius et viginti formæ literarum, vel aureæ vel quales libet, aliquo conjiciantur, posse ex his in terram excussis annales Ennii, ut deinceps legi possint, effici."—*De Natura Deorum*, lib. ii. 37.

Infinite Benevolence, to anticipate an immortal life, to love the one with a profound homage, and to expect the other with a joyful hope; how has this being—Man come to be?*

Has the Doubter the hardihood to assert, in contravention of the highest scientific opinion, that man is the result of "spontaneous generation," that he is "evolved from protoplasm," or "an outcome of organisation?"

These and similar phrases are very familiar, yet they are controverted by the highest authorities in science, as we shall proceed in the following pages to show.

"Men of science," said Professor Tyndall in his Belfast address, "will frankly admit their inability to point to any satisfactory experimental proof that life can be developed save from demonstrable antecedent life." Professor Huxley acknowledges that "life precedes organisation"; but the effect cannot precede the cause; life, therefore, is not a result of organisation.

The Doubter will scarcely, we presume, accept the odd theory of an eminent scientific speculator, who surmises that "the first forms of life were carried from some other planet to this earth on an —aerolite!" Even that fanciful invention does not

* "Iam vero animum ipsum, mentemque hominis, rationem, consilium, prudentiam, qui non divinâ curâ perfecta esse perspicit, is ipsis rebus mihi videtur carere." *De Nat. Deo.* Lib. ii. 59.

remove but only thrusts back the difficulty of the origin of life one stage. Or will the Sceptic trace his ancestry to the *monera* of the deep-sea slime, where "the oldest monera originated," as Haeckel says, "just as crystals form in the matrix?"*

Science has its later answer to the impossible theory; and we claim the Doubter's attention to this reply.

"It is in vain," says an eminent microscopist, "for Haeckel to call the simplest moneron that lives 'primeval slime,' or to call numbers of them 'individualised lumps of albumen.' It is a travesty. Under the same lens place 'a lump of albumen,' and the lowest *living* infusorian, and a voiceless contradiction of Haeckel's phrase which none can ever question is indubitably given. The infusorian lives, the albumen is dead. The infusorian constructs the vital matter of its own body from the heterogeneous matter in which it lives; the albumen decomposes as it lies there. The infusorian has soon multiplied by millions, while the albumen disappears by decadence. To write of living monera as 'albumen,' or of 'complex molecules' with nothing more than complexity, as *living*, is to contradict, in the name, the essential and distinguishing qualities of both."†

* *The Evolution of Man*, vol. ii., Cap. xv.

† *The Creator*, &c. Dr. Dallinger, pp. 34, 35.

"Let no one imagine," says Professor Tait, "that, should we ever penetrate this mystery (of life), we shall thereby be enabled to produce, except from life, even the lowest form of life. Sir W. Thomson's splendid suggestion of vortex atoms, if it be correct, will make us thoroughly to understand matter and mathematically to investigate all its properties. Yet its very basis implies the *absolute necessity* of an intervention of Creative Power to form or to destroy one atom of even dead matter." And the Professor concludes his lecture by the quotation of memorable words addressed to the British Association by Professor Stokes, "When from the phenomena of life we pass on to those of mind, we enter a region still more profoundly mysterious. . . . Science can be expected to do but little to aid us here, since the instrument of research is itself the object of investigation. It can but enlighten us as to the depth of our ignorance and lead us to look to a higher aid for that which most nearly concerns our well-being."*

"Fare onward to the end, since from a source
Thou art, which doth transcend and doth determine force!
Fare onward to the end; not from force, dead and blind,
Thou camest, but from the depth of the Creative Mind."†

* *Lectures on Physl. Science.* Lect. 1.

† *Songs Unsung.* "The New Creed." Lewis Morris.

On the genesis and development of Man, see Preb. Reynolds *The Supernatl. in Nature*, Cap. xvii., "Man—Origin, Nature, Language," Cap. xviii., "Human Nature—Personality, Individuality, Speciality."

XXXIX.

THE *Theory of "spontaneous generation" is entirely unsustained by scientific experiment.*

Haeckel even admits that "the theory of spontaneous generation cannot be experimentally proved unless great difficulties be overcome." Then he candidly adds, that "he who does not assume a spontaneous generation of monera . . . to explain the first origin of life upon our earth, has no other resource but to believe in a supernatural miracle." Hence to avoid this imminent but distasteful alternative, the scientist counsels the acceptance of an unsustained assumption! This is speculation, not science.

Virchow has himself rebuked the introduction of this gratuitous hypothesis. He says, "No one can adduce a single positive fact in evidence that such spontaneous generation ever took place, and that an inorganic mass, even of this firm of Carbon & Co., was ever transformed into an organic mass. Nevertheless, I admit that if we propose to imagine to ourselves how the first organic being could have originated, there is no alternative but spontaneous generation, unless we recur to creation. *Tertium non datur.*

But spontaneous generation is not demonstrated, and we shall be wise to wait for its demonstration. We remember how completely all attempts have failed to find a place for it in tracing the passage of the most elementary forms from the inorganic to the organic kingdom. Haeckel will never be able to explain to us how from the midst of this inorganic world, in which nothing changes, life can come forth. The lapse of time makes no change in mechanical laws; and if we go back to the periods of incandescence in the history of our planet, we may fairly be reminded that intense heat is far more destructive than productive of life.*

"So far as science can settle anything, this question is settled. The attempt to get the living out of the dead has failed. Spontaneous generation has had to be given up. And it is now recognised on every hand that life can only come from the touch of life. Huxley categorically announces that the doctrine of biogenesis, or life only from life, is 'victorious along the whole line at the present day.' And even whilst confessing that he wishes the evidence were the other way, Tyndall is compelled to say, 'I affirm that no shred of trust-

* *Revue Scientifique*. Dec. 8th, 1877. *Vide A Study of Origins*. M. de Pressensé, bk., II., Cap. iv. See also Dr. Bree's *Fallacies of Darwinism*.

worthy experimental testimony exists to prove that life in our day has ever appeared independently of antecedent life.' "*

Yet we find that upon this theory, unsustained "by a single positive fact in evidence that spontaneous generation ever took place"—a spontaneous evolution of life from any primordial forms—willing doubters fall back with every ingenuity of suggestion and variety of iteration; for if this theory fails them, then they have, by their own confession, "no other resource but to believe in a supernatural miracle," "no alternative but to recur to creation."

Terrible dilemma! They stand alone, without scientific retreat, confronted with the Christian dogma of life created by an intelligent Will.

"The physical laws may explain the inorganic world, the biological laws may account for the development of the organic; but of the point where they meet, of that strange borderland between the dead and the living, science is silent. It is as if God had placed everthing in earth and heaven in the hands of nature, but reserved a point at the genesis of life for His direct appearing."†

* *Natural Law in the Spiritual World* (Drummond): "Biogenesis."

† *Ibid.*

Let us, for the satisfaction of the earnest Sceptic, confirm our contention by further scientific evidence.

The renowned Agassiz gives the weight of his scientific name and authority to the following notable testimony: "In my view, nothing shows more directly and absolutely the operation of a reflecting mind, than all these categories, upon which the different species, genera, families, orders, classes are based in nature; nothing more clearly indicates a deliberate consideration of the subject than the real and material manifestation of all these characteristics by a succession of individuals whose life is limited to a duration comparatively very short. The great marvel of all these relations consists in the fugitive character of all the parts of this great harmony. While the species is persistent during long periods, the individuals which represent it change constantly and die, one after the other in rapid succession. Nothing in the organic kingdom is calculated to impress us so strongly as the unity of plan which is apparent in the structure of the most various types.

"From pole to pole, under all meridians, the mammalia, birds, reptiles, fishes, exhibit one and the same structural plan. The plan denotes abstract conceptions of the most elevated order; it far sur-

passes the broadest generalisations of the mind of man, and it required the most laborious research to enable man to arrive at any adequate idea at all of it. Other plans not less marvellous disclose themselves in the articulata, the molluscs, the radiata, and the various types of plants. And yet this logical relation, this admirable harmony, this infinite variety in unity represent, we are told, the result of forces devoid of the least particle of intelligence, of the faculty of thought, the power of combination, or the conception of space.

"If anything in nature can place man above the other animals, it is just the possession of these noble powers. Without these gifts, carried to a high degree of excellence and perfection, none of the general marks of relationship which connect the great types of the vegetable and animal kingdom could be perceived or understood. How then could these relations have been conceived, but by the aid of analogous faculties? If all these relations are beyond man's intellectual power to grasp, if man himself is but a part or fragment of the whole system, how could this system have been called into being if there were not a supreme intelligence, the Author of all things?" *

* Address to the Univ. of Massachusetts: *Revue de Cours Scientifiques*. *Vide* De Pressensé's *Hist. of Origins*. Cap. v.

Dr. Dallinger, the eminent microscopist and scientific observer, says in a recent treatise :—

"Design, purpose, intention, appear, when all the facts of the universe are studied in the light of all our reasoning faculties, to be ineradicable from our view of the creation. Teleology does not now depend for its existence on Paleyan 'instances'; but all the universe, its whole progress in time and space, is one majestic evidence of teleology. The will and purpose running through it are as incapable of being shut out of our consciousness and reasoning faculties, as its phenomena and their modes are of being rendered wholly imperceptible by our senses. . . . The teleology—that is the inseverable motive, as it were, of all the activities and interactions of nature—must be the product of mind. . . . Did God make man 'of the dust of the ground,' by some process of which we can form no conception, and can discover no trace? Or is there evidence that the Creator made man of the dust of the ground by majestic laws, acting over vast epochs, until he had become meet for the inbreathing of a higher nature? That is a question of the profoundest interest. But if the authoritative and final demonstration were given either way tomorrow, we, in ourselves, should remain unaltered. We should be conscious of no uplifting and of no

fall. Immediate or mediate creation, if God be the author, must be alike Divine."*

The French naturalist, Pouchet, speaking of "the cup of Neptune," says, "I never see one of these gigantic sponges without humbling myself before the wisdom of Providence. . . . This truly monumental structure is erected solely by myriads of polypi. . . . And who directs the invisible hands of these polypi, separated from one another, and often a yard apart, so as to give their works such harmonious symmetry? . . . I can understand the bee building her cell; I can understand her foresight, and how a work can be arranged when all workmen can see, communicate with, and comprehend each other; but I admit that all seems to me incomprehensible in the architectural work of Neptune's cup. My mind is overwhelmed and confounded. This magnificent construction is the noblest challenge one can offer the school of materialism. Do the physico-chemical sciences explain how these animals communicate with each other so as to finish their common habitation, for it is absolutely necessary that all should be governed by one dominant idea? Certainly not. There is nothing

* *The Creator, and What we may Know of the Method of Creation.* London, 1887, pp. 74–76.

but utter feebleness in these presumptuous theories, the audacity of which now-a-days alone makes them successful."*

XL.

WE propose to offer *some further testimony from scientific authorities* in general confirmation of the immediately preceding argument.

Speaking of the principle of the Dissipation of Energy, Professor Tait says :—"It enables us distinctly to say that the present order of things has *not* been evolved through infinite past time by the agency of laws now at work, but must have had a distinctive beginning, a state beyond which we are totally unable to penetrate, a state in fact which must have been produced by other than now [visibly] acting causes."†

"The progress of science," says Professor Flint, "has not more convincingly and completely disproved the once prevalent notion that the universe

* *The Universe: or, the Infinitely Great, and the Infinitely Little.* Bk. i., Cap. vii. Transld. fr. the French. Dr. Pouchet's copiously illustrated quarto, though modestly introduced, as an "elementary study," is a work abounding in interesting information, presented in easy and taking style, and admirably suited "to inspire and extend a taste for natural science."

† *Lectures on the Recent Advances of Physl. Science.* Lec. i. Introd; also Cap. vii., "Sources and Transfer of Energy."

was created about six thousand years ago, than it has convincingly and completely established that everything of which our senses inform us has had a commencement in time, and is of a compound, derivative and dependent nature. . . .

"If we seek, then, after what is eternal, science tells us that it is not the earth nor anything which it contains, not the sea nor the living things within it, not the moving air, not the sun, nor the moon, nor the stars. These things when interrogated all tell us to look above and beyond them." . . .

To these considerations it has to be added that some of our ablest physicists believe that in the present age a strictly scientific proof has been found that the universe had a beginning in time. Quoting a passage from Jevons' *Principles of Science*, referring to Sir William Thomson's deductions from Fourrier's theory of the dissipation of heat, Professor Flint says justly, "If this theory be true, physical science instead of giving any countenance to the notion of matter having existed from eternity, distinctly teaches that creation took place, that the present system of nature and its laws originated at an approximately assignable date in the past."

In another striking quotation, from "one of the most eminent physical philosophers," Professor

Clarke Maxwell, we read, "None of the processes of Nature, since the time when Nature began, have produced the slightest difference in any molecule. We are, therefore, unable to ascribe either the existence of the molecules or the identity of their properties to the operation of any of the causes which we call natural. On the other hand, the exact quality of each molecule to all others of the same kind gives it, as Sir John Herschel has well said, the essential character of a "manufactured article," and precludes the idea of its being eternal and self-existent. Thus we have been led along a strictly scientific path, very near to the point at which science must stop."

Again, Professor Flint, alluding to the vortex-atom theory of Sir William Thomson, that the atoms may be small vortex-rings in the ether, the rotating portions of a perfect fluid which fills all space, observes very truly that "a perfect fluid can neither explain its own existence nor the commencement of a rotation in any part of it. . . . The origin, or cessation of rotation in a perfect fluid must be the effect of supernatural action; in other words, every vortex-atom must owe the rotation which gives it its individuality to a Divine impulse."

"A theist has certainly no need, then, to be

afraid of researches into the ultimate nature of matter. . . . Research has already shown us reason to believe 'that even chemical atoms are very complicated structures, that an atom of pure iron is probably a vastly more complicated system than that of the planets and other satellites, that each constituent of a chemical atom must go through an orbit in the millionth part of the twinkling of an eye, in which it successively or simultaneously is under the influence of many other constituents, or possibly comes into collision with them, that each of these particles is, as Sir John Herschell has beautifully said, for ever solving differential equations which, if written out in full, might perhaps belt the earth.' Now what does this mean, if not that every ultimate atom, is full to the very heart of God, and that every particle of dust or every drop of water is crowded with traces of the action of the Divine Reason, not less marvellous, it may be, than those which astronomy exhibits in the structure of the heavens, and the evolution of the heavenly bodies? Those who hoped that molecular science would help them to get rid of God have obviously made a profound mistake. It has already shown far more clearly than ever was or could have been anticipated that

every atom of matter points back beyond itself to the all originating will of God."*

XLI.

IT will be admitted, however, by all those who have any sufficient acquaintance with the subject, that the argument from design as formerly understood and represented by Paley and such writers, must give place to other aspects of the argument, in presence of the discoveries of modern science, as illustrated in *the Great Doctrine of Evolution.*†

Evolution cancels, without doubt, a certain line of argument from design, or what have been designated "the coarser forms of teleology," but it does not affect necessarily the belief in a plan and purpose in nature, nor imperil the conviction that

* *Theism.* Cap. iv. The whole of Professor Flint's able chapter, "Nature is but the name for an effect whose cause is God," is worthy of a very careful perusal.

† "The works of Mr. Darwin are invaluable to the theologian, owing to the multitude of 'beautiful contrivances' and 'marvellous adjustments' admirably described in them. The treatises on the fertilisation of orchids and on insectivorous plants require only to have their legitimate conclusions deduced and applied in order to be transformed into treatises of natural theology. If Paley's famous work be now out of date, it is not because Mr. Darwin and his followers have refuted it, but because they have brought so much to light which confirms its argument." *Theism*, p. 208.

the universe is the creative expression of a Divine power and will.

Darwin himself, indeed, gave it as his distinct opinion that "the theory of evolution is quite compatible with the belief in God."*

It is important to make clear to the Doubter, and to impress upon all who think and speak on these subjects, what even Professor Huxley has been at some pains to show, that evolution is not necessarily anti-theistic. He says, "Having got rid of the belief in chance, and the disbelief in design, as in no sense appurtenances of evolution, the third libel upon that doctrine, that it is anti-theistic might perhaps be left to shift for itself. . . . Evolution is neither anti-theistic nor theistic. It simply has no more to do with theism than the first book of Euclid has. The doctrine of Evolution does not even come into contact with Theism, considered as a philosophical argument."†

Indeed, elsewhere Professor Huxley urges that, "There is a wider teleology, which is not touched by the doctrine of evolution, but it actually based upon the fundamental proposition of evolution. That proposition is that the whole world, living and not living, is the result of the mutual inter-

* *Darwin's Life and Letters* (1837), vol. i., p. 307.

† *Life and Letters*, vol. ii.

action, according to definite laws, of the forces possessed by the molecules of which the primitive nebulosity of the universe was composed. If this be true it is no less certain that the existing world lay potientially in the cosmic vapour, and that a sufficient intelligence could, from a knowledge of the properties of the molecules of that vapour have predicted, say, the state of the fauna of Britain in 1869, with as much certainty as one can say what will happen to the vapour of breath in a cold winter's day. . . . . The teleological and mechanical views of nature are not necessarily mutually exclusive. On the contrary, the more purely a mechanist the speculator is, the more firmly does he assume the primordial molecular arrangement of which all the phenomena of the universe are the consequences ; and the more completely he is thereby at the mercy of the teleologist, who can always defy him to prove, that this primordial molecular arrangement was not intended to evolve the phenomena of the universe."*

That is a scientific admission, in other words, that Nature may have slowly and steadily evolved, without the interruption or intervention at successive stages of the Divine will, yet as the product of an original creative purpose and plan designed to effect such evolutionary results.

* *Academy*, Oct., 1869. On Haeckel's Nat. Hist. Creatn.

Indeed, Darwin himself, after observing on the current argument for the existence of God, "drawn from the deep inward conviction and feeling which are experienced by most persons," says, "Another source of the conviction of the existence of God, connected with the reason, and not with the feelings, impresses me as having much more weight. This follows from the extreme difficulty or rather impossibility of conceiving the immense and wonderful universe, including man, with his capacity of looking far backward and far into futurity, as the result of blind chance or necessity."* Again, while confessing the "horrid doubt" that disturbs his mind, he writes to the author of the *Creed of Science*, "You have expressed my inward conviction, though far more vividly and clearly than I could have done, that the universe is not the result of chance."†

Then according to Darwin himself—his "inward conviction" after all his profound observations—evolution is *not* the expression of accident or necessity, but the development of "purpose and design." And this illustrious founder and chief of the school of evolution, says further, "I cannot anyhow be contented to view the wonderful universe, and specially the nature of man, and to con-

* *Life and Letters*, vol. i., 312.

† *Ibid.*, vol. i., 316.

clude that everything is the result of brute force. I am inclined to look at everything as resulting from designed law."*

The latest belief of advanced science then, as represented by Mr. Darwin, concords with the Christian faith in respect of the origin of Nature and man, as "resulting from designed law." In other words, existence as we see and know it, is the outcome of forethought, arrangement, order, and design; or, as another scientist expresses it, "it is creation by an intelligent will."

"Ah, it was more than force
Which gave the universe of things its form and face.
Force moving on its path through time and space
Would nought enclose, but leave all barren still.
A higher power it was the world could form and fill;
And by some pre-existent harmony
Were all things made as Fate would have them be.
Fate, the ineffable word, of an eternal will."†

XLII.

THE *theory of evolution*, however, *may be cheerfully accepted without any shock to religious conviction.*

There is nothing in the doctrine of evolution properly understood adverse to belief in creation by an infinite intelligence.

* *Life and Letters*, vol. ii., 312.

† *Songs Unsung.* Lewis Morris.

"Fear not the evolution hypothesis," says Professor Tyndall. "Steady yourselves in its presence. . . . Trust me, its existence as a hypothesis is quite compatible with the simultaneous existence of all those virtues to which the term Christian has been applied."*

Professor Jevons affirms that he "cannot for a moment admit that the theory of evolution will alter our theological views."†

"The doctrine of Evolution," says the Bishop of London, "leaves the argument for an Intelligent Creator and Governor of the world stronger than before."‡

And another acute philosophic thinker argues, "Granting the doctrine of evolution to its utmost claim; admit the existence of 'nebulous matter without any question as to its origin, and as it has been well said, 'make the evolutionists a present of the law of gravitation.' What then? After we have admitted everything we have been asked to admit, there remains *just one half of the universe*, viz., the mental half, in regard to which evolution has not a syllable to say. If there was once a time when nothing existed but gas and gravitation

* *Fragments of Science.* "On Evolution."

† *The Principles of Science*, vol. ii., p. 461.

‡ *The Relations between Religion and Science.* Lec. iv. Religion and the Doctrine of Evolution. See also Lec. vi.

it is conceivable that from this may have come into existence, suns and planets, protoplasm and plants, animal organisms and creatures possessing the external semblance of ourselves; but out of gas and gravitation consciousness never could have been devolved. It shows the extraordinary one-sidedness of the physicists, that so many of them should set up the theory of evolution as a complete explanation of the universe, when, in regard to the whole of its most interesting and striking phenomena, that theory must for ever remain dumb. Consciousness they seem to look upon as a little detail in the development of things—a little troublesome, inexplicable, unscientific detail—with which it is not worth their while to concern themselves. The world, they have explained to us, is a world in which evolution rolls on its silent way, unseen and unnoticed. Its most marvellous results excite no attention, for there is no one to attend. There are creatures everywhere performing functions of life but they do not know that they live; not one of them has ever felt a pleasure or a pain; not one of them is capable of thought or imagination; not one of them has had a wish or experienced an emotion. They are all as unconscious as the ground upon which they walk. That is the only kind of world of which evolution gives a complete

account. God save us from the stupidity of mistaking it for our own."*

It may be of appropriate service at this point of our argument, and in confirmation of the immediately preceding passage, to quote a letter of the late Dean Mansel respecting a difficulty that confronts the materialistic unbelievers, the question of the human will.

"I believe," said the Dean, "that the basis of the whole controversy against the prevalent materialism of the present day lies in the question of the *human will.* Once concede that the

* *Agnosticism.* Prof. Momerie, viii., "Evolution of Worlds." We cannot further pursue this argument, but the inquirer will find valuable information in *Creation and Evolution*—"a philosophical inquiry." Geo. Ticknor Curtis. *Theism*, by Professor Flint, Lec. VI., specially sections on Evolution and Design. Also, Professor Flint's *Anti-Theistic Theories.* The two volumes discuss with great ability many of the most pressing questions in the Christian controversy with modern doubt and unbelief. Professor Caird's *Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion* is a masterly work, handling difficult questions with admirable ability. *A Century of Evolution*, Lyall. A work for the times. In *Modern Realism Examined*, by Professor Herbert, the inquirer will find sections which controvert with conclusive force various evolutionist and materialistic theories. *Creation and its Records*, H. Baden Powell. *Recent Advances in Physl. Science*, Prof. P. G. Tait. *The Bible and Science*, Dr. Lauder Brunton. Lec. XVI., "Mos. Record and Evol." *The True and False in Darwinism*, Hartmann. Art, "A Limit to Evolution," by St. George Mivart, *Nineteenth Century*, Aug., 1884. "Darwinism," &c., vi. and Appendix, in the lamented Aubrey Moore's able vol., *Science and the Faith.*

will of man is free, and no philosophy, say what it may of fixed laws, can ever really upset the truths dictated by man's religious instincts. This is why I look on the philosophy of such people as Mr. Mill as so utterly mischievous; because the question of *free will* or *no free will* is really the question of *belief* or *no belief*. If I am personally capable, within certain limits, of influencing the phenomena of Nature by my personal will, I can believe in a Personal God, who can influence them still more. If I am a thing subject to purely material laws, the sooner I go the way of other things the better. If I am merely a part of the universe, I am content to be resolved, as soon as may be, into the gases which pervade the universe. My free will is the only thing which makes me better than a gas."*

XLIII.

PESSIMISTS *and materialistic evolutionists even are constrained to acknowledge that at least "the universe looks as though it were planned by conscious intelligence."*

Hartmann admits "will and intelligence at work

* To Lord Carnarvon, 1866. Quoted in Dean Burgon's *Lives of Twelve Good Men*, pp. 225—226.

in the universe shaping its development" ; but into what straits is he driven to cancel the force of his own concession ! He says, "the will was unconscious, the intelligence blind !" Is this sense or non-sense ?

Haeckel too, in the midst of many negations and qualifications, says, "The more developed man of the present day is capable of, and justified in, conceiving that infinitely nobler and sublimer idea of God, which alone is compatible with the monistic conception of the universe, and which recognises God's Spirit and power in all phenomena without exception. This monistic idea of God, which belongs to the future, has already been expressed by Giordano Bruno, in the following words : 'A spirit exists in all things, and no body is so small but contains part of the Divine substance within itself by which it is animated.'" *

Mr. Herbert Spencer says, "Respecting the nature of the universe we seem committed to certain unavoidable conclusions. The objects and actions surrounding us, not less than the phenomena of our own consciousness, compel us to ask a cause ; in our search for a cause we discover no resting place until we arrive at the hypothesis of a First

* *The Creed of Science* (W. Graham, M.A.). Cap. i. "Creation and God."

Cause; and we have no alternative but to regard this First Cause as Infinite and absolute."*

Mr. Spencer makes a further noteworthy statement, that should command the most thoughtful attention of the Doubter. "Amid the mysteries, which become the more mysterious the more they are thought about, there will remain the one absolute certainty, that he [man] is ever in presence of an infinite and eternal Energy, from which all things proceed." Or, as he yet more strikingly expresses it, "an infinite and eternal Energy, by which all things are created and sustained."†

Professor Tyndall says, "After science has completed her mission upon earth, the finite known will still be embraced by the infinite unknown. And 'this boundless contiguity of shade,' by which our knowledge is hemmed in, will always tempt the exercise of belief and imagination. The human mind, in its structural and poetic capacity, can never be prevented from building castles—on the rock or in air, as the case may be—in this ultra-scientific region. Certainly the mind of Carlyle could not have been prevented doing so. Out of

* *First Principles.* Cap. ii.

† *Vide Nineteenth Century.* Jany. 1884. "Retrospect and Prospect"; and "Retrogressive Religion" (July), where Mr. Spencer makes and defends the above notable concessions.

pure unintelligence he held that intelligence never could have sprung, and so at the head of things he placed an Intelligence—an Energy, which to avoid circuitous paraphrase, we call God."*

Thus hostile philosophy and unfriendly science are "hemmed in" by the irresistible necessities of actuality. They confess an "ultra-scientific region," "a First Cause Infinite and Absolute," an "infinite and eternal Energy, from which all things proceed," and which finally, to "avoid circuitous paraphrase," is designated "God"!

Hegel, "that prince of thinkers," says Professor Momerie, "proved the existence of God—proved it so that it could never again be for an instant doubted by any one who had taken pains to master the demonstration."†

To the foregoing striking and suggestive statements, however, we can add yet more definite and decisive expressions on the part of science and "advanced thought," in support of our progressive argument.

"The very rationality of the creation, in our deepest analysis and broadest survey of it, leads the mind, by the conditions inseverable from its

* *Speech at the Unveiling of Carlyle's Statue*, Oct. 21st, 1882.

† *Agnosticism*. Com. Duties, v. "Cult. of the Spirit."

reasoning faculties, to see in its perfect relations the inevitable congruity of its intelligent cause. And all this be it observed results *after* science has disclosed the splendid treasures of its knowledge, the beauty and indisputable accuracy of its methods, and the new senses with which it has endowed itself by its instruments. Yes; the mind goes out to this conclusion, not defiant of science, but gratefully paying toll to it for an infinitely enlightening and ennobling passage through the marvels of phenomena, and the splendour of nature's methods, right to the very margin, beyond which science herself declares she cannot go; and although the physicist may declare he does not need it, and the mathematician that he can dispense with it, although all their immediate problems can be worked without it, yet the mind goes forth on the wings of its rational powers, its moral consciousness, its judgment, and leaving the margin of matter, it seeks audience, as it were, with the very mystery that enshrouds the universe; and it rises to the conviction that its quest has not been vain; it has realised, dimly, imperfectly, and, as it were, faint with awe, the necessity of the presence and action of eternal mind."*

The Savilian Professor of Astronomy at Oxford

* *The Creator*, &c., Dr. Dallinger, pp. 10, 11.

says: "We have at length been brought, by philosophical conclusions from the most advanced scientific knowledge of our day, to the philosophical certainty that matter is not eternal, but that from the beginning of nature it was endued with some very wonderful properties by some Intelligent Will. This is the latest and grandest revelation of nature."*

Let the Doubter and the earnest inquirer give diligent heed to this most notable revelation made as a "philosophic certainty" by "the most advanced science of the day"!

XLIV.

THE *philosophers and metapyhsicians are in agreement with the physicists.*

"Creation," said Sir William Hamilton, "is the evolution of existence from possibility into actuality by the fiat of the Deity." "There is one, but only one Absolute Existence, which is strictly *necessary*," says Professor Ferrier; "and that existence is a Supreme and Infinite and Everlasting Mind." †

"Atheism," says the author of *Natural Religion*, "is a disbelief in the *existence* of God; that is, a

* *Mod. Science and Nat. Religion.* S.P.C.K.

† *Institutes of Metaphysic:* Prop. xi.

disbelief in *any* regularity in the universe to which a man must conform himself under penalties. Such a disbelief is speculatively monstrous ; it is a kind of mental deficiency or perversion : but so commonly are the false views which lead to immoral action. There is an atheism which is a mere speculative crotchet, and there is an atheism which is a great moral disease."

And again, with even more incisive vigour, he says, "of atheism, that demoralising folly of human nature, which consists in the inability to discern in the universe any law by which human life may be guided, there is in the present age less danger than ever, and it is daily made more impossible by science itself."*

Yes, this is emphatically so. The progress of physical science so far from disturbing the fundamental principles of religious belief, is adding to their stability, and rendering impossible to enlightened conviction, in its happiest and strongest hours, the adoption of the cheerless negations of atheism.

The author of the *Creed of Science* contends that the recognition of a rational purpose, a Final Cause in creation, is not confined to the common sense of

* *Natural Religion.* By the author of *Ecce Homo.* Cap. ii., 1882.

mankind, but has been acknowledged by the masters of thought who have considered most carefully the question.* Philosophers, from Aristotle and Plato to Hegel and even Hartmann, have traced purpose in the evolution of the universe. Apart indeed from the support of philosophic testimony, it is almost impossible to doubt that human consciousness was designed as a result of the evolutionary process; and our ultimate analysis brings us face to face with the doctrine of creation.

Professor Tyndall confesses with honest candour, not only in the famous passage in the preface to his *Belfast Address*, but also elsewhere, how utterly inadequate are all atheistic theories to satisfy the inquiring mind and give contentment to the thought. "Often in the spring time," he says, "when looking with delight on the springing foliage, 'considering the lilies of the field,' and sharing the general joy of opening life, I have asked myself whether there is no power, being, or thing, in the universe whose knowledge of that of which I am so ignorant is greater than mine. I have said to myself, Can man's knowledge be the greatest knowledge —and man's life the highest life? My friends, the profession of Atheism, with which I am so lightly

* Cap. i., "On the Creation and God."

charged, would, in my case, be an impossible answer to the question."*

What then has the modern unbeliever, who boasts that he lives for the present and the seen, and rejects the supernatural, who comforts and flatters himself that, in some way, which he does not always quite understand, he is guarded by the sheltering *ægis* of science, and that he is, as he proudly phrases it, "a disciple of advanced thought" —*what has he to say to these "latest conclusions" and "grandest revelations of science and philosophy"?*

Does he pass them by with averted eyes? or does he venture deliberately to reject the testimony of the very witnesses, that he, at least, is bound to consider the most competent?

But if so, in what intellectual retreat does he hope to find fellowship and security? or with what weapons of "logic," and by what process of "pure reason" does he propose to confront the physicist and hold the metaphysician at bay?

Like that unhappy "son of Zippor," who having summoned a seer to curse his enemies, found the prophetic utterance to abound in blessing; so the

* *Fragments of Science.* "Crystals and Molecular Force." See also *Atheism and the Value of Life.* Mallock. 1. 'An Examination of Professor Clifford's Lectures and Essays."

modern unbeliever is raked by the fire of the very allies whose aid he has invoked.

"A little philosophy," said Bacon, "inclineth men's minds to atheism; but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds about to religion."*

XLV.

POSSIBLY, however, perplexed with the confusions of contradictory science and the difficulties of doubt, the Sceptic may have fled for refuge to *the modern and commodious shrine of Agnosticism*, hoping to find there the serenity of untroubled thought. Alas, that the doom of a heavy disappointment awaits him.

Agnosticism, represented by its most distinguished apostle, Mr. Herbert Spencer, declares *God* to be *the Unknowable*. Many difficulties, however, beset, and many contradictions harass a creed which ventures to set the bounds of human capacity, and to determine the possibilities of Divine power.

The horizon of human progress is an ever-widening sphere; and indeed the steady and successful occupation of natural science is the translation of the unknown, and of the often apparently unknowable, into facts of knowledge. In the movements

* *Essays*, xvi., "Atheism."

of aggressive thought the impossibles of yesterday become the achievements of to-day.

Further, if the possibilities of human capacity were within the range of our exact determination, what instruments can man have in his possession with which to gauge the resources of an Infinite, that he has already declared to be the Unknowable? *The Unknowable* must be at any rate the unknown; but with what logical consistency can anything be predicated concerning the unknown? We can have no data on which to arrive at any determinate conclusion concerning that which is unknown even to the extent of saying that it is unknowable. Of the unknown it is incompetent to say that there are no possible conditions in which it may become *knowable*, and ultimately actually *known*.

Mr. Herbert Spencer contends that "the absolute cannot in any manner or degree be known in the strict sense of knowing, yet," he adds, "we find that its positive existence is a necessary datum of consciousness, and that as long as consciousness continues we cannot for an instant get rid of this datum."*

But surely it is incompetent to admit the relativity of thought and to affirm that we are cognisant of the absolute. If human capacity is

* *First Principles*, p. 29.

limited to the finite, the infinite must be beyond all human cognition. In maintaining the unknowableness of the absolute Mr. Herbert Spencer defines it as "that which has no relation to thought"; but if this be so, it is to human capacity non-existent; if, however, as a positive existence it is, as he says, a "necessary datum of consciousness," then the infinite, as truly as the finite, is the subject of positive, though inexhaustible thought.

In his *History of Philosophy*, G. H. Lewes very justly observes, "Men are constantly affirming certain existences to be unknown and unknowable, yet in the same breath affirming relations of them which presuppose knowledge."

Mr. Herbert Spencer himself indeed actually knows so much of the Unknowable as to describe it as the All-Being, the Ultimate Reality, the Sole-Existence; and yet even more fully, as we have seen, as "the Eternal Energy by which all things are created and sustained."*

It is not surprising that such a concession as this alarms Mr. Frederic Harrison, who designates it an "equivocal reversion to the theological type"; but we welcome the advance, and rejoice that the chief priest of the Unknowable confesses himself within the dread shadow of the mysterious Presence,

* "Some Infirmities of Thought," xciv.

and recognises, though it is but dimly, the pervading "energy" of the Supreme Author and Sustainer of all being. For Mr. Spencer further says, "our lives, alike physical and mental, in common with all the activities, organic and inorganic, amid which we live, are but the working of this Power."*

"The Eternal Energy," then, which "creates," "sustains," and "permeates all existence," is no longer the "Unknowable," but is already become known "in part," even to the Agnostic, who, therefore, "prophecies in part." "But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away."†

XLVI.

AGNOSTICISM, *pure and simple*, we contend, *is demonstrably an untenable position.*

The agnostic must be more or less than an agnostic. In respect of the primary fact of religion —God, he says, "I don't know." But in due order of thought the question arises at once, "Why don't you know"? The agnostic reply is, "It is *the unknowable*."

Now at this point two concessions may be made to the agnostic contention. (1) That man's unaided

* *Vide supra*, pp. 152, 153. † 1 Cor. iii., 10, 12.

science or philosophy cannot discover and define the Eternal Power, who creates, sustains, and in whose presence we "live, move, and have our being." (2) That this august Power, in His perfection, cannot be comprehended by the finite understanding.

These statements, however, do not differentiate agnosticism. They are among the *principia*—the very elementary teachings of religious belief. We have it on record that "the world by wisdom—διὰ τῆς σοφίας—knew not God";* man, "by searching cannot find out God," he cannot "know the Almighty unto perfection."† Even an inspired seer exclaims, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain to it."‡

"Dangerous it were," says Hooker, "for the feeble brain of man to wade far into the doings of the Most High; whom although to know be life, and joy to make mention of His name; yet our soundest knowledge is to know that we know Him, not as indeed He is, neither can know Him; and

* 1 Cor. i. 21. † Job xi. 7. ‡ Ps. cxxxix. 6.

The inquirer who would further investigate this branch of the subject is referred to the late Dean Mansel's *Limits of Religious Thought*. Bampton Lec., 1858, specially Lecs. iv. and v. In this remarkable volume many of the misconceptions, confusions, and contradictions of modern thought, are treated, in some cases by anticipation, with sound learning and trenchant power.

our safest eloquence concerning Him is our silence, when we confess without confession, that His glory is inexplicable, His greatness above our capacity and reach."*

Though human science may be unable to find out God, He may yet be pleased to make Himself known; and though the perfect comprehension of the Divine nature may be beyond the grasp of finite thought, and though even any clear and definite knowledge of His being and perfections may be unattainable by man's unaided research, yet it may please God to make Himself known—"δι' ἐσόπτρου ἐν αἰνίγματι"†—by a revelation according to our capacity of apprehension, so that we may know much of His power and goodness, and in the growing knowledge of His Fatherhood find filial content and joy.

Indeed the knowledge of God, through the Divine Word, is the secret of the spiritual life of the individual soul. "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent."‡ But this knowledge is not to be understood in the philosophic

* *Eccl. Polity*, 1 Bk. i., 2.
† 1 Ep. Cor. xiii. 12.
‡ St. Jno. 3.

sense of knowing. It is not an intellectual comprehension of the Divine nature and perfections. It is the grasp of the heart; perception by the moral and spiritual faculties.

This assuredly is the distinctive characteristic of a religious revelation, it is not "*speculative*" but "regulative"—that is to say, not to satisfy the inquiries of intellectual curiosity in respect of things too high for human attainment—to bring infinity within the compass of finite vision; but to quicken the mind and enrich it with more definite and noble thoughts of God, and specially to teach the heart, to purify the affections, to train the will, and thus by moral and spiritual process to knit the life of man to the life of God.

XLVII.

WE aver that such *a revelation of the Divine nature and will has been made.*

The Eternal Power "having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in His Son."* And this "Son of God," heralded by many predictions and

* Ep. Heb. i., 1, 2, Revd. Vern.

authenticated by unique attestation, declared with emphatic explicitness that He came to make known the Eternal character and will—to make God manifest to man.

He came to satisfy that ever-recurring cry of the human life, "Let us see God." "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us," said one of His own disciples; and the Master answered, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father . . . I am in the Father and the Father in Me. The words that I say unto you I speak not from Myself: but the Father abiding in Me doeth His works."* On the reality and veracity of this testimony of the "Son of God" rests the magnificent edifice of Christian thought, achievement, and hope.

What, then, has the agnostic to say in respect of this testimony, and the incontestable facts by which it is accompanied?

If he still affirms, "I don't know," then his lack of knowledge must arise from one of two causes: Either 1. Because he refuses to examine the Revelation; but that is an immoral avoidance of the issue. It is not to meet, but to evade, the difficulties of religious unbelief, and wilfully to remain "not knowing," rather than to examine the credentials and character of freely offered knowledge.

* St. Jno. xiv., 8—10, Revd. Vern.

Or 2 Because he disbelieves and rejects the explicit testimony that Jesus Christ has given.

In that case the agnostic is no longer one who simply and negatively does not know, but one who positively disbelieves and denies. He leaves his remote and somewhat inaccessible region in the clouds of metaphysical subtleties and the dizzy heights of philosophic speculation, for the practical arena in which questions of historic fact, and authentication of testimony are settled ; and henceforth he must take his side in that conflict, and meet the challenge of his opponents on the solid battle-ground of the evidences.

If the agnostic joins in the ranks of the Disbeliever, then he must add some further and difficult articles to the short and shadowy creed of agnosticism.

It must stand somewhat thus: 1. I believe that God—though confessedly partially known—is the Unknowable. 2. I believe that Jesus Christ—who, it is admitted, taught and illustrated the purest and most practical scheme of ethics, irradiated life with new hope, and increasingly influences for good human destiny—was either a fanatical visionary or a wilful deceiver of the people.

The ablest disciples of the agnostic school—men whose learning and character are alike worthy of

honour—will shrink from the acceptance of such an impossible creed. If so, what is their standing ground?

XLVIII.

THE Doubter will find his *difficulties of belief not one whit abated in the creed of Agnosticism.* The serene repose of philosophic unanimity is not to be attained within the precincts of the shrine of the Unknowable. On the contrary, the unhappy refugee will be harassed with fresh conflict and disturbed with further contradictions.

He will find, indeed—

> "Ruin upon ruin, rout on rout,
> Confusion worse confounded."

The philosophers are themselves at war. Agnostic and Positivist are at "daggers drawn."

Mr. Frederic Harrison tells Mr. Herbert Spencer that "the worship of the Unknowable is abhorrent to every genuine instinct of religion." "A religion without anything to be known, with nothing to teach, with no moral power, with some rags of religious sentiment surviving, mainly the consciousness of mystery—this is, indeed, the mockery of religion."

And he says further, "Mr Spencer must remember that in his religion of the Unknowable he stands almost alone. He is, in fact, insisting to mankind, where all men have some opinion, on one of the most gigantic paradoxes in the history of thought. I know myself of no single thinker in Europe who has come forward to support this religion of an Unknowable Cause, which cannot be presented in terms of consciousness, to which the words emotion, will, intelligence cannot be applied with any meaning, and yet which stands in the place of a supposed anthropomorphic Creator. Mr. George H. Lewes, who of all modern philosophers was the closest to Mr. Spencer, and of recent English philosophers the most nearly his equal, wrote ten years ago: 'Deeply as we may feel the mystery of the universe and the limitation of our faculties, *the foundations of a creed can only rest on the known and the knowable.*' With that I believe every school of thought but a few dreamy mystics have agreed. . . All with one consent disclaim making a religion of the Unknowable."

The belligerent Professor renews his attack on the Agnostic school in a recent article.*

In words certainly sufficiently plain and incisive, he says that "the Agnostic is one who protests

* *Fortnightly Review*. Jan., 1889, "The Future of Agnosticism."

against any dogma respecting Creation at all, and who takes his stand deliberately on ignorance"; that he "has no positive belief apart from his ignorance"; and that "a strong mind really saturated with the historical sense, turns from Agnosticism and Atheism with the same weariness and pity with which it turns from the Law of Nature and the Rights of Man. They are all as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal."

Mr. Harrison tells us, in short, that "Intellectually it is quite impossible to remain an Agnostic."* He is not by any means alone in this opinion. We have similar testimony from a very different quarter.

"The worship of the Unknowable," says Principal Jno. Caird, "is really an impossible attitude of mind. The feelings of awe, reverence, humility, which are supposed to be called forth, by the contemplation of that which lies beyond the limit of consciousness, are not legitimately due to such an object. At first sight it looks like a kind of intellectual paradox, that men whose whole life is a life of thought should select as the supreme object of reverence that which is the negation of thought—that those who are distinguished for the genuine and enlightened zeal with which they devote them-

* *Fortnightly Review.* Jan, 1889, "The Future of Agnosticism."

selves to the service of truth should suppose themselves capable of serving a divinity which is neither more nor less than the apotheosis of ignorance."*

Does the Unbeliever, then, who turns his back upon the first principles of the Christian religion, expect or hope to find rest and satisfaction for his higher life in a "worship," that one of the most "advanced thinkers" says is "abhorrent to every genuine instinct of religion," and from which every sound mind must "turn away with weariness and pity?" Does the Sceptic hope to find answer to his intellectual questionings, or content for his heart in a religion founded, as we are so emphatically told, in "ignorance," "without anything to be known, with nothing to teach"—save indeed a doctrine of despair, that the God not known is the eternally *Unknowable?* This is surely "retrogressive reli-

* *Introdn. to the Philos. of Religion.* Cap. i. The Sceptic who is allured by the doctrine of the "Unknowable," would do well to read the whole of Principal Caird's chapter on the *Relativity of Human Thought*, and Prof. Momerie's, *Agnosticism*, and *Belief in God.* An able and appreciative essay, entitled *An Examination of Mr. Herbert Spencer's Philosophy*, has been published by the Victoria Institute, together with a report of the discussion that followed the reading of the paper before the society. The whole is worthy of a careful consideration by those who have felt the influence of Spencer's remarkable powers. See also *The Mystery of the Universe.* Prebendary Reynolds. Theme VI.—"Revelation of the Unknown." And his *Supernatural in Nature.*

gion," not "advanced thought," and—our adversaries themselves being the witnesses—an "intellectually impossible" creed.

XLIX.

EIGHTEEN centuries ago there was *an altar* in ancient Athens inscribed, "*To the unknown God.*"*

A ray of hope lingered around that shrine. Its inscription left open the possibility of a more definite dedication. One day a stranger, who had observed in the city the objects of Athenian devotion, proclaimed on Mars' Hill, "What ye worship not knowing, I declare unto you." The Athenian confessed that he was in a gloom, dimly lighted; but the door of his temple stood at least open to the morning, and in due time the day dawned in the revelation of God.

The worshippers of the *Unknowable*, however, not only say that they are in the dark, but that light is impossible; that theirs is a night that can have no morning; that a constitutional incapacity precludes the very possibility of their ever knowing the "All-Being," the "Ultimate Reality"; that they have no faculty of vision for the Unseen, that therefore He is the Unseeable; in short that they

* Acts of the Apostles, xvii.

are blind men worshipping, not only they know not what, but what they never can know.

This is intellectual heresy. It is a doctrine of darkness; a creed that "signifies nothing." Happily there are the indications of hope, even on the agnostic's own showing; for since he knows so much of the Unknowable as to speak of "an infinite and eternal Energy, by which all things are created and sustained," he may yet, by the happy advances of sincere and patient inquiry know more. Talents multiply by use, faculties strengthen by effort, and hearts have a tendency to grow in the direction of their earnest desires.

We contend that the agnostic diagnosis is at fault; that there is no inherent and essential incapacity in the nature and constitution of man, which makes the knowledge of the "All-Being" impossible. On the contrary, we affirm that it has been proved to a moral demonstration, in the experience of a multitude that no man can number, that God is knowable and known. Even the agnostic has discovered and confesses the existence of a "Power from which all things proceed and which works through all";* and in the fuller knowledge of His perfections, the revelation of His Fatherhood, the filial hunger of the human soul finds its eternal content.

* *Vide supra.*, pp. 152, 153.

Let it be remembered, however, that with some there may be a moral and spiritual obliquity of vision making dim the eternal light. The law of light for the inner life is, "he that willeth to do His will shall know of the doctrine."* "There be that delight in giddiness," says Bacon, "and count it bondage to fix a belief." Our fraternal wish is that through some opening window of the will there may steal in on all honest agnostics that light, more beautiful than the light of morning, which has already touched some of their number with rosy hope; and in that day-dawn of the soul may they see with open vision the Unseen, and know Him whom to know is life eternal.

L.

Is there then any other point of the philosophical compass to which the Sceptic, seeking intellectual *prestige* and moral content and safety, may run for refuge—and find it?

Possibly he is seeking sanctuary at the altar of Positivism, and shelter under the great name of M. Comte.

* "I too doing justly and reverencing the gods
Shall not want wit to see what things be right."
Atalanta in Calydon. Swinburne.

Does he hope to enjoy there a philosophic calm, and to find a happy unanimity among "advanced" thinkers? Alas, disappointment awaits him.

He will indeed find Mr. Herbert Spencer there, but not to worship, only to war. The agnostic chief is now in his turn the assailant. He has defiantly invaded the sacred retreat, mocks the famous founder of the shrine of the Positive philosophy, and wounds with the keen shafts of his ridicule the belated worshippers of Humanity. He derides "the absurdities of the Comtean religion," and "dissents from every one of the fundamental principles which distinguish his system."*

Of M. Comte himself, Mr. Herbert Spencer says that he manifested "a height of assumption exceeding that ever before displayed by a human being," that "he exhibited a lack of mental balance unparalleled among sane people," and that "Papal assumption is modest compared with the founder of the religion of humanity."† All this and much beside Mr. Herbert Spencer urges with distinctive vigour.

* *Vide The Classification of the Sciences*: "Reasons for dissenting from the Philosophy of M. Comte." 1871. Also *Modern Theories in Philos. and Religion*. Professor Tulloch. Art. "Positivism."

† "Retrogressive Religion," *Nineteenth Century*, July, 1884.

Buckle tells us that Comte "deliberately advocated and wished to organise a scheme of polity so monstrously and obviously impracticable, that if it were translated into English the plain men of our island would lift their eyes in astonishment, and would most likely suggest that the author should for his own sake be immediately confined."*

"Incompetence in philosophy," says Professor Huxley, "and all branches of science, except mathematics, is the well-known mental characteristic of the founder of Positivism"; and "anticipating the religious historian of the future," Professor Huxley gives the following sketch of the origin of Positivism.

"The founder, Auguste Comte, was a teacher of mathematics, but of no eminence in that department of knowledge, and with nothing but an amateur's acquaintance with philosophy, chemistry and biological science. His works are repulsive on account of the dull diffusiveness of the style, and a certain air, as of a superior person, which characterises them; but nevertheless they contain good things here and there. . . . M. Comte attempted to combine the substance of imperfectly comprehended contemporary science with the form of Roman Christianity."

* *Miscellanies.* "Mill," &c. On Comte's "Last Work."

"That the incongruous mixture of bad science and eviscerated philosophy," continues the critical scientist, "out of which M. Comte manufactured a positive religion, will be the heir of the ages, I have too much respect for the humanity of the future to believe." . . . "When the positivist asks me to worship humanity, that is to say, to adore the generalised conception of men as they ever have been, and probably ever will be, I must reply that I could just as soon bow down and worship the generalised conception of a wilderness of apes." *

"As to Mr. Harrison's language about the soul working on continually new and grander ways, after it has ceased to have conscious existence at all, it appears to me," says Sir James Stephen, "as empty and as unsatisfying as undertakers' plumes. It would be just as much to the purpose to say that our bodies do not really die because the matter which composed them is here, there and everywhere forming part of the water of the clouds, part of the grass of the earth, part of the cattle which feed upon it, and part of men, perhaps wiser and better than ourselves, who feed on the cattle. Play with these fancies as you will death is death, and if nothing lies beyond it, it is nearly related to despair, for it is the end of all rational hopes and

* "Agnosticism." *Nineteenth Century*, Feb. 1889.

wishes. Wherever individual consciousness ends, existence ends. A man is either himself or he does not exist at all."*

The unhappy Doubter finds neither peace nor protection among the philosophers. They are in keen-edged conflict. The refugee is wounded in the house of his patrons, with whom he sought distinguished association and inviolable sanctuary.

LI.

POSITIVISM *advocates*, as the satisfaction of that religious instinct, deep in the heart of man, of which Mr. Frederick Harrison has told us so much and so many things, *the worship of humanity*.

Is such a worship in any true and real sense possible? If possible, *cui bono?* What possible good can accrue either to the humanity worshipping or the Humanity worshipped?

"Humanity with a capital H (Mr. Harrison's God), is neither better nor worse fitted to be a god," says Sir James Stephen, "than the Unknowable with a capital U. They are as much alike as six and half-a-dozen. Each is a barren abstraction to which any one can attach any meaning he likes—or rather, no meaning at all."†

* *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity*. Pref. xxxiv.

† Qd. in *Religion Without God*. Rev. W. Arthur, Pt. ii., p. 11.

M. Comte speaks of "veneration and gratitude rising into enthusiastic admiration of the Great Being (Humanity), who is the author of all beneficent progress." Mr. Herbert Spencer, however, replies to this that "veneration or gratitude to any being implies belief in the conscious action of that being; . . . gratitude cannot be entertained to something unconscious. But the Great Being Humanity has no corporate consciousness whatever. If the Great Being Humanity, who is the author of all these conquests of human progress, is unconscious, the emotions of veneration and gratitude are absolutely irrelevant." He adds that since "veneration and gratitude are surely due somewhere, they are due, if due at all, to that Ultimate Cause from which humanity, as a whole, in common with all other things, has proceeded.*

Thus we are brought back, even by the hand of the distinguished agnostic philosopher, from the worship of Humanity to that of the Supreme Creative Being.

So deep and dominant is the instinct of worship that the unbeliever cannot "rest and be thankful"

* "Retro. Religion" (a rejoinder to Mr. F. Harrison), *Nineteenth Century*, July, 1884.

in his cheerless, shoreless, visionless system of negations.

The agnostic offers his "veneration and gratitude," his blind and hopeless homage to a partially known Unknowable. Here can be no rest for the eager intellect, no aliment for the hungry heart of man.

The mythical school talk of "adoring the Universe"; but if there is no "Supreme and Absolute Mind," then man is the crowning work of the universe. The higher however must not worship nor adore the lower, so we draw back to the Positivists' Humanity. This, however, is self-worship; it is, as Père Hyacinthe has shown, only a thinly disguised egotism; or if it is the worship of self in some or all of human kind, it is "what is called to-day, in rather barbarous French, *l'altruisme*."

The Positivist has his sanctuary, services, and sacraments; his calendar and catechism; his canonization of saints and solemn processions, with banners having "on the white side the holy image, and on the green the sacred formula of Positivism." His "symbol of divinity is always to be a woman of the age of thirty, with her child in her arms."*

* *Vide Catechisme Positiviste;* Comte, Paris, 1874. Mr. Herbert Spencer's "Retrogressive Religion," and Père Hyacinthe's "Paganism in Paris."

"The High Priest of Humanity," says Professor Huxley, "proposes to saddle the world with a sort of Roman Catholicism *minus* Christianity."

"What is Humanity?" asks Mr. Goldwin Smith, an eminent advocate of liberal thought. "Is it an abstraction? I must say I would rather worship a stone idol, which at least has real existence. Is it an aggregate? Then it includes the wicked. Is it an induction? Then it will be incomplete till the scene of history is closed. I believe that it is an ideal, and I declare that I fail to see how it differs from the ideal of the Christian."*

The ideal of the Christian had "corporeal consciousness." He was "the surprise of history;" a unique personality, who "appeared among the wondering peoples as a stranger from another sphere," doing and demanding the hitherto impossible. He burst the prison doors and opened the path of enlightened liberty and immortal hope to men of every land and age and condition. They who through Him have found the way of the new life are a countless and ever-increasing host.

"The victory over disintegrating egoism and deadly chillness of the heart will only be won," says

* "Evolutionary Ethics and Christianity."—*Contemp. Rev.*, Dec., 1883.

Lange in his *History of Materialism*,* "by a great ideal, which shall appear amid the wondering peoples as a 'stranger from another world,' and by demanding the impossible unhinge the reality." And he adds, "Whether the battle remains a bloodless conflict of minds, or whether, like an earthquake, it throws down the ruins of a past epoch with thunder into the dust, and buries millions beneath the wreck, certain it is that the new epoch will not conquer unless it be under the banner of a great idea, which sweeps away egoism and sets human perfection in human fellowship, as a new aim in the place of the restless toil which looks only to personal gain."

LII.

DOES the Sceptic in his moments of desperation dream of seeking retreat "far from the madding crowd" in *the frigid zone and sterile philosophy of Pessimism.*" That is indeed the last refuge of the destitute; and borders on the shades of death

Even Pessimism has, however, its apostles who offer to the inquirer their cynical empiricism.

* Cap. iv., "The Standpoint of the Ideal."

† *Vide Modern Theories in Philos. and Religion.* Principal Tulloch, Art., "Pessimism." And Prof. Momerie's Discourse on "Pessimism," in *Inspiration*, etc.

Hartmann's assurance is that "life is a mistake, and it were better not to be." Leopardi's doctrine is that "human consciousness is itself a curse, and that the brute and the plant are happier than man." Schopenhauer strives to teach a querulous generation, that this is the worst possible world; that it would have been much better if it had been a little worse, for then man, in his lot of such unsweetened wretchedness, would have refused to live, and have found his heaven of being in not being! But now fooled with just a dash of pleasure in his cup he persists in living, whereas he ought to prefer dying.

In short this "advanced" guide and Job's comforter announces that the true creed of life is not to live; for happiness is a delusion and living a fraud. But death—what of that?

Can these husks of philosophic discontent and despair be wholesome pabulum on which to feed and nourish the souls of men? Can this be the evangel of the age, or good tidings for any body? Yet this farrago of folly and feebleness is what Pessimism has the assurance to offer to men—a gospel of despair and death—"miserable comforters are ye all."

The Doubter, then, who falters at the difficulties of religious belief, or who shrinks from the surrender that it demands, finds that scientists and

philosophers have no easier doctrine to propound; nor any common ground of belief to rest upon themselves, or to recommend to the puzzled inquirer, for they are rent by division and torn by vehement conflict. "Sweetness and light" find no congenial home amid the uncertainities, contradictions, and controversies of so-called "advanced thought."

LIII.

WHERE, then, *shall the modern unbeliever find rest and content?*

He may well exclaim, "Oh, that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away and be at rest." "At rest"—*where?*

M. Thiers, looking up to the glory of the midnight sky, said, "C'est là ma messe." Three thousand years before, another gazer at the same wondrous firmament exclaimed, "The heavens declare the glory of God." Did the ancient Hebrew seer or the modern French statesman and savant represent more truly "the latest revelation of science," or "that faculty of worship" which even Mr. Fred. Harrison admits "is ever fresh in the heart"? "With the ancient is wisdom."*

* Job xii. 12.

An invalid mother said one day to her child, standing by the foot of her couch, and apparently delighted with some *bonbons*, "Do you love them, darling?" For a moment there was a perplexed look on the bright little face, and then the child replied, "No; I cannot love them, they have no face." Deeper wisdom of the innocent life!

"Inanimate things," says Cardinal Newman, "cannot stir our affections; these are correlative with persons." Love implies intelligent sympathy and responsive affection; but there can be no true, ennobling worship without love! Man may admire the universe, and gaze with wonder and rapt delight at the starry glory of the midnight skies; but he cannot love them. "They have no face"—no personality; and the personal life of man demands, as the object of a real and loyal worship, the personal God. There can be no true worship of an absolute mystery, no love for an "All-Being" of which nothing is known save that it is the ever *Unknowable.*

Humanity in its eventful history touches deeply and touches many chords of thought, feeling and sympathy; but, whether considered as an "abstraction" or an "aggregate," Humanity has no "corporate consciousness" by which it can receive worship, nor any "conscious action" by which it

can refresh the worshipper. "I would rather worship a stone idol," says Mr. Goldwin Smith.

But if there can be found in humanity One who is the human ideal, albeit illumined with some splendours of a higher glory, is He not truly the more fitting object of human love and homage? However that may be, most certain it is that the filial longing within the human soul cannot be satisfied by enkindling the sentiments of wonder, awe, or admiration. It wants fellowship—Fatherland. "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us."* That great human cry has not been left without response. One has declared Himself to be the revealer of God, Who brings the Divine within the range of human apprehension. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."*

"Come unto Me . . . and I will give you rest."†

LIV.

POSSIBLY the Doubter may admit the existence of a "Supreme Intelligent Will," "the One Absolute and Everlasting Mind."

Then indeed he must prefix a momentous article to his creed, viz., "I believe in God"; but in doing so he concedes half "the Christian dogma." On

* St. John xiv. 9. † St. Matt. xi. 28.

what evidence however does he make this large concession? What is the proof that commands his assent to this supernatural doctrine—a doctrine so stupendous in itself, and fraught with such important issues? In kind or degree, is the proof in this case superior to that which is offered in confirmation of other essential verities of the Christian faith? It is surely only the first grand link of a series, by which we are

"Bound by gold chains about the feet of God."

Here however arises *a grave, practical question.*

If the Doubter acknowledges the Supreme Intelligence, then what is his relation to Him? what effort is he making to learn the Divine character, and to do His will? Surely a mere pagan living for the present and the seen, without consideration for the future or reverence for the unseen, can be no proper result of an honest acceptance of that first and fundamental article of the Christian creed—belief in an august and benevolent Will—a personal God.

Professor Francis A. Newman says: "The claim of retaining a belief in God, while rejecting a personal God, I do not know how to treat with respect. . . . To deny personality to God denies that mind and morality are part of His essence,

and denies everything that can distinguish God from blind force or blind fate. Such an application of the word 'God' is delusive and evasive. An atheist may thus profess to believe in God."

An honest belief in a personal God should manifestly work itself through the convictions into the character and out into the life. Granted the existence of *God*, it cannot be reasonable to exclude the thought of Him from the aims and acts and hopes. Indeed He must be the first object of thought, and His will life's imperative law.

"If there be a God, the virtue which takes no account of Him, even if it were otherwise faultless, must be most defective. The performance of personal and social duty can in that case no more compensate for the want of piety than justice can excuse intemperance, or benevolence, licentiousness."*

The Doubter's position therefore, whose creed is, "I believe in God, but I yield Him no place in my thoughts or affections; for I live for the present and let the future take care of itself," is as irrational as it is immoral. Indeed unbelief or doubt under such conditions is no longer so much a matter of mental difficulty as of moral disinclina-

* *Vide* Prof. Flint's *Theism*. Cap. i., "Moral Issues," p. 9, *et seq.* And Prof. Momerie's *Belief in God*.

tion; it is less a question of the intellect than of the conscience and the will.

LV.

ANOTHER question, and one of the most urgent importance, blocks the Sceptic's path, and demands his most serious consideration. "If a man die shall he live again?"*

What is death—a gate or a terminus? In other words, what happens to the personal life at what is called death?

There is a crisis in life at which a great change takes place. That change may be wrought in a moment, "in the twinkling of an eye," without forewarning, or it may come by slow and steady stages, and with many heralds of its advent. It may come in the fresh and hopeful morning of life, when glory lights the hills, or it may come at eventide when—

> "The day is done, and the darkness
> Falls from the wings of night."

It is a change not at first in any material measurements of the physical frame, but in the passing away of an imponderable, intangible, invisible somewhat, the mysterious centre of the vital energies, of the reason and affections, of the under-

* Job xiv. 14.

standing and the will, of thought, desire, and conscience—all that constitutes the *ego*, the personal self. At death it disappears—is gone. Whither?

The instrument "fearfully and wonderfully made" is still there in its material entirety, in weight and measurement of substance undiminished; but the master minstrel who awoke the music of its temporal life, where is he? Possibly he was so great in song that Time has taken his music into cherished possession, and will never let it perish; perchance he was only so beloved that his exodus has left the world dark for some true and tender hearts; but where is he? What has become of him? "Man dieth and wasteth away, yea man giveth up the ghost, and *where is he?*"* What has become of the mysterious energy that set the prostrate figure on its feet, that brightened the eye, taught the lips language, and gave all thought and love and volition to the personal life?

Has unbelief any solution of that problem? Has it any message of strength or word of promise for the life that stands face to face with death? Can unbelief kindle any light of hope in the dark chamber of the dead, or breathe any whisper of consolation to hearts wounded with the keen agony of bereavement? No.

* Job xiv. 10.

Mr. John S. Mill and Mr. F. Harrison acknowledge the benign power of the Christian hope; and confess that in their faith or unfaith they have no equivalent, nor any inspiring word.* Their funereal creed ends in night, gloom, and nothingness. "Dust to dust, earth to earth, ashes to ashes." Life is but—

> "A moment's halt—a momentary taste
> Of being from the well amid the waste—
> And lo! the phantom caravan has reach'd
> The nothing it set out from." †

So the profound question arises, "What is death to the personal life, of thought, emotion, will?" "The New Creed"‡ and the unbelieving schools of "advanced thought" venture to offer as their curt reply to the immortal question, the gloomy polysyllable *annihilation*, with its maximum of syllabic measurement and its minimum of meaning; and

> "With the body make the spirit die."

Science knows nothing of this dark pretender *annihilation*. Science speaks of "the conservation of energy"; of matter as changeable in form, but indestructible in fact.

Are we then invited to believe that the corporal

* *Vide supra*, pp. 109—112. † *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam.*

‡ See an able examination of its gloomy and impossible theories in *A Century of Revolution*, W. S. Lilly, specially cap. iii., "The Revolution and Religion."

frame, the "dust which returns to the dust as it was," is an indestructible quantity, changeable indeed, yet imperishable, but that the inner life of human personality, that "no man hath seen at any time," whose vital energies have framed the sciences, achieved the arts, created the literature of all lands, and, in a hundred languages, have interpreted the hopes and fears of this hidden individuality, its filial cry for God, its passionate yearning for immortality—this life of life, "dim miniature of greatness absolute," falls before the arrow of the archer Death, into the dark abyss of nothingness? That has been an impossible thought to earnest souls from the days of Pythagoras to the present.

A great poet has recently passed from human sight, and sings on earth no more.

"The clearest eyes in all the world they read
With sense more keen and spirit of sight more true
Than burns and thrills in sunrise, when the dew
Flames, and absorbs the glory round it shed,
As they the light of ages quick and dead,
Closed now, forsake us: yet the shaft that slew
Can slay not one of all the works we knew,
Nor death discrown that many-laurelled head.
The works of words whose life seems lightning wrought,
And moulded of unconquerable thought,
And quickened with imperishable flame,
Stand fast and shine and smile, assured that nought
May fade of all their myriad-moulded fame,
Nor England's memory clasp not Browning's name."

But the man himself, where is he? His 'works of words moulded of unconquerable thought,' are imperishable; has annihilation overtaken the worker? His fame lives triumphant; is he himself no more?*

"Death, what hast thou to do with one for whom
Time is not lord but servant? What least part
Of all the fire that fed his living heart,
Of all the light more keen than sundawn's bloom
That lit and led his spirit, strong as doom
And bright as hope, can aught thy breath may dart
Quench? Nay, thou knowest he knew thee what thou art,
A shadow born of terror's barren womb,
That brings not forth save shadows. What art thou,
To dream, albeit thou breathe upon his brow,
That power on him is given thee,—that thy breath
Can make him less than love acclaims him now,
And hears all time sound back the word it saith?
What part hast thou then in his glory, Death?

. . . . . .

"He . . . stands now on death's triumphant steep,
Awakened out of life wherein we sleep
And dream of what he knows and sees, being dead."

. . . . . .

Nor weep nor doubt that still the spirit is whole
And life and death but shadows of the soul."†

. . . . . .

* "Ita quidquid est illud, quod sentit, quod sapit, quod vult, quod viget, coeleste et divinum est: ab eamque rem aeternum sit necesse est."—*Tusc. Qaest.* Lib. i. 27.

† *A Sequence of Sonnets on the Death of Robert Browning.* Swinburne.

Deep in human life, when brought face to face with this grand question, lies the conviction that at death the dust shall "return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."* Beneath all surface disturbances of doubt, stronger than all plausibilities of unbelieving argument, implanted in the heart of man is that longing and anticipation of life beyond life to which Christianity has given definite response and divine assurance. For "our Saviour Jesus Christ hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."†

"Death! there is not any death; only infinite change,
Only a place of life which is novel and strange.

. . . . . .

Shall I fear that I shall be changed, and no more shall be I?
I who know not what 'tis that I am, to live or to die?
Nay, while God is, I too must be, else too weak were His hand.
The created is part of His essence,—how else could the Maker stand?
There is no death for ever!"‡

. . . . . .

"No life that breathes with human breath
Has ever truly longed for death.

'Tis life, whereof our nerves are scant,
O life, not death, for which we pant:
More life, and fuller, that I want."§

* Eccles. xii. 7. † 2 Tim. i. 10.
‡ *The Ode of Life.* "The Ode of Change."
§ *The Two Voices.* Tennyson.

Kant asserted that "a future life is a necessary postulate of the practical reason."

"At the age of seventy-five," says Goethe, "one must of course think sometimes of death. But the thought never gives me the least uneasiness, for I am fully convinced that our spirit is a being of a nature quite indestructible, and that its activity continues from eternity to eternity. It is like the sun, which seems to set only to our earthly eyes, but which in reality never sets, but shines on unceasingly."*

Buckle tells us that the *immortality of the soul* is "a doctrine that he cherished above all other doctrines." Appealing to the "moral sentiments which adorn and elevate human character," he says, "the instinct of affection is surely the most lovely, the most powerful and the most general," and this, he argues, in every age and clime bears witness to immortality.

In a passage of great tenderness and beauty, picturing the loss of a beloved life, he says—

"When the very signs of life are mute; when the last faint tie is severed, and there lies before us nought save the shell and husk of what we loved too well, then truly, if we believed the separation were final, how could we stand up and live? . . .

* *Conversations with Eckermann and Sorel*, vol. i. p. 161.

Then, when we have garnered up our hearts, and where our treasure is thieves break in and steal, methinks that in that moment of desolation, the best of us would succumb, but for the deep conviction, that all is not really over; that we have as yet only seen in part; and that something remains behind. Something behind; something which the eye of reason cannot discern, but on which the eye of affection is fixed. What is that, which, passing over us like a shadow, strains the aching vision as we gaze at it? Why is it that at these times our minds are thrown back on themselves, and, being so thrown, have a forecast of another and a higher state? If this be a delusion, it is one which the affections have themselves created, and we must believe that the purest and noblest elements of our nature conspire to deceive us. So surely as we lose what we love, so surely does hope mingle with grief."*

"I have visions of the future," said Professor Sedgwick. "They are as much a part of myself as my stomach and my heart; these visions are to have their antitype in solid fruition of what is best and greatest. But on one condition only, that I humbly accept God's revelation of Himself both

* *Miscellaneous and Posthumous Works.* Art., "Mill on Liberty."

in His works and in His Word, and do my best to act in conformity with that knowledge which He only can give me, and He only can sustain me in doing. If you and I do all this, we shall meet in heaven."*

"Huxley says that life is the cause of organisation, not organisation the cause of life. . . . Well, if life is the cause of organisation, probably it is safe to say the cause must exist before the effect. At least that is nature's logic. *But if life may exist before the organisation, why not after it? I affirm that the microscope begins to have visions of immortality.*"†

"Immortality—that is, the preservation of the individual—may be considered," says Professor Momerie, "the highest possible end, and for a reason which even physical science to some extent justifies. The reason is this: the development and preservation of the individual would seem to be the end which all along has been aimed at in the process of evolution. According to Herbert Spencer, evolution means a change from homo-

* Letter to Darwin in *Life and Letters*.

† *Vide Boston Monday Lectures, U.S.*, by Rev. Jos. Cooke. 2nd series. "The Microscope and Materialism." This is a remarkable series of volumes that, in their own style, contribute many masterly arguments in defence of the Christian faith.

geneity to heterogeneity, and this highest form of heterogeneity is what we call individuality. As Miss Cobb says, 'The advance through inorganic, vegetative, animated, and self-conscious existence, and again from the lowest savage to the loftiest philosopher, is all in the direction of a more and more perfect, complete, and definite personality. . . . . To suppose that there is a height in the range of being, whereto having attained, this slowly evolved personality suddenly collapses like a volcanic island and subsides into the ocean of impersonal being, is to suppose that the whole scheme of things is self-stultifying, a great much ado about nothing, the building up of a tower which should reach to heaven, but which, like a child's house of cards, as soon as it is finished will be again swept flat.' From the point of view of evolution, therefore, it follows that any end attained through our extinction would be not high but low—so ridiculously low as to make the process which led to it utterly beneath contempt. If the destruction of personality be the final end of evolution, then the history of the universe is but a gigantic farce. We have a right to immortality, which there are no reasonable grounds for disputing. In the name of all that is high and noble, we *demand* eternal

life. Unless there be injustice and irrationality at the heart of things it cannot be denied us."*

> "Nothing is lost, nor can be: change alone,
> Unceasing, never done,
> Shapes all the forms of things and keeps them still
> Obedient to the unknown, perfect will.
> And shall the life that is the highest that we know,
> Shall this, alone no more increase, expand and grow?
> Nay, somewhere else there is, although we know not where,
> Nor what new shapes God gives our lives to wear."†

"In my Father's house are many mansions, if it were not so I would have told you."‡ "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." §

LVI.

We oppose then to the creed of Doubt or Unbelief, "Life for the present, let the future take care of itself," under any of its many verbal modifications,

* "Our Right to Immortality," in *Preaching* and *Hearing*. 1886. The Doubter would do well to read also cap. iv.; "Immortality" in Professor Momerie's *Agnosticism;* and "Immortality," cap. i., in his *Basis of Religion*. See, also, *The World to Come*, by Prebendary Reynolds. The Doubter or Earnest Student will find valuable information in the learned and suggestive works of Prebendary Reynolds, which deal with some of the most anxious problems of religious thought.

† *Songs Unsung*. Lewis Morris. "The New Creed."

‡ St. John xiv. 1. § 2 Cor. v. 1.

"*Life for God, here and now, in the faith of Christ, with the assured hope of immortality.*"

And we confidently ask which is the nobler symbol of belief? which is the creed most worthily adapted to the needs and possibilities of human being; which is most fitted to exalt the thoughts, regenerate the character, to awaken and sustain the activities of practical benevolence, and to brighten all the life of man? "Godliness is profitable." Goodness is prolific. "Il faut que la vie soit bonne," said George Sand, "afin qu'elle soit féconde."

We urge upon the Doubter's serious thought, and commend to his frank consideration *the Christian religion*,—the one religion that preserves, amid all the mutations of time and the changing aspects of human thought and need, its quenchless vitality and vigour. As—

> "the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns,"

its "excelsior" banner still waves upon the heights.

Amid the complicated conditions of our civilisation, Christianity is still at the head of every benevolent enterprise; it has a sympathy for every sorrow, a strength for every burden, for every sin a Saviour; and there is no purity of character nor elevation of life, no noble aspiration, but finds in

Christianity the sanction and stimulus of a yet higher ideal. Between this religion and the most inquisitive science or the most cultured intelligence there is, as we are assured on the highest authority, no necessary conflict. "Under the seeming antagonism of religion and science," even Mr. Herbert Spencer declares, "lies hidden entire agreement.*

Again, he says, "Doubtless, to the superstitions that pass under the name of religion, science is antagonistic, but not to the essential religion which these superstitions merely hide. Doubtless, too, in much of the science that is current, there is a pervading spirit of irreligion, but not in that true science which has passed beyond the superficial into the profound.

'True science and true religion,' says Professor Huxley, 'are twin sisters, and the separation of either from the other is sure to prove the death of both. Science prospers exactly in proportion as it is religious, and religion flourishes in exact proportion to the scientific depth and firmness of its basis. The great deeds of philosophers have been less the fruit of their intellect than of the direction of that intellect by an eminently religious tone of mind. Truth has yielded itself

* *First Principles*, cap. I.

rather to their patience, their love, their single heartedness, and their self-denial, than to their logical acumen.'

"So far from science being irreligious, as many think, it is the neglect of science that is irreligious —it is the refusal to study the surrounding creation that is irreligious."*

LVII.

CHRISTIANITY, *properly understood, can have no jealousy of scientific research, nor hostility to the advancement of knowledge.*

Indeed, it is only in an atmosphere of cultured thought and honest-minded inquiry that Christianity can attain its full and symmetrical proportions. It is the one religion in this restless and questioning age that not only invites the fullest inquiry, but stimulates the energies of human progress.

With youth "renewed as the eagle's," Christianity is busy in the most advanced movements of intellectual activity, marching in the vanguard of every noble enterprise, animating every scheme of practical benevolence, and maintains, amid all the

* EDUCATION: *Intellectual, Moral, and Physical*, cap. I.
Vide also, Prof. Momerie's "Science and Religion," in *Inspiration*, etc.

changes and chances of time, her power to leaven the lives of men with the highest principles of faith and joy and duty. "There was never found in any age of the world," says Bacon, "either philosophy or sect, law or discipline, which did so highly exalt the public good as the Christian faith."

Let us call some liberal minded, impartial, and even unfriendly witnesses to vindicate this opinion.

"There is no religion in the whole world," says Max Müller, "which in purity, in simplicity of purpose, in charity and true humanity, comes near to that religion which Christ taught to His disciples."*

Sir James Stephen says, "To deny that Christianity, in its various forms, has been, and still is, one of the greatest powers in the world, or to deny that its doctrines have, in fact, been associated in many ways with all that we commonly recognise as virtue, is like denying the agency of the sun in the physical world."† "From it," he says elsewhere, "not all, but most of the things we value most highly have been derived."‡ He urges the beneficial influence exercised by the thought and hope of immortality on moral life; that 'as a man's

* *Natural Religion.* Lec. xx. † *Nineteenth Century.*
‡ *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity.* 2nd ed., p. 97.

religion so will his morals be; and that though many people wish to retain the morality which they approve, without the religion which they disbelieve, they must stand or fall together. If we think as Cæsar thought of God and a future state, the result will be the morals of Cæsar; though many persons in the present day seem to believe that they can reconcile the morals of Jesus and the theology of Julius Cæsar by masquerading in the world's old clothes, and asking the world at large to take their word that all is well.'*

The anonymous author of an elaborate treatise that endeavours to despoil religion of its supernatural character, is yet constrained to admit that "whilst all previous systems had merely sought to purify the stream, it [Christianity] demanded the purification of the fountain. It placed the evil thought on a par with the evil action. Such morality, based upon the intelligent and earnest acceptance of Divine law, and perfect recognition of the brotherhood of man, is the highest conceivable by humanity, and although its power and influence must augment with the increase of enlightenment, it is in itself beyond development, consisting as it does of principles unlimited in their range and inexhaustible in their application." And he adds,

* *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity.* Pref. xliii. 4.

respecting the Christian religion, "No supernatural halo can heighten its spiritual beauty, and no mysticism deepen its holiness. In its perfect simplicity it is sublime, and in its profound wisdom it is eternal."*

Another witness, liberal minded and impartial, Mr. Goldwin Smith, bears his testimony to the enlightening and progressive spirit of the Christian faith. "Progress is conterminous with Christendom. Outside the pale of Christendom all is stationary. There have been noble outbursts of material wealth and splendour, transient flashes even of intellectual brilliancy, as in the Caliphates and Mogul empire, though the light in these cases was mainly borrowed ; real and sustained progress there has been none. Japan, to whatever she may be destined to come, has kindled her new civilisation with a coal from the Christian hearth."†

"If liberty is to be saved," says Amiel, "it will not be by the Doubters, the men of science or the materialists ; it will be by religious conviction, by the faith of individuals who believe that God wills man to be free, but also pure ; it will be by the seekers after holiness, by those old-

* *Supernatural Religion.* Vol. ii., pp. 487, 8, 9. *Vide supra*, pp. 41, 54, 55, 66, 69, 75—79.

† "Evolutionary Ethics and Christianity." *Contemp. Rev.*, Dec., 1883.

fashioned, pious persons who speak of immortality and eternal life, and prefer the soul to the whole world; will be by the enfranchised children of the ancient faith of the human race." *

LVIII.

THIS Divine religion is revealed and expounded in *sacred Scriptures*, a remarkable literature, gathered into *one book, sui generis—the Bible.*

Let the troubled Doubter, therefore, and the earnest Sceptic give their honest attention to that "book of books." From many points of view it is worthy of their most careful study. In its ample treasury lie many rewards both intellectual and moral; and no honest searcher among its "things new and old" will fail to find "pearls of great price."

The Bible, it should be always remembered, is not so much a book as it is a literature: the derivation of its title tells this story.

It is a literature of fragments, written by different men—dissimilar in temperament, culture, rank,

* *Journal Intime.* Vol. ii.

For most ample confirmation of Amiel's statement the reader is referred to *A Century of Revolution*, Lilly, specially cap. ii., "The Revolution and Liberty"; cap. iii., "The Revolution and Religion"; cap. v., "The Revolution and Art"; and cap. vi., "The Revolution and Democracy."

and social habit; separated in many cases by the long interval of eventful centuries; written too in almost every variety of style—history, poetry, proverb, prophecy, parable, ethics, doctrine, apocalypse; yet somehow gathering all together into one interdependent and organic whole: *bibliotheca divina*—a sacred library—as St. Jerome designated this unique literature.

These sacred Scriptures do not come to us from any of those great eastern monarchies, distinguished in arms and arts, in wealth and civilisation, contemporaneous with its earlier books; nor from that land of classic wisdom and achievement, whose most brilliant age shortly preceded the writings of the later Testament, but from a race inferior in civilisation and culture and art.

Yet in this many-sided literature, this library in a volume, as St. Ambrose justly says, "History instructs, the law teaches, prophecy foretells, correction chastens, morality persuades; in the Book of Psalms is found that which is of advantage to all men, and what is as it were a medicine to give health to human souls."*

And this is no mere old world judgment, for a

* "Historia instruit, lex docet, prophetia annunciat, correctio castigat, moralitas suadet; in libro Psalmorum profectus est omnium, et medicina quædam salutis humanæ." St. Amb., Media. Episcop. Enarrationes in xii. Psalmos Davidicos. Pref.

renowned living statesman and scholar says, "All the wonders of the Greek civilisation heaped together are less wonderful than is the single book of Psalms."*

In every age, from Longinus to Byron, rhetorician and poet have praised the style and beauty found in the Bible. It lent a higher glow to Milton's stately page, and Carlyle invoked its aid to give vigour to his trenchant style. The arts—painting, music, architecture—owe some of their noblest productions to its ever-flowing inspiration. But it has a higher function and nobler mission among men. It claims to be "able to make men wise unto salvation";† and tens of thousands of the wisest and the best have acknowledged the validity of that unique profession, and confess that they have found in the Holy Scriptures the secret of the new life, the "life hid with Christ in God"—"the life that begins in faith but is fulfilled in love."‡

LIX.

EVEN those who have failed to find its hidden springs have yet confessed *the wonder and the*

* Rt. Hon. W. E. Gladstone, M.P., Speech, Edinburgh University.

† 2 Tim. iii. 15—17.

‡ "Αρχὴ μὲν πιστις, τέλος δέ ἀγάπη." *Ignatius ad Eph.*, xiv.

wisdom of the Bible in language aglow with a generous admiration.

Let us call a scientist to witness. Speaking of the influence of the Bible in education, Professor Huxley says: "I must confess I have been no less seriously perplexed to know by what practical measures the religious feeling, which is the essential basis of conduct, was to be kept up in the present utterly chaotic state of opinion on these matters without the use of the Bible. The pagan moralists lack life and colour, and even the noble Stoic, Marcus Antoninus, is too high and refined for an ordinary child.

Take the Bible as a whole, make the severest deductions which fair criticism can dictate for shortcomings and positive errors; eliminate, as a sensible lay-teacher would do if left to himself, all that is not necessary for children to occupy themselves with, and there still remains in this old literature a vast residuum of moral beauty and grandeur. And then consider the great historical fact that for three centuries this book has been woven into the life of all that is best and noblest in English history; that it has become the national epic of Britain, and is familiar to noble and simple from John O'Groat's House to Land's End, as Dante and Tasso were once to the Italians;

that it is written in the noblest and purest English, and abounds in exquisite beauties of a mere literary form; and finally, that it forbids the veriest hind who never left his village to be ignorant of the existence of other countries and other civilisations, and of a great past stretching back to the farthest limits of the oldest nations in the world.

By the study of what other book could children be so much humanised, and made to feel that each figure in that vast historical procession fills, like themselves, but a momentary space in the interval of two eternities, and earns the blessings or the curses of all times, according to its effort to do good and to hate evil, even as they also are earning their payment for their work."*

Nor has Professor Huxley at all departed from this view. In a recent article he says, "I have always advocated the reading of the Bible, and the diffusion of the study of that most remarkable collection of books among the people."†

In respect of another distinguished teacher in the school of "Advanced Thought," George Eliot, her husband tells us in his interesting *Life*—

"We generally began our reading with some chapters of the Bible, which was to her a very

* *Critiques and Addresses*. "The School Boards." ii., p. 51.

† "Agnosticism: a Rejoinder." *Nineteenth Cent*. Ap., 1889.

precious book, not only from early association, but from a profound conviction of its importance in the development of the religious life of man."*

"As a specimen of a literature," said a recent publicist, "it has no peer. No substitute has been invented for it as a teacher of morality. Apart from its theological authority, it can show incomparable educational credentials. As a world's classic none rivals it in interest."†

But lest it should be thought that the very air of England and our educational traditions may prejudice our national judgment in respect of the Holy Bible, let us hear the recent opinion of an Italian liberal, a patriot and publicist.

Signor Sonzogno, in issuing recently a popular edition of the Bible for the Italian people, said, in his journal *The Secolo*, "There is one book which gathers up the poetry and the science of humanity, and that book is the Bible, and with this book no other work in any literature can be compared. It is a book that Newton read continually, that Cromwell carried at his saddle, and that Voltaire kept always on his study table. It is a book that believers and unbelievers should alike study, and that ought to be found in every house."

* Vol. iii. 419. Also on Bible and Liturgy, Vol. ii. 212.

† *The Times*, July 3, 1888. Lead. Art.

Thus from the most varied, and sometimes apparently the most improbable sources, come testimonies to the wonder and wisdom of the Bible; to its ethical and educational value in purifying character, inspiring thought, imparting strength and joy to individual lives, and to its unparalleled power in giving order and cohesion to the fabric of civil society.

LX.

POSSIBLY the religious Doubter may say, "*I cannot accept the theory of the inspiration of the Bible.*"

What theory of *inspiration?*

The Bible has formulated no theory of its own inspiration. The Church has pronounced no authoritative definition of inspiration.

Holy Scriptures are their own best witness. Human definitions are apt to be too strait for Divine subjects. Beware of definitions. The spiritual understanding will find for itself the true inspiration; and learn to know from incontestable evidence that it hears "*coelestes voces*"; that through the media of earthly messengers a Divine message has come to the unforgotten children of the Eternal Father.

Those who know the Bible best, who have drunk

most deeply at its hidden springs, have the truest understanding of its inspiration, even though they may not be able to define the divineness of it.

Let the earnest-minded Doubter search this sacred literature, look into it with patient and inquiring eyes, even as the benighted traveller watches for the morning, and, sooner or later he will see a glow upon the horizon, the herald light that broadens into day. And daylight needs no definition.

LXI.

In closing this argument, I cannot refrain from *some parting words of earnest appeal* to those whose religious convictions are either under shadow of doubt or "eclipse of faith."

They have a right to the most tender interest and courteous consideration of those whose faith is clear and cloudless. The beloved Master has left a memorable example to His Church. To reassure the apostolic Doubter, Thomas, He "unveiled the sacred wounds of Calvary."

I confess that in whatever zone of shadow or darkness the Doubter may be found he commands my brotherly regard. I, too, have passed under the cold shade of cheerless doubt, and have tasted

the exceeding bitterness of the cup which the Spectre of Unbelief presses to the lips of men. In the half-waking dreams of life's twilight hours, when the faculties are less vigilant and shadows loom large, I sometimes imagine that mocking voices trouble the air and ghostly forms haunt the gloom. With the return of morning the shadows flee away, and the true Light shineth.

By the memory of many a conflict, whose fading echoes still vibrate, the Doubter holds my sincere sympathy; and I would that it might be given to me to offer him some succour in his hour of conflict, for the keen severities of that struggle, and its "horror of great darkness," many a wounded heart knows but too well.

Let the Doubter, however, be in earnest, and honest with himself, treat fairly even his fears, and never "make his judgment blind." Rather let him boldly

> . . . "Face the spectres of the mind,
> And lay them; thus . . come at length
> To find a stronger faith his own."

Insincerities deprave the judgment and the will. Conflict is discipline. It is in the wrestle that the wrestler gains agility and strength. Murky hours of fear and fight are often God's training-school, in

which the soul gains broader conviction, more athletic faith, and the warrior joy of victory.

> . . . "This is sure,
> That not in tranquil zones of endless calm
> Springs up the victor's palm." *

Suffering is the forge of character. By patience and endeavour high ends are attained. Not alone by speculative thought, but in the school of experience, with those complicated lessons that teach and train the many-sided nature of man, the feelings ripen and wisdom is matured.

Let the Doubter be of good courage. His doubts may be only the outer husk of an inner kernel, from which faith may spring and flourish; and even a darkness of unbelief, which is almost a darkness of despair, may be the herald of the coming light. We pass through night to morning. Only let him keep his will unbiassed, his heart awake, and sentinel hope on the watch-tower.

It is not by the cold appliances of the intellect, and the efforts of the "pure reason," that the truth can be attained which gives completeness to life and full content. Truth speaks in many languages, and by various avenues reaches the inmost citadel of conviction. Not by earthquake, whirlwind, fire, but with "still small voice" come those Divine

* *The Ode of Life.*

messages that are "heard as the heart hears, and that leave no room for doubt."* "We may question the decisions of the intellect," says Robertson, "but it is at our peril that we tamper with the verdict of the heart."

The danger, however, is imminent lest, in an age distinguished by the spread of education, the diffusion of knowledge, the revelations of scientific discovery, and the increasing luxuries of material possession, the faculties of perception by the inward sense become dulled, the hunger of the heart, the aspirations of the spiritual life, become unheeded, the energies of faith be left without due exercise, and the realm of their proper activity becomes a region forsaken, and its ancient highways untravelled.†

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* *St. Augustine. Supra*, p. 90.

† We refer the inquiring Doubter to *The Restoration of Belief*, Isaac Taylor, a volume of sterling value; *The Eclipse of Faith*, by the late Professor Rogers, published anonymously. It deals more particularly with phases of doubt and unbelief specially presented some thirty years ago; but the work is of permanent value, and deeply interesting. Much information is to be found —given in a popular form—in Canon MacColl's *Christianity in Relation to Science and Morals*. The works of Prebendary Reynolds, *The Supernatural in Nature*, *The Mystery of Miracles*, *The Mystery of the Universe*, and *The World to Come*, are a treasury of information and defensive arguments. *A Century of Revolution*, W. S. Lilly, is a very able and useful volume dealing with some of the latest aspects of "The New Creed." *Occasional Thots. of an Astronomer on Nature and Revelation*. Prof. Pritchard. A book rich in reassuring words for the scientific doubter.

"With our sciences and cyclopædias," said Thomas Carlyle, "we are apt to forget the *divineness* in these laboratories of ours. We ought not to forget it. That once well forgotten, I know not what else were worth remembering. . . . Man cannot know either unless he can worship in some way."* And again he urged, "without religion constantly present in the heart, I see not how a man can live otherwise than unreasonably—than desperately."†

Yes, indeed, without God, the ethical guidance of a Divine law, and the inspired hopes of religion, life is "unreasonable" and "desperate." The Scientist confesses it, and the philosopher feels it so. But how feeble and inadequate the methods with which they endeavour to fill the aching void!

Mr. Herbert Spencer, anticipating the decline of spiritual authority, and confessing the disasters that must follow from "the decay and death of a regulative system," states his anxiety "to indicate, in outline, if he may not complete," a work of his own, which, *mirabile dictu*, he conceives will fitly replace the obsolete authority of Holy Scripture, and "establish rules of right conduct on a scientific

* *Hero Worship.*

† *Life of Thomas Carlyle*, vol. ii., p. 264.

basis." To the life stricken with unbelief, bereaved of God, Christ, and eternal hope, Mr. Herbert Spencer is eager to offer the *Data of Ethics*.* He might as well offer a skeleton to the impassioned eagerness of human love.

"The Agnostic is willing," says Mr. Frederic Harrison, "to trust science as an adequate answer to the intellect, to ethics as a sufficient basis for conduct. He might as well trust in the rule of three and the maxims in a copy-book to deal with the storms and trials of life."†

Professor Tyndall, too, conceives that there is a "recession of the theologic tide that has left exposed wide shores of life"; but how does he anticipate that these desolate wastes shall be re-covered and cheered again with "the voice of many waters"? A new Poetry, he urges, must fill the void of the old Religion. Lawgiver and prophet, apostle and

* Mr. Herbert Spencer's words are, "I am the more anxious to indicate in outline, if I cannot complete this final work, because the establishment of rules of right conduct on a scientific basis is a pressing need. Now that moral injunctions are losing the authority given by their supposed sacred origin, the secularisation of morals is becoming imperative. Few things can happen more disastrous than the decay and death of a regulative system no longer fit, before another and fitter regulative system has grown up to replace it."—*Data of Ethics*. Pref.

† "Future of Agnosticism." *Fortnightly Review*, Jan., 1889.

evangelist, and One greater and dearer than all, are to be supplanted by the poet, when he has undergone "a tonic discipline."

To the poet of the future it is to be given to recover the shores, re-fill the estuaries, and to give that "lightness" and "brightness" to life, which the Professor confesses we all need. The poetry to come, then, is the soul's final hope.

O ye weary and way-worn men and women harassed with life's cares, broken with its sorrows, perplexed with its enigmas, and who hitherto have sought and found solace in the Songs of Zion, in the Gospel of the new life, and in the words of Him who is the "Altogether Lovely," prepare to bid a long adieu to all of these, and to welcome a new "guide, philosopher, and friend," who, "when he understands his mission, and has received his tonic discipline," is to fill the void of the heart with fresh delights. He will solace you with a Sonnet, "brighten" you with an Idyll, and "heighten" you with an Epic. When the poet of the future pipes, the world of the future will be expected to dance. What would you more? Is not this the climax of "advanced thought" and the elysium of progress?*

* Professor Tyndall's statement runs thus: "The position of science is assured, but I think the poet also will have a great part

Whence or how is this new race of poets to be obtained, who shall have power to charm and cheer the life of man with a godless music? Will science call them from "the vasty deep," and philosophy interpret the chastened mission and supply the "tonic discipline?" *Poeta nascitur non fit.* Henceforth, however, or till the new race appears, on the shores desolate by the recession of the theologic tide, no minstrel's voice can do more than chant an idle lay since only the poet of the new discipline is "to play a great part in the future of the world."

The poet's function is truly a noble one; and his genius is among the highest gifts of God; but poetry without religion is a *caput mortuum.* The "tonic discipline" that would take God and eternal hope out of the poet's heart, would paralyse his hand and unstring his lyre. Henceforth the very chords would be dumb that heretofore have had truest power to solace and inspire the souls of men. The medicated poetry that the physicist anticipates,

to play in the future of the world. To him it is given for a long time to come to fill those shores which the secession of the theologic tide has left exposed; to him, when he rightly understands his mission, and does not flinch from the tonic discipline, which it assuredly demands, we have a right to look for that heightening and brightening of life which so many of us need."—*Fragments of Science*, v., "Add. to Students."

would be cold and uninspiring; as mockingly inadequate to hush the troubles of the human heart and to brighten the gloom of its darker hours, as the philosopher's proposed "method of morality on a scientific basis" to mould the character and guide the conduct of human life.

The masters of verse, who have filled the ages with their fame and the hearts of men with untold delight, must pass away with the religion that inspired their muse and permeated all their thought. Shakespeare did not "rightly understand" this severe "mission." Milton never braved this "tonic discipline." Keats and Wordsworth, Browning and Tennyson, Lewis Morris and Matthew Arnold, and how many beside, who have "heightened" and "brightened" life, are to be borne away on the "receding tide" of religious thought and hope.

"Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar
When I put out to sea.

"But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

"Twilight and evening bell
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;

"For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crost the bar."*

Let it be clearly understood by those who anticipate the recession of the theologic tide, that on that ebbing current much would go besides religious dogma. Conviction makes character; and character is the mother of great achievements. For better or worse religion with its beliefs and desires, its hopes and fears, is wrought into the very tissue and fibre of many of the noblest products of human thought and skill. The recession of religion would carry with it, or leave wrecked and stranded on a desolate shore, much that is highest and best alike in literature and art, and that belongs to the most inspiring motives of human activity.

The Scientific Positivist, however, derides and denounces all such vain methods of satisfying the ineradicable needs and desires of human life as are proposed by the agnostic philosophers and the scientific materialists. And with dogmatic vehemence and decision, the positivist propounds the necessity of a "genuine religion;" and affirms that the life without religion and in willing indifference

* *Demeter and other Poems.* Tennyson. "Crossing the Bar."

to its commanding questions is both "weak and immoral"; that to treat those practical matters that belong to religion as "a mere academic question" to be indifferently considered, is a cause of public "danger and corruption," and is a mark of either "anti-social selfishness or anti-social indolence"; that "the eternal religious instincts are as true and powerful now as ever;" and that "the positivist contends as passionately as the theologian," that a "wilderness is left in the heart of the man and the life of society, which is without the guidance of religion."*

* Mr. Frederic Harrison's statement, on which these observations are based, is as follows: "The profound instinct of all healthy spirits, recognises that a state of no religion, of deliberate acquiescence in negation, of non-interest on principle, in those dominant questions, is weak, unworthy, and even immoral. It is in vain that the man of science, and the man of affairs ask to be let alone, and to do their own work in their own way, to leave these ultimate problems to those whom they concern, or to those who care for them. The instinct of all good men and women tells that a man without a genuine religion, a man to whom the relation of man to the world, man to his fellow man, is a mere academic question, a question to be put aside—is a source of danger and corruption to his neighbours and the society in which he lives, that selfishness, caprice and anti-social self-assertion, or equally anti-social indolence are his sure destiny and besetting weakness. The appeals and reproaches of the older creeds as to the folly and danger of stifling the eternal religious instincts, are as true and powerful now as ever, though every single dogma were shivered to dust."—"Future of Agnosticism," *Fortnightly Review*, Jan., 1889.

What then has "advanced thought" on its Positivist side to propound that will avert from society the "danger and corruption" of cultured indifferentism, or to satisfy the invincible desires and inbred hunger of the human heart? With what glad tidings will Positivism make beautiful upon the mountains the feet of its messengers? What mission has it with which to make the "wilderness in the heart of man and the life of society" "glad for them," and "the desert" of an immoral indifference "to rejoice and blossom as the rose?"

Positivism urges, enthusiastically indeed, the imperative claims of a "genuine religion," but the genuine religion of Positivism is a religion without God, Christ, or the hope of immortal life. This surely is only a travesty of religion. It is an "eviscerated" creed that can bring neither life nor comfort, strength nor solace to human souls. An altruistic worship can no more appease the eternal instinct of religion than a system of scientific ethics can quicken and control the moral life.

Puzzled with problems, harassed with doubts, burthened with care, tempted to forsake the stronghold of the ancient faith, in which so many generations have found a refuge and a home, let the Doubter well consider the whitherward of his steps.

To whom will he go? Where will he find sanctuary? What is to occupy the place of the lost possession?

Doubt has no resting-place for thought. Unbelief can provide no home for the heart. And what is offered, where so much is taken? A gospel of "advanced thought," a "New Creed"! But it is a gospel without a Saviour, a creed without Christ; a new culture in which the neophyte is expected to delight and edify himself with an expurgated poetry, and the "regulative system" of the *Data of Ethics!*

From every point of view, as we consider the discrepant nostrums of Scientific Doubt, we are constrained to confess, with the author of *Ecce Homo*, that "the scientific life is less noble than the Christian; it is better, so to speak, to be a citizen in the New Jerusalem, than in the New Athens."*

But why not a citizen in both kingdoms; loyal to the claims of both? One of old time, who boasted that he was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, yet proudly claimed his Roman citizenship; and many of the most distinguished citizens in the kingdom of science and cultured thought are true

* Pref. xxiv.

and fervent members in the sacred commonwealth of the Church of God; for there is no necessary conflict between the verified facts of science and the essential principles of religion.*

In the cosmopolitan Kingdom of Christ "there is neither Jew nor Greek,"† neither scientist nor non-scientist, learned nor unlearned, rich nor poor. The single right of citizenship, and bond of brotherhood, is loyal devotion to Him who bears away the sin of the world; and by Him all earnest souls are welcomed, even though baffled with questions and harassed with doubts. He has given His immediate pledge that "whosoever cometh unto Him He will in no wise cast out";‡ and "in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him."§ To Him be universal Kingship.

* *Vide supra* pp. 26—8, 202, 203.
† Ep. Gal. iii. 28.
‡ St. John vi. 37.
§ Acts Aps. x. 35.

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